
**CHRIST, THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH
IN MODERN ORTHODOX THEOLOGY:
A COMPARISON OF
GEORGES FLOROVSKY, VLADIMIR LOSSKY,
NIKOS NISSIOTIS AND JOHN ZIZIOULAS**

**BY
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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGY
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
(TORONTO SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY)
TORONTO, 1998**

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ABSTRACT

**"Christ, the Spirit and the Church in Modern Orthodox Theology: A Comparison of
Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Nikos Nissiotis and John Zizioulas"**

by Jerry Z. Skira

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This dissertation compares the ecclesiologies of Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), Nikos Nissiotis (1924-1986) and John Zizioulas (1931-) in terms of their trinitarian theologies, as well as their synthesis between christology and pneumatology. There are two parallel dimensions to this study. The first is what I have called the "trinitarian synthesis," and the second is the "ecclesiological synthesis."

The "trinitarian synthesis" refers to the symbiosis between pneumatology and christology. It asks whether or not there exists some theological emphases toward christology or pneumatology. The topic thus concerns the question of a "simultaneity" or of a "priority" of either christology or pneumatology, as well as the "content" of these theologies. Primarily addressed is the theology of the economic Trinity, hence its role in the economy of salvation, but the questions are nevertheless grounded and influenced by each theologian's respective theologies of the immanent (theological) Trinity.

Because of the significance for contemporary ecumenism, I also note the degree to which each theologian developed the theological concept of communion (*koinōnia*) or used it in his theology. Of related interest is whether or not each theologian's theology permitted him to speak of Christ as a

"corporate person," as the one whose identity encompasses being both the "one" as well as the "many."

The "ecclesiological synthesis," the second dimension of this study, examines how each theologian's "trinitarian synthesis" ultimately impacted the way in which they constructed and explained their theologies of the Church (ecclesiology). In other words, I apply their christologies and pneumatologies to ecclesiology, and the result is what I have called the "ecclesiological synthesis." To illustrate the implications of these similarities and differences in the "ecclesiological synthesis," I mention their notions of time and eschatology, while also referring to their understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist, ministry, and the marks of the Church. I also indicate the degree to which each theologian spoke of the "presence" of Christ and the Spirit in the economy of salvation, and how this is related to the notion of the church as an "event."

***To
Natalia***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was born into this world at an institution named after St. Michael, and now an institution bearing the name of the same patron will send me into the world in a ministry of teaching. I mention this point because, interestingly, there are also other Michael's to whom I owe a great deal of thanks. The first of these is Michael A. Fahey, S.J. (Marquette University), my director, mentor and friend. Many thanks are due him for his overseeing of my studies, especially this work, and for his kind support throughout the years. The other is Michael Attridge, a fellow doctoral candidate, and a good friend whom I was grateful to have as a theological interlocutor.

In addition to these two people, there are also others who have read various stages of my work and responded with many rich insights and suggestions. In this respect I sincerely thank the other two members of my doctoral supervisory committee, namely, Paul J. Fedwick (St. Michael's College) and Iain Nicol (Knox College), as well as Jean-Marie R. Tillard, O.P. (Collège Dominicain), and Gilles Mongeau, S.J. (Regis College).

Throughout my years of studies, I have relied as well on the generous support and prayers of my family: my parents, grandparents, brother and sister, in-laws, and extended family. Many thanks to them too.

I am likewise very grateful for the many graces bestowed upon me by the Spirit of our Lord. Among these was the sending to me of what I can best describe as a personal martyr and saint—a martyr in that she sacrificed much for me, and a saint because her faith and love taught me many things that textbooks could not. With deepest gratitude, I thus dedicate this study to my wife Natalia.

ABBREVIATIONS

A note on translations: In general, all references are to a work's original language of composition. Unless otherwise indicated, where an English translation is used, the original work is cited, followed by the source of the translation in square brackets.

- BC* John Zizioulas. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's, 1985.
- CW* Georges Florovsky. *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*. 14 vols. Belmont: Nordland; Vaduz: B uchervertriebsanstalt, 1972-1989.
- IL* Vladimir Lossky. *The Image and Likeness of God*. Ed. John Erickson and Thomas E. Bird. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's, 1985.
[see *IR*].
- IR* Vladimir Lossky. *A l'image et   la ressemblance de Dieu*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1967.
[see *IL*].
- Messenger* *Messenger de la l'exarchat du Patriarche russe en Europe Occidental*.
[originally published as *Messenger de l' glise russe en Europe Occidental*].
- MT* Vladimir Lossky. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's, 1991.
[see *TM*].
- OrT* Vladimir Lossky. *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*. Trans Ian & Ihita Kesarcodi-Watson. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's, 1978.
- TM* Vladimir Lossky. *Essai sur la th ologie mystique de l' glise d'Orient*. Paris: Aubier-Montagne, 1944.
[see *MT*].

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

- SETTING THE STAGE -

This study compares the ecclesiologies elaborated by Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958), Nikos Nissiotis (1924-1986) and John Zizioulas (1931-), and the theological visions that lie at the basis of their ecclesiological constructions. A number of other Orthodox theologians could be added in a larger study of contemporary Orthodox ecclesiology, and some are mentioned here, such as Alexei Khomiakov, Sergei Bulgakov and Nicholas Afanas'ev.¹ Yet, I have chosen to focus on these four only. I chose Florovsky because of his importance in the interpretation of patristic theology and in ecumenism.² In terms of christology and pneumatology, Zizioulas singles

¹ For a survey of authors in contemporary Orthodox ecclesiology, see the sections on ecclesiology in Michael Fahey, "Orthodox Ecumenism and Theology: 1970-1978," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978) 446-485; and "Orthodox Ecumenism and Theology: 1978-1983," *Theological Studies* 44 (1983) 625-692.

² For example see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, In *The Christian Tradition*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971-1989) 1: 359; Thomas FitzGerald, *The Orthodox Church*, Denominations in America no.7, gen. ed. H.W. Bowden (Westport: Greenwood, 1995) 173-175; and Willem Visser 't Hooft, "Fr.

out Lossky as being "destined to exercise the greatest influence on this subject in our time."³ Others have spoken of Nissiotis as "one of the most outstanding theologians in the ecumenical world of our generation,"⁴ and Zizioulas was praised by Yves Congar as an original and seminal thinker.⁵

Brief Biographies

I have opted to present a single comparative biography of all four of these influential

Georges Florovsky's Role in the Formation of the WCC," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 23 (1979) 135.

³ *BC*, 124. A.M. Allchin said that Lossky was "one of the great and genuinely creative theologians of our century," in "Vladimir Lossky: The Witness of an Orthodox Theologian," *Theology* 72 (May, 1969) 203. Similar praises are found in Rowan Williams, "The 'Via Negativa' and the Foundations of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of V.N. Lossky," *New Studies in Theology*, Vol. 1, ed. S. Sykes & D. Holmes (London: G. Duckworth, 1980) 95; and in John Meyendorff, "Lossky, le militant," *Contacts* 31 (1979) 208-211.

⁴ Thomas F. Torrance, "The Trinitarian Theology of Nikolas Nissiotis," *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994) 103. See also the laudatory comments in Paul A. Crow, "Nissiotis, Nikos A., 1925-1986 [obit.]," *Mid-Stream* 26 (1987) iii-v; and a very early favourable appraisal of Nissiotis's influence in S.P. Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," *Contemporary Continental Theologians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966) 229-250.

⁵ In Yves Congar, "Bulletin d'ecclésiologie," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982) 88; and John Meyendorff, "Foreword," in *BC*, 12.

Orthodox theologians, rather than separate biographies in their respective chapters.⁶ My goal is to present their lives in a collinear fashion. For example, while Florovsky was already making his mark in theology in the early 1930s, in another part of the world Zizioulas was being born. Such a presentation shows the many ways each person's lives were intertwined with the lives of the others, as well as with the events which influenced them individually or

⁶ Below is a select list of sources from which biographical information on the four theologians was taken:

Florovsky: Andrew Blane, "A Sketch of the Life of Georges Florovsky," *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman*, ed. Andrew Blane (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1993) 11-217; and George Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovsky: His American Career, 1948-1965," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 11 (1965) 7-107. See also Thomas E. Bird, "In memoriam: Georges Florovsky 1893-1979," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 24 (1979) 342-350; and the special issue of the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 41 (1996).

Lossky: Olivier Clément, *Orient-Occident: Deux passeurs: Vladimir Lossky et Paul Evdokimov* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1985).

Nissiotis: Bernard Dupuy, "Nikos Nissiotis (1925 [sic.]-1986), théologien de l'Esprit-Saint et de la gloire," *Istina* 32 (1987) 225-237; and Joseph Kallarangatt, "The Ecumenical Theology of Nikos A. Nissiotis," *Christian Orient* 11 (1990) 173-186. See also Thomas Stransky et al., "Nikos Nissiotis: Three Sketches," *Ecumenical Review* 48 (1996) 466-475.

Zizioulas: Gaëtan Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes sur l'Église-Communion: l'oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas* (Montréal: Paulines; Paris: Médiaspaul, 1989) 27-58.

There are also some shorter biographies of Florovsky, Lossky and Nissiotis in Ion Bria and Dagmar Heller, eds., *Ecumenical Pilgrims: Profiles of Pioneers in Christian Reconciliation* (Geneva: W.C.C., 1995).

corporately. The order of appearance of the four follows a chronological pattern based on each person's date of birth, that of Florovsky, Lossky, Nissiotis and Zizioulas.

Florovsky's schooling was largely in Odessa (Ukraine), where he was born in 1893, and later in Czechoslovakia. At the turn of the century, Lossky was born (1903) in Göttingen (Germany), although much of his youth was spent in St. Petersburg (Russia).⁷ Lossky's university studies in St. Petersburg showed his interest in western mediaeval history, later manifesting themselves, for example, in his study on Meister Eckhart.⁸ During the early 1920s Florovsky obtained a master's degree at the University of Prague where he consequently began lecturing in 1923 as a professor in philosophy.

Since Lossky was exiled to Prague (1920-1924), he may have met Florovsky at that city's university. Lossky eventually moved to Paris in 1924 and pursued studies at the Sorbonne, which led to a licentiate (masters) in mediaeval studies. Here he studied under Etienne Gilson. A friend of his, Eugene Kovalevsky, introduced him to the Brotherhood of St. Photius, a group dedicated to being witnesses of Orthodoxy in the West. His first year of studies there coincided with the year of Nissiotis's birth (1924) in Greece.

Like Lossky, Florovsky also moved to Paris where he taught at the Institute of St. Sergius from the mid-1920s to the 1930s, and came into contact with other famous

⁷ Lossky's father was the famous Russian philosopher Nicholas O. Lossky (1870-1965), whose work was influenced by Vladimir Solov'iev (1853-1900) and G.W. Leibnitz (1646-1716).

⁸ *Théologie négative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart* [orig. pub. 1960] (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1973).

Orthodox émigré theologians such as Sergei Bulgakov and Nicholas Berdia'ev, as well as Lossky. Florovsky participated in the Berdia'ev Colloquium during those years and he also developed a friendship with Etienne Gilson, as well as with Jacques Maritain and Gabriel Marcel. While at St. Sergius, Florovsky undoubtedly came into contact with Lossky through their mutual involvement in the 1930s in the controversy with Sergei Bulgakov over sophiology. Florovsky was asked to participate in a theological commission reviewing Bulgakov's teaching, while Lossky published a monograph on the subject.⁹ It was in the early stages of this divisive controversy at the Institute, that Zizioulas was born (1931) in Greece.

Florovsky entered the international ecumenical involvement in the early 1920s through the Fellowship of St. Alban and Sergius (London), an ecumenical gathering of Anglicans and Orthodox. This eventually led to his participation in the second Faith and Order Conference (Edinburgh, 1937), and to his membership in the "committee of fourteen" that planned the founding of the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.). He held various executive posts in the W.C.C. and the Commission on Faith and Order, and was considered

⁹ Lossky's work was entitled *Спор о Софии* [The Controversy about Sophia] (Paris: Confrérie de Saint Photios, 1936). Although Florovsky disagreed vehemently with Bulgakov, he did not find his teachings heretical, and both remained very good friends. The respect between the two was so great, that during an illness, Bulgakov asked Florovsky to take his place at Faith and Order. See Blane, "A Sketch of the Life of Georges Florovsky," 60-68.

an important pioneer in the international ecumenical movement.¹⁰ It was at the W.C.C. that Florovsky met Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. Florovsky was eventually ordained to the priesthood in 1932, and in 1946 was conferred as a mitred-archpriest.

Up to 1940, Florovsky and Lossky were already actively involved in teaching and beginning their ecumenical work, while Nissiotis and Zizioulas were beginning their academic careers. From 1942, and throughout the Second World War, Nissiotis studied in Athens, mostly in philosophy, existentialism and depth psychology. In 1948, he went to Zurich to begin graduate studies, under such notables as Emil Brunner and Gustav Jung. His studies also took him to Basel (1951-1952), where he worked under Karl Barth and Karl Jaspers. In Athens during 1956 he completed his dissertation on existentialism.¹¹

While Nissiotis was in studies during the war, Lossky took an active role in the French resistance movement. This was motivated in part by the Jewish origins of his wife Madeline Shapiro. At the end of the war, Lossky began teaching dogmatics and church history at the Orthodox Theological Institute of St. Denis (Paris), the year of its inception (1945). He later became the Institute's dean, but eventually left over a controversy

¹⁰ See Visser 't Hooft, "Fr. Georges Florovsky's Role in the Formation of the WCC," 135-138. For Zizioulas's comments on Florovsky's contributions to the ecumenical movement, and Orthodoxy in general, see "La perception qu'ont les orthodoxes d'eux-mêmes et leur participation au mouvement oecuménique," *Service Orthodoxe de presse* no. 201 (Sept.-Oct. 1995) 1-8.

¹¹ *Existentialism and Christian Faith According to Søren Kierkegaard and Contemporary Existentialist Philosophers* [In Greek]. Athens, 1956.

surrounding the non-canonical status of Kovalevsky. Nevertheless, during this period, in 1947 Lossky was invited to participate in the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. Lossky, unlike Florovsky, remained in France pursuing his studies and participating in various international patristic conferences up to the time of his early death in 1958.

In 1948 Florovsky moved to the United States and taught at various institutions, such as St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Crestwood, NY), Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary (New York city), Harvard Divinity School, Princeton University, and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Brookline, Mass.). Both Florovsky and Zizioulas came into close contact in 1955 while the latter was studying for a master's degree at Harvard, where Florovsky taught patristics. The two met again in the later 1950s when Zizioulas returned to the United States to begin his doctoral work. At this time he was simultaneously pursuing two doctoral dissertations, one under Florovsky on Maximus the Confessor's christology, and the other under A.G. Williams on the unity of the Church in the bishop and the Eucharist in the Early Church. Despite Florovsky's initial reservations about pursuing the thesis under Williams, in 1964 Zizioulas transferred to the University of Athens where he completed and published this dissertation.¹²

Zizioulas's studies at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute (Geneva) in 1954-1955, pre-

¹² *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῖα Εὐχαριστία καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας* (Athens, 1965) [Fr. trans. *L'Eucharistie, l'Évêque et l'Église durant les trois premiers siècles*, trans. J-L Paliarne (Paris: Desclée, 1994)]. For a lengthy summary of the work, consult Pier Cesare Bori, "Review of: John Zizioulas, *L'unité de l'Église durant les trois premiers siècles*," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 65 (1970) 56-68.

date Nissiotis's teaching there (1956-1974). Nissiotis eventually became the Institute's director (1966), and also taught at the University of Geneva (1962-1974). During these years, beginning in 1963, Nissiotis was appointed by the W.C.C. as a permanent observer at the Second Vatican Council (Rome). Here he most likely had contact with a number of prominent Roman Catholic theologians, like Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac. After the council's work, Nissiotis married Marina Catris and began teaching philosophy of religion at the University of Athens. Many of his appointments during the above mentioned period were concurrent with each other.

It was not until 1963 that Zizioulas became involved in the Faith and Order Commission (having been introduced to Lukas Vischer by Nissiotis), and was later appointed to the Joint Working Group in 1968, the year Nissiotis was elected Associate General Secretary of the W.C.C. (a post he held until 1974). Zizioulas's work on the Central Committee of the W.C.C. commenced in 1972. From 1977-1982, Nissiotis became Moderator of the Faith and Order Commission.¹³ Florovsky, Nissiotis and Zizioulas undoubtedly came into contact with each other over the years through their work in the Faith and Order Commission and the W.C.C.

In 1979, Zizioulas was appointed to the official international ecumenical dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. This was the year of Florovsky's death. Like Florovsky, Zizioulas occasionally taught throughout his career at St. Vladimir's

¹³ During this time Nissiotis was very active in both the Greek Olympic Association and the International Olympic Academy.

and Holy Cross, in addition to terms at the University of Glasgow (Scotland), the Gregorian University (Rome),¹⁴ the University of Helsinki (Finland), and the Bossey Ecumenical Institute (Geneva). He has recently been professor of theology at King's College (London) and the University of Thessalonika (Greece). Zizioulas's work in the above ecumenical organizations continues to this day, and through many of them he has enjoyed a continued friendship with the prominent Roman Catholic theologian Jean-Marie Tillard.¹⁵

Nissiotis was also President of the Académie internationale des sciences religieuses

¹⁴ For an insight into some of his lectures at the Gregorian, see the various references in Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993); and Ronald Roberson, "Orthodox Eucharistic Ecclesiology and Its Ecumenical Significance," (Licentiate thesis; Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1984).

¹⁵ Zizioulas both worked with Tillard in the W.C.C., and on the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. For an analysis of their early influence in the latter dialogue, see Myroslaw Tataryn, "The Munich Document and the Language of Unity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26 (1989) 648-663. An overview of the ecclesiology of this commission is found in my article, "Ecclesiology in the International Orthodox-Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 41/4 (1996) 359-374. Zizioulas and Tillard have collaborated on a number of works, including contributions to, *L'Eucharistie, Églises en dialogue* no. 12, J.M.R. Tillard et al., (Paris: Mame, 1970). For a comparison of their theologies, consult: Jaume Fontbona, *Comunion y synodalidad: La ecclesiologia eucaristica despues de N. Afanasiev en I. Zizioulas y J.M.R. Tillard* [In Spanish: Communion and Synodality: Eucharistic Ecclesiology After N. Afanas'ev in J. Zizioulas and J.M.R. Tillard] (Barcelona: Herder, 1994).

(Brussels) from 1984 up to the time of his tragic death in 1986. The same year, Zizioulas was ordained priest, then bishop; he was named Metropolitan of Pergamon and currently also serves as an official representative for the Ecumenical Patriarch.

From what has been said thus far, one can skim each theologian's biographies and note some interesting similarities and differences. Of the four men, only Florovsky was ordained when he entered the international theological world with his significant publications on the Fathers. Zizioulas too was a layperson after the appearance of his major publication *L'être ecclésial* (1981), being ordained only much later on in his career. Zizioulas also represents the only one of the four who was not married, and hence, was able to be ordained bishop. Of the four, obviously two are Greeks and two are Russians, the latter émigré theologians. Florovsky and Lossky were members of the Russian Orthodox Church, but Florovsky, while living in Paris and the United States, changed his canonical membership to the Greek Orthodox Church (Ecumenical Patriarchate), while Nissiotis and Zizioulas were native to the Greek Church. Lossky, Nissiotis and Zizioulas also had significant exposure to the Western academic world through their studies (as well as in teaching) in places such as France, England, Switzerland and the United States. Florovsky was the only one of the three whose formal education took place at Eastern European universities. Lossky was the only one without a doctorate, despite his graduate work, and the only one of the four who did not have extensive international ecumenical involvement at the level of the W.C.C. and its Faith and Order Commission. Nissiotis, Zizioulas and Florovsky came into close contact with each other through their involvement in the W.C.C.

and were familiar with one another's writings. The exception is Lossky who met Florovsky and read his works, but who would have read neither Zizioulas nor Nissiotis.¹⁶

Since all four were exposed to the West very early on in their careers, they developed easy facility in English, French and German. Despite a small portion of their works being written in their native tongues of Greek or Russian, a great majority of their published works were originally written in English, French and German. These works are easily accessible in the collections of the University of Toronto and at the University of St. Paul (Ottawa), as well as the Collège Dominicain (Ottawa).

Thesis

This dissertation compares the ecclesiologies of these four theologians in terms of their trinitarian theologies, as well as their synthesis between christology and pneumatology. There are two parallel dimensions to this study. The first is what I have called the "trinitarian synthesis," and the second is the "ecclesiological synthesis."

The "trinitarian synthesis" refers to the symbiosis between pneumatology and christology. It asks whether or not there exists some theological emphases toward christology or pneumatology. The topic thus concerns the question of a "simultaneity" or of a "priority" of either christology or pneumatology, as well as the "content" of these

¹⁶ There are references in Zizioulas, for example, to the other three theologians. Nissiotis too referred to the others, while Florovsky commented on Lossky's work in a number of places.

theologies. Primarily addressed is the theology of the economic Trinity, hence its role in the economy of salvation, but the questions are nevertheless grounded and influenced by each theologian's respective theologies of the immanent (theological) Trinity.

If one were to construct a spectrum in terms of a "priority" of either christology or pneumatology, at one end would be Florovsky with his christological leanings, and at the other would be Nissiotis with his preference for pneumatology. In the middle, but perhaps somewhat closer to Nissiotis, would be Lossky, positing a simultaneity of christology and pneumatology. Beside Lossky in the center is Zizioulas, with a more emphatic stance on the simultaneity of pneumatology and christology, despite his affinities to Florovsky's christology.

Because of the significance for contemporary ecumenism, I also note the degree to which each theologian developed the theological concept of communion (*koinōnia*) or used it in his theology. Of related interest is whether or not each theologian's theology permitted him to speak of Christ as a "corporate person," as the one whose identity encompasses being both the "one" as well as the "many."

The "ecclesiological synthesis," the second dimension of this study, examines how each theologian's "trinitarian synthesis" ultimately impacted the way in which they constructed and explained their theologies of the Church (ecclesiology). In other words, I apply their christologies and pneumatologies to ecclesiology, and the result is what I have called the "ecclesiological synthesis." To illustrate the implications of these similarities and differences in the "ecclesiological synthesis," I mention their notions of time and

eschatology, while also referring to their understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist, ministry, and the marks of the Church (unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity). I also indicate the degree to which each theologian spoke of the "presence" of Christ and the Spirit in the economy of salvation, and how this is related to the notion of the church as an "event." These latter areas reveal the interesting and creative ways in which each theologian's "trinitarian synthesis" was manifested.

Significance of the Study

The topic is important and significant since it shows how different theological approaches in triadology and ecclesiology have existed within the various Orthodox traditions, and that current Orthodox theology is, in some senses, still developing the dynamics of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in one trinitarian and ecclesiological synthesis. This study also reveals some differences among the Orthodox in their theologies of the Church, areas which have undoubtedly had an influence on Orthodoxy's contributions to the ecumenical movement. Although there are a number of major studies on each individual author, there is as of yet no major comparison of these four theologians along the lines I have sketched out here.

In this present work I have chosen not to go into detail about some specific aspects of the four theologian's thought, although I occasionally allude to them in my text. Among such elements are their beliefs that certain movements in Orthodox theology deviated from their Eastern heritage as a result of influences from Scholasticism and the Reformation (or

the West in general).¹⁷ All four theologians are also known for advocating a "return to the sources" of Christian theology.¹⁸ Florovsky is famous for his development of a "neo-

¹⁷ See for example Florovsky, "Western Influences in Russian Theology," *Aspects of Church History*, in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont: Nordland; Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1972-1989) 4:157-182; and *Пути Русского Богословия* [The Ways of Russian Theology; orig. pub. 1937] (Paris: YMCA, 1988) [Eng. *CW*, 5-6]. Nissiotis's echoed this in "Orthodoxy and the West: A Response," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 17-18 (1972-1973) 133-134. For Zizioulas see, "The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education," *Orthodox Theological Education for the Life and Witness of the Church* (Geneva: W.C.C., 1978) 33-40; and "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study," *The Forgotten Trinity*, BCC Study Commission, 3 vols, ed. A. Heron (London: BCC/CCBI, 1991) 3:21. For Lossky, one can refer to the chapters on Scholasticism and the Reformation in *Vision de Dieu* (Paris: Delachaux et Niestle, 1962).

¹⁸ One can see Lossky's commitment to such a patristic revival, for example, simply by perusing his table of contents in *Vision de Dieu*. Yves-Noël Leouvier said, "Florovsky could only congratulate Lossky ... for having attempted in the West the first Eastern theological synthesis entirely drawn from Byzantine tradition," in *Perspectives russes sur l'Église: Un théologien contemporain: Georges Florovsky* (Centurion: Paris, 1968). Quoted in McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 222. Nissiotis too wrote of being faithful to the patristic tradition, though perhaps his position in this area is not as pronounced or visible as with the others. See Nissiotis, "Chrétienté: fin et/ou permanence," *La chrétienté en débat: histoire, formes et problèmes actuels* [Colloquium at Bologne, May 1983], G. Alberigo et al., (Paris: Cerf, 1984) 19.

patristic synthesis" through his work on the Fathers of the Church.¹⁹ Zizioulas similarly advocates this return to the early Church, going so far as to say that the post-apostolic age should be normative for theology, and he too opts for a "neo-patristic synthesis."²⁰ All four theologians also spoke of the importance of patristic theology and contemporary theology in terms of its existential or personalist character.²¹ It would be of considerable interest if a

¹⁹ See his monumental studies *Восточные Отцы IV Века: Из чтений в Православном Богословском Институте в Париже* [The Eastern Fathers of the IVth Century: Lectures at the Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris; orig. pub. 1931] (Paris: YMCA, 1990) [Eng. *CW*, 7]; *Восточные Отцы V-VIII Веков: Из чтений в Православном Богословском Институте в Париже* [The Eastern Fathers of the Vth-VIIIth Centuries: Lectures at the Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris; orig. pub. 1933] (Paris: YMCA, 1990) [Eng. *CW*, 8-9]. See also George Williams, "The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky," *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman*, ed. Andrew Blane (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's, 1993) 287-340.

²⁰ In "Episkopé and Episkopos in the Early Church: A Brief Survey of the Evidence," *Episkopé and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective*, Faith & Order Paper no. 102, Lukas Vischer et al., (Geneva: W.C.C., 1980) 41. And "Introduction," *BC*, 26, cf. 110, respectively.

²¹ Florovsky, "Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church," *Aspects of Church History*, *CW*, 4: 17, 22. Zizioulas, in this respect, equates "ontology" with "existential" in its broadest possible sense. Cf. Zizioulas, "Episkopé and Episkopos in the Early Church," 41; and *BC*, 33, 65. For Lossky, one can see a hint of this in his distinction between "person" and "nature," as in *Mystical Theology*, 122-123. For Nissiotis, see "Vers un théologie existentielle: Réflexions sur l'ouvrage de P. Evdokimov, 'L'Orthodoxie,'" *Contacts* 33/13 (1961) 39-51.

future study examined the ways in which each interpreted and used the Fathers and the Scriptures in their "trinitarian and ecclesiological syntheses." One could also mention, in connection with existentialism, that a useful study would be a comparison of each theologian's writings with the philosophy of Kierkegaard, which again, is beyond the scope of this study.²²

Plan of the Study

The study is divided into six sections, beginning with this introduction and biographical sketches. This first chapter briefly situated each theologian in the context of theological movements in Orthodox theology and in the general ecumenical life of the Orthodox churches. References throughout the dissertation will be made to each person's ecumenical participation and influences, and to what each wrote about the others. Chapters two to five deal separately with each theologian, analyzing each according to the thesis areas I mentioned above. No lengthy comparisons among Florovsky, Lossky, Nissiotis and Zizioulas are made in these chapters, although significant points, similarities and differences

²² For example, see Nissiotis's dissertation *Existentialism and Christian Faith According to Søren Kierkegaard*; and "Vers une théologie existentielle: Réflexions sur l'ouvrage de P. Evdokimov, 'L'Orthodoxie,'" 39-51. With respect to Lossky, Rowan Williams spoke of a Kierkegaardian streak in him, in "Eastern Orthodox Theology: V.N. Lossky," *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 2 vols., ed. David Ford (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 2: 162. Zizioulas recognized Kierkegaard's relevance for existentialism, in *BC*, 103-14.

are indicated throughout. The sixth section culminates in a comparison of the four in terms of their trinitarian syntheses and ecclesiologies, and sketches out possible directions or areas of development in contemporary Orthodox trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. In the bibliography, I have opted to present the primary sources chronologically. This should give the reader the possibility of not only clearly seeing the development of thought or concerns of each theologian, but also to easily situate their writings in the various events and stages of their lives.

CHAPTER 2

GEORGES FLOROVSKY

- ECCLESIOLOGY AS A CHAPTER OF CHRISTOLOGY -

"Christ conquered the world. This victory consists in his having created his own Church." These were Georges Florovsky's opening lines to one of his first treatises on the Church.¹ They point to the importance of christology in his "ecclesiological synthesis," a position which evolved from his appraisal of two biblical images of the Church, namely, the People of God and the Body of Christ. This christological leaning shows that for him, the theology of Christ should be given preference or precedence over the theology of the Spirit in constructing a theology of the Church, a conviction which also emerged in his attempt to forge a link between the two in his "trinitarian synthesis." His trinitarian theology consequently impacted his theology of the Eucharist and time, as well as his comments on the marks of the Church. Notably, catholicity and the Eucharist had decisive importance in his "ecclesiological synthesis."

¹ "The Catholicity of the Church," *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, CW*, 1:37.

Defining Ecclesiology and Trinitarian Theology

The starting point for understanding Florovsky's ecclesiology is to know that he judged that there is no real definition of the Church in the Scriptures, nor in the early Church Fathers, but that such writings contain only references and images of the Church.² For Florovsky, doctrine is a description of the experience and self-consciousness of the Church, so that Christianity needs to be seen not as a teaching, but as a way of life to be appropriated and lived out in its fullest. The Church is the source and milieu in which one experiences this new life in Christ, and thus, Christian theology is, in a sense, expressed in teachings about the Church.³ Nevertheless, any attempts to reduce the fullness of Church self-awareness and experience will lead to doctrinal and theological imprecision or distortion.

That is why, in essence, there cannot be particular, individual, complete dogmatic teachings about the Church, set forth in generally accessible dogmatic formulations. For the Church is the focus of all Christianity and is known only from within, through experience and the accomplishment of a

² "The Image of the Church," *John XXIII Lectures: Byzantine Christian Heritage*, Georges Florovsky et al., 2 vols. (Bronx: Fordham University, 1969) 2: 96; cf. "Christ and His Church—Suggestions and Comments," *1054-1954, L'Église et les églises: Neuf siècles de douloureuse séparation entre l'orient et l'Occident*, Études offerts à Lambert Beauduin, 2 vols. (Chevetogne, 1955) 2: 160.

³ "Домъ Отчій," *Путь* 7 (April 1927) 64-65 ["The House of the Father," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach, CW*, 13:59].

life of grace—not in individual dogmatic definitions but in the entire fullness of the doctrine of the faith.⁴

The authors of the Scriptures as well as the Fathers recognized this fact and generally chose not to pursue definitions of the Church, dealing instead with images and aspects of the Church.

The People of God and the Body of Christ

Florovsky wrote that the two most common images of the Church contained in the New Testament are the "People of God" and the "Body of Christ." The older of these is the "People of God" of the Hebrew Scriptures; it places the Church within the history of salvation beginning with the people of Israel (Jeremiah 31.33; 2 Kings 18.5; Matthew 22.32). This image expresses that in Christ, the Church appropriates the Old Testament calling and mission and becomes the new Israel, a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Peter 2.9).⁵ This people is in search of God and on pilgrimage towards the heavenly Jerusalem, the supernatural destiny of the Church. The image of the Church as the People of God stresses the continuity of the Old Testament covenant with the New

⁴ Ibid. 64 [Ibid. 58].

⁵ "The Church and the Communion of Saints," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach*, *CW*, 13: 81-82. On these images, see also Yves-Noël Leouvier, *Perspectives russes sur l'Église: Un théologien contemporain: Georges Florovsky*, *L'Église et son temps* no. 15 (Paris: Centurion, 1968) 69-77.

Testament one, conveying them in terms of Messianic preparation and fulfilment in Christ.⁶

Florovsky associated this image of the Church with the pneumatological approach in ecclesiology.⁷

The second predominant image in the Scriptures, especially in St. Paul and in patristic writings, is the Church as the "Body of Christ" (Ephesians 1.22-23). The Church is seen as a body which is the fulfilment (*plēroma*) of Christ, and the image is situated within the context of redemption and salvation in Christ, emphasizing the intimate union of the faithful with Christ and their sharing in his saving work and fullness.⁸

The Church is the *Body of Christ* not simply as a "body of [persons]," "a corporation."

The Church is *in Christ*, as well as Christ is in his Church. The Church is not merely a community of those who believe in Christ and walk in his commandments. [It] is a community of those who abide and dwell in him, and in whom He Himself is abiding and dwelling by the Spirit.⁹

⁶ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, *CW*, 1: 58.

⁷ "On the History of Ecclesiology," *Ecumenism II: A Historical Approach*, *CW*, 14: 12.

⁸ Cf. "The Image of the Church," 97; "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," *Ecumenism II: A Historical Approach*, *CW*, 14: 29.

⁹ "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 30. Cf. Christoph Künkel, *Totus Christus: Die Theologie Georges V. Florovskys* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

Christ is both the Head and the Body, where the members of the Church are at a distance from Christ as Head, as well as in intimate communion with him in his Body.

Naturally, since the images of the Church as the "Body of Christ" and as the "People of God" reflect a larger and mysterious reality, each has its limitations. In the Old Testament image, the notion of the "Covenanted People" of God is central, yet according to Florovsky this image insufficiently appropriates the mystery of the incarnation and the resurrection, and tends to stress the incorporation of a person into membership of a community, implying that one cannot be a Christian alone, but only within the community.¹⁰ Florovsky indicated that if one starts by constructing ecclesiology from the phenomenon of the Church being a community, with natural (historical) and spiritual ties, then there is a danger that the doctrine of the Church will turn into a kind of "charismatic sociology."¹¹ In reference to the

Ruprecht, 1991) 179-187.

¹⁰ "On the History of Ecclesiology," 13. And "The Church and the Communion of Saints," 81; "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 59.

¹¹ "On the History of Ecclesiology," 12ff; "The Image of the Church," 98. Cf. Peter Chamberas interpreted this uneasiness with some aspects of pneumatology in ecclesiology as a result of Florovsky's ecumenical exchanges with Anglicans and Reformed churches. In "Some Aspects of the Ecclesiology of Georges Vasilievich Florovsky," *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honour of Georges Florovsky*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 110. 195, ed. David Neiman and Margaret Schatkin (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1973) 422, 427. Also cf. G. Williams, "The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky," 293-294.

For a comparative analysis between Florovsky and Karl Barth, see Michael D.

weakness or limitation of the "Body" image, Florovsky admitted that the Church is composed of human personalities, who can never be merely regarded as elements or cells of a body. Each person is in direct and immediate union with Christ in the Church since the "idea of the organism must be supplemented by the idea of a symphony of personalities, in which the mystery of the Holy Trinity is reflected (cf. John 17.21, 23)."¹²

Preference and Precedence of the Images

Florovsky characterized the People of God image as pneumatological, whereas the Body of Christ image is obviously christological. This treatment of the images led to a dilemma when he rhetorically asked which of the two should be the starting point in ecclesiology. This is my concern in describing his "trinitarian synthesis." He wrote:

Should we start just with the fact (or "phenomenon") of the Church's being a "community," or *koinōnia*, and then investigate [its] "structure" and "notes"? Or should we rather start with Christ, the God Incarnate, and investigate the implications of the total dogma of the Incarnation, including the glory of the Risen and Ascended Lord, who sitteth on the right hand of the Father?¹³

Florovsky's preference for a christological starting point in ecclesiology is obvious from this

Peterson, "Georges Florovsky and Karl Barth: The Theological Encounters," *American Theological Library Association, Summary of Proceedings* 47 (1993) 141-165.

¹² "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 67.

¹³ "Christ and His Church," 165.

quotation. He affirmed that the principles for constructing a theology of the Church are very relevant in that they determine the pattern of exposition, and indicate which of the two images should be given preference or precedence.¹⁴

There is no contradiction, he continued, between the two formulas—"in the Spirit" (pneumatological) or "in Christ" (christological)—but the latter one should take precedence over the former. He insisted on not reducing or limiting the "economy of the Son" in favour of the "economy of the Holy Spirit" as the Son always has a priority over the Spirit, and because the Church is the Church of Jesus Christ and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son (John

¹⁴ Ibid. 165. According to Florovsky, certain approaches like Johann A. Möhler's, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (1825) [*The Unity of the Church or the Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, ed. and trans. Peter C. Erb, (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1996)] and Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860), in *The Church is One* [Russ. orig. *Церковь одна*] (Seattle, Wash.: St. Nectarios, 1979), stressed the pneumatological aspect too much. Cf. Aidan Nichols, "Georgii Vasil'evich Florovskii (1893-1979)," *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev (1893-1966)* (New York: Cambridge University, 1989) 159; G. Williams, "The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky," 315.

Yves Congar, in discussing the East's general criticism that Western theology was too christological, referred to a review by Florovsky which surprisingly stated that Möhler's ecclesiology was typical of "Western theology" in that it lacked "christological foundation." In "The Spirit, the Spirit of Christ: Christomonism and the 'Filioque,'" *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (San Francisco: Harper and Row, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986) 121, n.45. Florovsky's review is in "Книга Мёлера о церкви." *Путь* 7 (April, 1927) 128-130.

16.13-14).¹⁵ The Church has its personal centre only in Christ, and it is not an incarnation of the Holy Spirit nor merely a Spirit-filled community.¹⁶

It may happen ... that a starting point unfortunately chosen may cause a very serious distortion of the total theological perspective and preclude the normal development of the inquiry. It is but fair to suggest that this has actually happened in many cases when the doctrine of the Church has been treated without any organic relation to the Incarnate life and Redemptive sacrifice of the Lord of the Church. The Church has been too often represented rather as a community of those who believe in Christ and follow him than as his own "body," in which he is continually active and acting "through the Spirit," in order to "recapitulate" all things in himself.¹⁷

The Church is most importantly the Body of the Incarnate Lord because "unity in the Spirit" is precisely our '*incorporation*' into Christ, which is the *ultimate* reality of Christian existence."¹⁸ This preference for the Body of Christ image is one area which reflected his

¹⁵ "Christ and His Church," 168. In this article, he argued that Vladimir Lossky's synthesis between christology and pneumatology was unacceptable. I discuss Florovsky's critique at length in the section below: "The Problem of a Synthesis." See additional references in Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 167-168; and Leouvier, *Perspectives russes*, 65-66.

¹⁶ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 67.

¹⁷ "Christ and His Church," 165.

¹⁸ "On the History of Ecclesiology," 12.

christological emphasis in his "ecclesiological synthesis,"¹⁹ while a second area occurred in his reflections on the founding of the Church.

Ecclesiology as a Chapter of Christology—The Corporate Christ

In some of his earlier writings (c. 1930–1940s), Florovsky located the founding of the Church at Pentecost, the event of the descent of the Spirit on the Twelve and on the community.²⁰

Strictly speaking, the Messianic Community, gathered by Jesus the Christ, was not yet the perfect Church, before his Passion and Resurrection, before the "promise of the Father" was sent upon it and "was endued with the power from on high," "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (cf. Luke 24.49 and Acts 1.4-5).²¹

The Holy Spirit's descent completed the Church into the perfect Body of Christ, likened by Florovsky to a mystical consecration or Baptism of the Church.²² The Holy Spirit was sent to witness and to seal the victory of Christ's death and resurrection. Pentecost was the mysterious foundation and consecration of the Church when all the prophecies about the

¹⁹ Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 256.

²⁰ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62; and "The Sacrament of Pentecost," *Creation and Redemption, CW*, 3: 189.

²¹ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62.

²² *Ibid.* 62.

Church were fulfilled. In this context, Florovsky said that the sacramental life of the Church becomes the continuation of Pentecost because it is the fullness and source of all the sacraments and sacramental actions.²³

In a later work (c.1969), Florovsky somewhat modified this position, commenting that to maintain that the Church was founded at Pentecost was strange because the great sacrament of the Church, the Eucharist, had been instituted before Pentecost.²⁴ In noting the centrality of the Eucharist in the Church's life and worship, by implication Florovsky could have been suggesting that the founding of the Church occurred at the Last Supper. However, if one wanted to locate the origin of the Church then, for Florovsky, one should look to the incarnation. In the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this same Lord though now glorified, returns to his Church to abide with it until the end of time. This change in position on the founding of the Church occurred in the later 1940s, and was based on Florovsky's notion that the Church is "the extension and the fullness of the holy incarnation, or rather the life of the Son" where all humankind is united or incorporated into God through Christ in the Spirit.²⁵

This incorporation into God is expressed concretely as incorporation into the

²³ Ibid. 62; "The Sacrament of Pentecost," 189-190.

²⁴ "The Image of the Church," 103; cf. "The New Vision of the Church's Reality," *John XXIII Lectures: Byzantine Christian Heritage*, G. Florovsky et al., 2 vols. (Bronx: Fordham, 1969) 2: 108.

²⁵ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 64; cf. "The Catholicity of the Church," 38.

Church through the mysteries of Baptism and the Eucharist. This implies that one cannot be a Christian alone, but only within a community.²⁶

Baptism and the Eucharist are the two "social sacraments" of the Church, and in them, the true meaning of Christian "togetherness" is continually revealed and sealed. Or more emphatically, the sacraments constitute the Church. Only in the sacraments does the Christian Community pass beyond the purely human measure and become the Church.²⁷

Here the Eucharist or Baptism "makes the Church" be what it is. The Son of God became a person so that all by the mystery of divinization (*theosis*) might become the children of God. Christ enters his glory as an individual person, which then results in a call for all to be "in" and "with" him.²⁸ This latter event makes Christ a "corporate" entity, who needs his people in order to be the Body of Christ. Being in communion in the Church means enclosing "the many within our own ego. Therein lies the similarity with the Divine Oneness of the Holy Trinity."²⁹ We are thus "corporate" yet "person-al."³⁰ Especially in the Eucharist, the

²⁶ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 59; "The Worshipping Church," *The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber, 1969) 21; "Christ and His Church," 161. Cf. G. Williams, "The Neo-Patristic Synthesis," 294.

²⁷ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 61. Cf. "Christ and His Church," 167.

²⁸ "The Catholicity of the Church," 38.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 43; "The Worshipping Church," 22ff.

"sacrament of meeting or participation," we become one body in each other.³¹ Here we see him speaking in terms of what contemporary theology calls "communion ecclesiology." This notion of Christ as a "corporate person" is a notion that Zizioulas borrowed from Florovsky, and made the core of his communion ecclesiology.

Although there was a tendency in Florovsky to say that Jesus Christ is the Head, and the Church is the Body, he did at times state that Christ is both Head (divine) and Body (human).³² He maintained this in order to uphold the Chalcedonian premise that all Orthodox belief evolves from the dogma of Chalcedon.³³ He referred to this aspect when speaking of the eucharistic thanksgiving prayer (*anaphora*) addressed to the Father, where there is a "personal encounter" of the community with Christ, and where Christ is the one offering and the one being offered. "Christ is never alone" because the "Redeemer and the redeemed belong together inseparably."³⁴ Christ is both the "One" who is also the "many,"

³¹ "Таїнство собранія, таїнство общенія" in "Евхаристія и соборность," *Путь* 19 (Nov. 1929) 7, 8 ["The Eucharist and Catholicity," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach*, *CW*, 13: 48, 49]; "The Worshipping Church," 35.

³² "The Church and the Communion of Saints," 82.

³³ "Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church," 24. See Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 112, although his reference to this in n.4 is incorrect. Cf. also "The Eucharist and Catholicity," 49.

³⁴ "Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church," 25.

and he fulfills the role of "Mediator" (cf. John 1.18).³⁵ When Florovsky said in an earlier article that Christ's victory consisted in creating the Church,³⁶ it might seem that he envisioned Christ as an individual (the "one"), who then becomes corporate (the "many") in the creation of the Church or in the resurrection.³⁷ However, in later articles, he clarified this by saying that Christ is both an individual (one) and a corporate person (many).

This pairing of the "one-many" in christology is simply the corollary of his Chalcedonian premise.

The Greek Fathers emphatically insist that the humanity of Christ was at once individual—it was *his* humanity—and yet comprehensive and inclusive.

Therefore, in the Incarnation, the whole humanity has been included in a certain indefinable way. But one thing is clear: in the West St. Augustine didn't consider Christ simply *a* man. In him potentially the whole of humanity was already contained.³⁸

This pivotal change occurred because of Christ's redemption of human nature, a position akin to Lossky's Christ redeeming nature.

³⁵ "The Last Things and the Last Events," *Creation and Redemption*, *CW*, 3: 249; "The Worshipping Church," 25.

³⁶ "Catholicity and the Church," 37.

³⁷ Cf. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 217.

³⁸ "The New Vision of the Church's Reality," 108; cf. "The Worshipping Church," 167.

Already by the virtue of the incarnation the rift had been overcome, humanity was no more inimical to God. It is united to God in the person of Christ, and it is this incarnational emphasis which makes comprehensible the further development of the doctrine of the image of the Body of Christ.³⁹

Christians are members of the fullness of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1.23), where Christ's identification with the (human) person is completed in Christ's death. This makes the Church an integral part of the definition of Christ.

So, the uniting of the two natures in the incarnation signalled the inclusion of all humanity into Christ's body and into his redemptive work. Since the Church participates in the Christ event in personal communion with him, Florovsky concluded in a well-known phrase: "Ecclesiology is but a chapter of Christology and part of the program of redemption."⁴⁰ Elsewhere, he wrote:

The theology of the Church is but a chapter and a vital chapter of Christology. And without this chapter Christology itself would not be complete.⁴¹

For him, citing Augustine, ecclesiology and christology must be correlated in the "inclusive

³⁹ "The New Vision of the Church's Reality," 108.

⁴⁰ "The Image of the Church," 103; cf. "Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church," 23, 25; "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 67.

⁴¹ Trans. mine from: "Le corps du Christ vivant: une interprétation orthodoxe de l'église," *La Sainte Église Universelle: Confrontation Oecuménique* (Neuchâtel/Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1948) 12.

doctrine of the 'whole Christ,'—*totus Christus, caput et corpus*.⁴² Such a position is possible in his "ecclesiological synthesis" because of Florovsky's understanding of the corporate nature of Jesus Christ.

The Problem of a Synthesis

Despite his preference for a christological approach in ecclesiology, Florovsky nevertheless tried to forge a synthesis between it and pneumatology. By describing the Church as an extension of the incarnation, he wrote that Christ "abides" continually in the

⁴² "Christ and His Church," 163. Although not noted in this text, the reference to Augustine is: *Joannis evangelium tractatus*, 28.1 (PL 35.1622): "Non enim Christus in capite et non in corpore, sed Christus totus in capite et corpore."

J.M.R Tillard reproduces and comments on key Augustinian texts dealing with the relationship of the Body of Christ and the Eucharist, in *Chair de l'Église, chair du Christ: Aux sources de l'écclésiologie de communion*, Théologie et sciences religieuses: Cogitatio fidei no. 168 (Paris: Cerf, 1992) 53-62f.

For an analysis of the interpretation of Augustine by Florovsky, and other Orthodox theologians of St. Sergius (Paris), consult Myroslaw Tatarzyn, *The Orthodox Theologians of L'Institut St. Serge, Paris and Their Perception of St. Augustine's Theology* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 1995) 146-179. Cf. also Jaroslav Pelikan, "Puti Russkogo Bogoslova: When Orthodoxy Comes West," *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honour of Georges Vasilievich Florovsky*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta no. 195, ed. David Neiman and Margaret Schatkin (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1973) 12-13; and Yves Congar, *L'Église de saint Augustin à l'époque moderne* (Paris: Cerf, 1996) 12f.

Church, or that he abides sacramentally in his Body, into which we are incorporated by the Spirit.⁴³ This abiding is also envisioned in terms of an "indwelling."⁴⁴ The Church is a community of those who abide and dwell in Christ, and in whom he himself is abiding and dwelling by the Spirit in a new way, a way in which the Spirit was not yet present in creation.⁴⁵ Christ is continually present in the Church through the Spirit because the "Holy Ghost does not descend upon earth again and again, but abides in the 'visible' and historical Church."⁴⁶ Our unity and communion in the Body of Christ are brought about by the Spirit who was sent to seal the victory of Christ. The Spirit is thus the principle of communion. Maintaining a balance between christology and pneumatology, Florovsky wrote that:

The Church is the unity of the charismatic life, of life in the Spirit. The source of this unity is hidden in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and in the mystery of Pentecost.⁴⁷

Further, in affirming that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology," Florovsky presented the redemption and reconciliation of humanity as solely the work of Christ, which is then

⁴³ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 63.

⁴⁴ "The Worshipping Church," 30.

⁴⁵ "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 30 and "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62.

⁴⁶ "The Catholicity of the Church," 45; and "On the History of Ecclesiology," 12-13.

⁴⁷ "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 31. An almost verbatim quote exists in "The Catholicity of the Church," 45.

offered to everyone by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ However, Florovsky expressed his dissatisfaction with his "trinitarian synthesis" between christology and pneumatology by admitting that:

One may at once ask whether these two approaches or manners could not be somehow integrated into an inclusive, synthesized whole. Indeed, this should be done, and one may hope and wish that this be done in fact. Yet, one does not yet see quite clearly, how this could and should be done.⁴⁹

This is the crucial issue in modern Orthodox theology, and the essence of this study, namely, to see how each theologian worked out this "trinitarian synthesis."

Shortly after Lossky's death (in 1958), and with the re-publication into English of his *Mystical Theology*, Florovsky had an opportunity to again review Lossky's work.⁵⁰ He spoke of the book as "refreshing," "provocative," and "stimulating," and credited it with being an original response to his call for a "neo-patristic synthesis." However, he also reserved some sharp criticisms of Lossky's theology. In the review, he spoke of Lossky's exaggerating the tension between East and West (the book's "manifold bias"), referring most likely to Lossky's position that the *filioque* was the sole dogmatic reason for the estrangement between the two Churches. One of the faults that Florovsky found with Lossky is that in developing a Christian philosophy, Lossky began not with a theology of Christ, but a theology of apophaticism. Florovsky commented:

⁴⁸ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62, 63.

⁴⁹ "Christ and His Church," 163.

⁵⁰ In *Journal of Religion* 38/3 (1958) 207-208.

Indeed, what warrant may a Christian theologian or a "Christian" philosopher have to speak of God, except the fact that "the Only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father" has *declared* the unfathomable mystery of the Divine life? Would it not be proper, therefore, to begin with an opening chapter on the Incarnation and the Person of the Incarnate, instead of following a rather "philosophical" order of thought: God, Creation, Created Being, and *Imago Dei*, etc., so as to arrive at christology only in the middle of the road? In fact, the christological chapter of Lossky's book (chap. vii, "The Economy of the Son") is the most controversial, and the same could be said of the chapter on the church (chap. ix, "Two Aspects of the Church").⁵¹

Despite such a critique, Florovsky concluded that "the book is excellent" because of the important subject matter that it addresses. In terms of this present study, Lossky's *Mystical Theology* systematically set out his synthesis between christology and pneumatology, and their relationship to nature and the person. This review by Florovsky once again highlighted his christological emphases based on his belief that all Orthodox belief evolves from the dogma of Chalcedon.

These criticisms continued Florovsky's earlier critique of Lossky. In saying that the "economy of the Son" should not be reduced to the "economy of the Spirit," Florovsky rejected Lossky's positing of the two economies of the Son and of the Spirit, saying that

⁵¹ Ibid. 208.

Lossky's "solution is hardly acceptable."⁵²

Although Lossky's theology is the subject of the next chapter, his contributions are based on the relationship between "nature" and "person." In the church, by virtue of the redemption of human nature, Christ unites all persons in their "nature." However, since the personal element of freedom is required to complete the process of divinization, Lossky affirmed that the Spirit is the one who both divinizes and diversifies each person. Lossky's position would thus be "one in Christ, multiple in the Spirit." Florovsky argued that it is not acceptable to distinguish so easily between nature and person, because "the implication seems to be that *only* in the Holy Spirit, and *not* in Christ, is human personality fully and ontologically (re-)established."⁵³ Lossky's "trinitarian synthesis," according to Florovsky, did "not leave enough room for the *personal relationship* of individuals *with Christ*."⁵⁴ Florovsky recognized the many nuances in Lossky's synthesis, and appreciated Lossky's concern for affirming that grace is the gift of the Spirit, and that human freedom in this schema is to be preserved, however, and here is Florovsky's doctrine of the *totus Christus*, "[one] may ask: is not the multiplicity of 'human *hypostases*' fully established by the personal 'communion' of the many with the One Christ?"⁵⁵ The relationship with Christ is identically a "personal encounter" with Christ (especially through the sacraments) and it is

⁵² "Christ and His Church," 168-170, at 168.

⁵³ Ibid. 168.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 168.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 169.

identically effected by the Spirit. Communion with Christ and amongst all persons is "personal" and is possible only in the communion of the Spirit. Here Florovsky was speaking in terms of a simultaneity between christology and pneumatology.

Florovsky thought that Lossky's approach was misleading because of its promoting the idea that persons are "necessarily" united via nature in Christ, yet "freely" they are persons in the Spirit. Florovsky also was weary of Lossky's conception of ecclesial institutions being rooted in christology, while the dynamic aspect pertained to the life of the Spirit, because that would imply that Christ is "*not dynamically present in the Church.*"⁵⁶ Florovsky's critique was that:

Almost everything that Mr. Lossky says is acceptable, but he says it in such a manner that the basic pattern of Ecclesiology is in danger of distortion.

There is some inadequacy precisely in his *christological* presuppositions. Mr. Lossky's chapters on the Church in his admirable book deserve serious attention, because they expose very clearly the dangers inherent in any attempt to reduce the christological pattern of ecclesiological doctrine. ... It must be stated therefore that no coherent Ecclesiology can be constructed unless *the centrality of Christ*, the Incarnate Lord and King of Glory, is admitted without any reservations.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ This position, Florovsky noted, could lead to errors in sacramental theology. In *ibid.* 169.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 170.

In this way Florovsky reiterated the notion that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology," even though in the same article he recognized some the limitations of his own approach, especially as they related to explaining how Christ and the Spirit are "present" in the Church.

The Eucharist and Time

Another problem that Florovsky encountered in his ecclesiology was that he presented both Christ and the Spirit as abiding in the historical Church. In a sense this could lead to their presence becoming historicized.⁵⁸ This would also pose for him difficulties in explaining the nature of the *epiklēsis*. In Florovsky's "ecclesiological synthesis," since the descent of the Spirit is perpetuated from Pentecost in the sacramental life of the Church,⁵⁹ the Holy Spirit does not descend again and again, but "abides" continually in the historical Church and in the communicants of the Eucharist.⁶⁰ Ever since the incarnation, God no longer guides the faithful from "outside" of history, but from "inside" history: "It is precisely his abiding presence which makes the Church what it is, that is, the Body of Christ."⁶¹ We

⁵⁸ McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 214.

⁵⁹ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62; and "The Worshipping Church," 35.

⁶⁰ "The Catholicity of the Church," 45.

⁶¹ "The Worshipping Church," 28.

are incorporated into this Body pre-eminently in the celebration of the Eucharist.⁶² Thus the Spirit and Christ are both active and present in history, which Florovsky realized is another problem in his synthesis, for he had to indicate how this is possible. He lamented that the "crucial and ultimate problem of ecclesiology is precisely to describe and explain the mode and character of this 'Presence.'"⁶³

By virtue of this notion of "presence," Florovsky explained that the Eucharist is a memory (*anamnēsis*) of the past event of the Last Supper, which is mysteriously continuing in our time until Christ comes again. The Eucharist is "a complete reflection of the single great Eucharist, performed by our Saviour on the eve of his voluntary sufferings at the Last Supper."⁶⁴ Each celebration of the Eucharist is "the Last Supper itself."⁶⁵ In the eucharistic synaxis, creation is becoming heaven—the beginning and the end are united. However, no final goal has yet been attained, since the Church is still *in via*, despite the ultimate goal being already revealed.⁶⁶ The Church is still expecting the Kingdom to come in the future

⁶² "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 30; "The New Vision of the Church's Reality," 110.

⁶³ "Christ and His Church," 168. Cf. Leouvier, *Perspectives russes*, 64-65.

⁶⁴ "Евхаристія и соборность," 4 ["The Eucharist and Catholicity," 46]; cf. "The Worshipping Church," 28.

⁶⁵ "The Worshipping Church," 29, 36.

⁶⁶ "Евхаристія и соборность," 19. And "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 68. See also George Maloney, "The Ecclesiology of Father Georges Florovsky," *Diakonia* 4/1 (1969) 22.

because the end is "paradoxically anticipated."⁶⁷ The Church is both "visible" and "invisible," historical and eternal, all by virtue of the Chalcedonian formula of the two natures in Christ.⁶⁸ Again, the christological aspect in ecclesiology comes into play, but his rooting each celebration of the Eucharist in the past tends to downplay its link with the eschatological future.

Related to Florovsky's concern for history and time is the notion of "event." He held that Christian faith is not grounded in ideas, but "events." God calls us through various events in salvation history.⁶⁹ Creation is an event, which was called into being for a purpose, namely for the glory of God.⁷⁰ The fall and redemption too are "events," the latter being the "crucial event" because "salvation is the only purpose of God."⁷¹ Since the Church is the "unity of charismatic life,"⁷² one wonders if Florovsky would also describe the Church as an event, and how he might have explained this in terms of "presence" had he been satisfied with his trinitarian synthesis. Speaking of the Church as an event is also a theme that the

⁶⁷ "The Worshipping Church," 33, 36.

⁶⁸ "ДОМЪ ОТЧІЙ," 67, 71 ["The House of the Father," 61-62, 66]. See his "Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church," 24 and the comments on evolving all of Orthodox belief out of the teachings of Chalcedon.

⁶⁹ "The Worshipping Church," 25.

⁷⁰ "The Last Things and the Last Events," 244, 246.

⁷¹ Ibid. 248 and 257.

⁷² "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 31; cf. "The House of the Father," 58-59.

other theologians developed, specifically related to Nissiotis's and Zizioulas's notions of the "epicletic" nature of the Church.

Apostolicity

Consistent with his concern for historical time, and his theology of "presence," Florovsky linked Pentecost with the apostolicity of the Church by affirming that "Pentecost becomes eternal in the Apostolic Succession, that is in the uninterruptibility of hierarchical ordinations in which every part of the Church is at every moment organically united with the primary source."⁷³ Hierarchy or ministry, continued in the apostolic succession, is not simply a juridical or canonical infrastructure of the Church, but rather, it is primarily a charismatic principle.⁷⁴ Ministers, although acting as representatives of the faithful, are primarily acting as the representatives of Christ in a ministry of sacraments. In Florovsky's ecclesiology, the bishop and the priests in communion with him are the chief organs of apostolic succession and the guarantors of apostolicity. In and through ministers in the apostolic succession, Christ, the only true and High Priest, is continually performing and accomplishing his eternal, pastoral and priestly mission.⁷⁵ Apostolicity, as an uninterrupted hierarchical succession for Florovsky, equally included the dimension of the loyalty of the Church to apostolic tradition and doctrine, so that the Church's apostolicity can be viewed

⁷³ Cf. "The Sacrament of Pentecost," 190.

⁷⁴ "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 31.

⁷⁵ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 65.

as a "living image of eternity in time."⁷⁶ Again, this was based on his view that Christ's Spirit does not descend again and again upon the Church, but "abides" continually in the apostolicity of the Church.⁷⁷ In this way, Florovsky was able to speak of the apostolicity of the Church as the continuation of Pentecost.

Catholicity and the Local Church

Apostolicity is related to another mark of the Church, namely, the Church's "catholicity" or "sobornicity." Catholicity became a dominant theme in Florovsky's ecclesiology, and he closely related it to the unity of the Church.⁷⁸ Unity and catholicity are two inseparable aspects of the same reality: one Church in a plurality of members.⁷⁹ Catholicity does not denote a qualitative or geographical conception of the Church, for the universality of the Church is the consequence, not the cause or foundation of the Church's catholicity. Catholicity denotes the inner wholeness and integrity of the Church's life and witness, and is descriptive of the inner quality (and not the outer universality) of an organism, thus belonging to the Church as an ontological principle, and not an empirical

⁷⁶ "The Catholicity of the Church," 45.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 45.

⁷⁸ Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 187-207; Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 156.

⁷⁹ Leouvier, *Perspectives russes*, 83.

mark.⁸⁰ It denotes a unity in the Spirit, where all are baptized into one body, but it also means a certain unity of life, and union of love and communion.⁸¹ The Church envelops the faithful of any culture and all times such that the sobornicity of the Church demands that all be of "one heart and one soul,"⁸² in opposition to individualism and schism, while stressing the integrity and comprehensiveness of faith and doctrine.

In catholicity's relationship to apostolicity, Florovsky wrote that it is through the episcopate that every particular and local church is included in the catholic fullness of the Church.

Every local Church therefore finds its centre and its unity in the bishop, not so much because he is its local head and pastor, but because through him it is included in the mysterious "*sobornost*" of the Church-body for all times.⁸³

The local church is thus not simply a "part" but it is a "microcosm" of the whole Church.⁸⁴ This is where he differed in approach from one of his Russian Orthodox contemporaries, Nicholas Afanas'ev, by affirming both the importance of the local and universal Church.

⁸⁰ "The Catholicity of the Church," 40-41. See also Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 156-157.

⁸¹ "The Catholicity of the Church," 42-43. See also Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 187ff.

⁸² "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 33. Cf. "Домъ Отчій," 72; "The Catholicity of the Church," 40.

⁸³ "The Sacrament of Pentecost," 191.

⁸⁴ "Евхаристія и соборность," 14. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 161-162.

Florovsky stated:

In the Eucharist the fullness of the Church invisibly but truly reveals itself. Each liturgy is performed in connection with the entire Church and somehow on its behalf, not only on behalf of the people at hand. ... For each "little [local] church" is not only a part, but a microcosm of the whole Church, inseparable from its unity and completeness. The entire Church therefore attends and participates in every liturgy, mystically, mysteriously, but truly. ... In the eucharistic prayer, the Church contemplates and recognizes itself as the common and whole Body of Christ [*totus Christus*].⁸⁵

The Eucharist is not performed only "in" and "for" the local church, but also with the entire Church in all places and times, which means that there arises an intrinsic relation of apostolicity, catholicity and the unity of the Church.

Unity and Ministry

The unity of the Church is reflective of the unity of the Triune God, of the unity of love and grace of the three Persons in the Tri-Personal God. Unity is also of the Church's

⁸⁵ From *ibid.* 13-14 [*Ibid.* 52]. Cf. the translation in Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 161. One can even here argue that Florovsky's ecclesiology influenced Afanas'ev's, like in Peter Plank, *Die Eucharistieversammlung als Kirche: Zur Entstehung und Entfaltung der eucharistischen Ekklesiologie Nikolaj Afanas'evs (1893-1966)* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1980) 79-81; and the comments in Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 161.

unity with the Church's Head-Christ, in his Body, so that all may be one (John 17.21-23).⁸⁶ This unity is consequently expressed through the centrality of the Eucharist in the Church's worship and life, and is predicative of the unity expressed in the apostolicity and catholicity of the Church.

For us, separated and detached, this union and unity in the image of the Trinity, Consubstantial and Indivisible, is possible only in Christ, in his love, in the unity of his Body, in the sharing of his cup. In the unity of the Catholic Church, the consubstantiality of the Trinity is mysteriously reflected; and through the consubstantiality of the Trinity and the penetration of Divine Life with a multitude of believers, one soul and one heart is rendered one (Acts 4.32). And the Church realizes this unity and catholicity primarily in the sacrament of the Eucharist.⁸⁷

In various places, Florovsky mentioned that the Church is the image of the Triune God in creation.⁸⁸ He described the unity, yet diversity, of the Church in terms of the unity (consubstantiality) of the Triune God (diversity of persons). The unity of the Church is an image of the Triune God.⁸⁹ To be Christian means primarily to be in the Church, for one

⁸⁶ "The Catholicity of the Church," 39.

⁸⁷ "Евхаристія и соборность," 9 ["The Eucharist and Catholicity," 49].

⁸⁸ Ibid. 9.

⁸⁹ Cf. Rowan Williams, "Eastern Orthodox Theology: Three Orthodox Theologians: G.V. Florovsky," 2:167.

cannot be a Christian alone but only as a member of the Body.⁹⁰ This intuition is taken from the fact that Baptism is an incorporation into the Body of Christ and that the Eucharist is the mystery of communion with God. Consequently, characteristic of Florovsky's ecclesiology, is that he continually emphasized the centrality of the Eucharist as principally affirming unity with God and unity amongst brethren and other local churches.

In Florovsky's ecclesiology, the bishop is a primary builder and minister of unity, along with the priests in communion with him, through the celebration of the eucharistic meal. Yet unity is expressed in the one celebrating the Eucharist, whether a priest or bishop. Despite the preceding statements, that the bishop is the centre of unity in the Church, Florovsky also said that the bishop has a "higher" role to play in building Church unity, above that of the Eucharist. This is manifested in the bishop's role as "ordainer."⁹¹ He has power of sacramental action above that possessed by a priest, and priests and bishops act not so much *in persona ecclesiae* as *in persona Christi*.⁹²

Schism and Disunity

The unity of the Church in Christ allowed Florovsky to write that "outside of the

⁹⁰ "The Church and the Communion of Saints," 81.

⁹¹ "The Sacrament of Pentecost," 190ff. See Chamberas, "Some Aspects of the Ecclesiology," 431; Leouvier, *Perspectives russes*, 90-91.

⁹² "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 65-66.

Church there is no salvation."⁹³ For him, this expression is a tautology that says "salvation is the Church." On the other hand, and this is more relevant for ecumenism, Florovsky had to address the problem of disunity. Florovsky made it clear that he believed that the Orthodox Church is "the Church, i.e. the true Church and the only true Church."⁹⁴ However, he conceded that the Orthodox Church is not yet the perfect Church and that it is on its way of pilgrimage to God. This statement would have caused controversy amongst other Christians, and brought to the fore the problem of Church unity and schism (or estrangement).⁹⁵ Disunity is contrary to the nature and purpose of the Church.⁹⁶

⁹³ "The Catholicity of the Church," 38.

⁹⁴ "The True Church," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach, CW*, 13: 134. In the same work he wrote: "I am therefore compelled to regard all other Christian Churches as deficient, and in many cases I can identify these deficiencies accurately enough. Therefore, for me, Christian reunion is simply universal conversion to Orthodoxy. I have no confessional loyalty; my loyalty belongs to the *Una Sancta*."

References to this position are quite numerous in his writings: "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem," *The Ecumenical Review* 2 (1950) 157; "The Quest for Christian Unity and the Orthodox Church," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach, CW*, 13: 139; and "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 36.

See also George C. Papademetriou, "Father Georges Florovsky, A Contemporary Church Father," *American Theological Library Association, Summary of Proceedings* 47 (1993) 166-175.

⁹⁵ Cf. Christoph Künkel, "'The True Church is Not Yet the Perfect Church.' Ökumenisches Denken und Handeln bei Georges Florovsky," *Tausend Jahre Christentum in Rußland: Zum Millennium der Taufe der Kiever Rus'*, ed. Karl C. Felmy (Göttingen:

Further, developing his ecclesiology based on the principle of *oikonomia* (economy), Florovsky admitted that he could not concede that those outside the canonical boundaries of the Orthodox Church are excluded from salvation—in this, the ultimate judgement belongs to Christ.⁹⁷

Since the Church is earthly and visible and there is still no completion and perfection of the entire Church, which the Lord decreed shall exist until the final judgement of all creation, it creates and knows only within its limits, not judging the remainder of mankind ... , and only recognizes as lost—that is, as not belonging to [it]—those who have left [it] of their own accord. The remainder of mankind, either outside of the Church or connected to [it] with knots which God will not allow [it] to unravel, [it] concedes to the judgement of the great day.⁹⁸

As a mystical organism, Florovsky admitted that the Church simply cannot be defined in canonical and legal terms alone.

If the charismatic limits of the Church do not coincide with the canonical, he asked

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988) 583-590.

⁹⁶ "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem," 152.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 156, 159ff. For an exposition of his notion of "economy" and its relation to non-Orthodox Christians and their salvation, see "The Boundaries of the Church," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach, CW*, 13: 33ff.

⁹⁸ Florovsky's quote of Khomiakov's, *The Church is One*, in "Schism and the Branch Theory," *Ecumenism I: A Doctrinal Approach, CW*, 13: 35.

whether or not it was correct to say that "where the sacraments are accomplished, there is the Church."⁹⁹ Here is another parallel with Afanas'ev's ecclesiology, one which raises issues about the recognition of the sacraments in non-Orthodox Churches, and whether or not the Holy Spirit is present or active within the other Churches and their sacraments. Florovsky replied that:

As a mystical organism, as the sacramental Body of Christ, the Church cannot be adequately described in canonical terms or categories alone. It is impossible to state or discern the true limits of the Church simply by canonical signs and marks. ... In her sacramental, mysterious existence the Church surpasses canonical measurements. For that reason a canonical cleavage does not immediately signify mystical impoverishment and desolation.¹⁰⁰

He concluded that:

It is sufficient to state that there are occasions when by the very form of her activity the Church brings one to understand that the sacraments of sectarians and even of heretics are valid, that the sacraments can be celebrated *outside the strict canonical limits of the Church*.¹⁰¹

For example, he stated that Orthodox churches "customarily" do not re-baptize any non-

⁹⁹ "The Boundaries of the Church," 37.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 37.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 37.

Orthodox "schismatics" received into Orthodoxy; that adherents are often received without Chrismation; and that sometimes ministers are received into Orthodoxy in their existing orders.¹⁰²

Holiness and Eschatology

In the same way that the Church is a visible, historical society, it is also the Body of Christ. Both aspects exist at one and the same time. The Church of sinners is a Church of the redeemed where no final goal has yet been attained, but in which the ultimate reality has been revealed. The ultimate reality of salvation and eternal life in Christ is available to all members of the Church, but only in provisional forms (such as the sacraments).¹⁰³ "This constitutes the mystery of the Church: a visible 'society' of frail [persons] is an organism of the Divine Grace."¹⁰⁴ In the Church, the salvation of humanity is perfected, and even though the final goal (of eternal life) has not yet been fully attained, the ultimate reality of salvation and the *eschaton* has already been manifested or granted in the sacraments. The Church is a fellowship in holy things, where the holiness and unity of the Church are effected through the sacraments as outward symbols of divine grace.

¹⁰² Ibid. 37ff. On the question of "re-baptism" in Orthodoxy, see John Erickson, "The Reception of Non-Orthodox Into the Orthodox Church: Contemporary Practice," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 41/1 (1997) 1-17.

¹⁰³ Cf. "The Historical Problem of a Definition of the Church," 31.

¹⁰⁴ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 68.

For the Church is a sacramental society. *Sacramental* means no less than "eschatological." To *eschaton* does not mean primarily *final*, in the temporal series of events; it means rather *ultimate* (decisive); and the ultimate is being realized within the stress of historical happenings and events.¹⁰⁵

The Church can consequently be called an "eschatological community."¹⁰⁶ The Church, as regenerated and transfigured humankind, is formed in order that humanity might become like God, in imitation and union with Christ. In Florovsky's ecclesiology, the Eucharist as a central sacrament of the Church is the basis for the Church's holiness, granted yet not fully realized. The Eucharist is the real continuation of the Last Supper, and it is the sacramental participation of the Church in the eschatological Kingdom.¹⁰⁷ All persons, in the communion of saints, share in "anticipation, but really—the everlasting life."¹⁰⁸ The holiness of the Church also does not consequently refer to any human achievements, but rather to the gift of God, available only in and through Christ's Church, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁹ The holiness of the Church is related to Pentecost, where the Spirit is promised to abide with the Church until the end of time, and as mentioned, one can be a "saint" not as an

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 68.

¹⁰⁶ "The Patristic Age and Eschatology: An Introduction," 63; "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem," 156. Künkel, *Totus Christus*, 255ff.

¹⁰⁷ "The New Vision of the Church's Reality," 110.

¹⁰⁸ "The Last Things and the Last Events," 259.

¹⁰⁹ "The Church and the Communion of Saints," 83.

individual, but only in communion with others in the Church.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

One of the key areas of Florovsky's theology that has been frequently repeated in this study is his theological principle that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology." Any definition of Christ must necessarily include a definition of the Church, for the Church is an integral part of the identity of Christ. Some of the language used in this respect has characterized Christ as a corporate person, who is "one" yet also the "many." The Church's experience of this "one / many-ness" is principally experienced in the eucharistic celebration, since the sacraments make the Church. Each local church is also truly a Church, by virtue of its catholicity and in communion or in unity with other churches. Communion with other local churches, and with the apostolic Church, is founded on the notion of the apostolicity of each Church, and since each Church is the Body of Christ, it is also holy and catholic and on its way to its eschatological goal. There is thus a christological preference in his "trinitarian and ecclesiological syntheses."

Florovsky also wrote that each Eucharist is the historical Last Supper, yet it is also the eschatological one. He tended to stress more on what was accomplished in the historical past and present than on what is constantly being accomplished anew in the eschatological

¹¹⁰ "The Church: Her Nature and Task," 62. This in part refers to his saying that "salvation is the Church" or "outside the Church there is no salvation." In "The Catholicity of the Church," 38.

future. This concern with historical time emerged out of his discussions on the "presence" (abiding) of Christ and the Spirit in the Church, and was related to his attempt at a synthesis between christology and pneumatology. Florovsky was disappointed, as we have seen, in not being able to bring christology and pneumatology adequately into a coherent "trinitarian synthesis." He recognized that this shortcoming also extended to problems in his ecclesiology. These themes should be kept in mind when comparing his theology with that of the other theologians.

CHAPTER 3

VLADIMIR LOSSKY

- NATURE, PERSON AND RECIPROCITY -

Lossky was one of the first to respond to Florovsky's call for a return to the Fathers.¹ Lossky did not, however, emulate Florovsky's approach in developing a systematic and coherent defence of his position,² and he has sometimes been criticized for oversimplifying his theology to fit into a systematic framework.³ These criticisms should be

¹ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 222. A.M. Allchin, "Vladimir Lossky: le témoignage d'un théologien orthodoxe," *Contacts* 31 (1979) 221-222 also has brief references to other Russian Orthodox theologians of the time, like Bulgakov and Berdia'ev. Again, for a comparison of some of these Russian Orthodox theologians, especially in their analysis of Augustine, see Tataryn, *The Orthodox Theologians of l'Institut St. Serge*. As an aside, both Lossky and Florovsky were directly involved in the sophiology controversy with Bulgakov at the Institut St. Serge (Paris), which occasioned Lossky's critique of Bulgakov in *Спор о Софии* [The Controversy about Sophia].

² Rowan Williams, "The *Via Negativa* and the Foundations of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of V.N. Lossky," 111-112.

³ Allchin, "Vladimir Lossky: The Witness of an Orthodox Theologian," 208.

tempered by the fact that some of his work and ideas were left unfinished owing to his early death.⁴ Nevertheless, in terms of his "trinitarian and ecclesiological syntheses," much of present-day Eastern Orthodox theology has been greatly influenced by his theological approach.⁵

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the trinitarian theology that is the basis for Lossky's synthesis between christology and pneumatology. Key here are his concepts of "nature" and the "person," which are at the root of his trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, as well as his discussions on the *filioque*. The chapter then proceeds to his analysis of the "economy of the Son" and the "economy of the Holy Spirit," and each's relationship to ecclesiology, specifically to unity and diversity, as well as to the theological notion of catholicity. Lossky recognized the importance of the doctrine of the Church when he stated that "ecclesiological problems increasingly determine the preoccupations of

⁴ For an indication of this, see the reflections of one his students, in Olivier Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 90-94. This appears to be a revised version of an article which appeared originally under the title, "Vladimir Lossky, un théologien de la personne et du Saint-Esprit," *Messenger* 8/29 (1959) 81-86, 137-206.

⁵ Rowan Williams, "Eastern Orthodox Theology: V.N. Lossky," 163. Compare also Allchin, "Vladimir Lossky: le témoignage d'un théologien orthodoxe," 228. See also the other laudatory articles in the special issue on Lossky, in *Contacts* 31/105 (1979), as well as Zizioulas's praise in *Being as Communion*, 124. John Meyendorff also speaks very favourably of Lossky's contribution to modern Orthodox theology, in "Lossky, le militant," *Contacts* 31 (1979) 211. Cf. Waclaw Hryniewicz, "Der pneumatologische Aspekt der Kirche aus orthodoxer Sicht," *Catholica* 31 (1977) 134.

modern Christian thought."⁶ The analytical approach here follows the structure of the chapter on Florovsky.

God in Trinity

The basis of Lossky's trinitarian theology concentrated on the distinction of Persons within the Trinity in terms of *ousia* (nature) and *hypostasis* (person). There is an identity of the three (Father, Son, and Spirit) through their common nature, yet the three are distinguished by virtue of their Persons and their origins of procession.⁷ The one nature and the three Persons are presented as simultaneous to one another in the immanent Trinity, and not one as being prior to the other.⁸ "The 'one' and the 'many' find themselves gathered and circumscribed in the Trinity."⁹ Consequently, one concern in this present chapter is whether or not Lossky posited such a "simultaneity" between the Spirit and Christ in the economy, or whether such a "simultaneity" also existed in his distinctions between "nature and "person."

For Lossky, the notion of *hypostases* in the immanent Trinity meant not so much "individuals" as "persons." He commented that:

Indeed, our ideas of human personality, of that *personal* quality which makes

⁶ *IR*, 67 [*IL*, 72].

⁷ *TM*, 48ff.

⁸ *IR*, 77. See Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 37, 59.

⁹ *TM*, 46 [*MT*, 47], ital. mine.

every human being unique, to be expressed only in terms of itself: this idea of *person* comes to us from Christian theology.¹⁰

These divine Persons exist without commingling or mixture, despite their unity being found in their common nature. Although a human person's activities and existence are distinct from those of other persons, this is not the case in the Trinity. In the Trinity, there exists a single will, power or operation, which Lossky envisaged in terms of each Person indwelling the Other, thereby ensuring distinctiveness of personhood yet unity in nature.¹¹ The Persons are distinguished by their eternal generation or procession, which is expressed in traditional Orthodox theology in terms of the properties of being unbegotten (Father), of filiation (Son) and of procession (Spirit). So the only "characteristic of the *hypostases* which we can state to be exclusively proper to each, and which is never found in the others, by reason of their consubstantiality, is thus the relation of origin. Nevertheless, this relation must be understood in an apophatic sense."¹² This mystery implies that we in no way understand the

¹⁰ Ibid. 52 [Ibid. 53].

¹¹ Ibid. 52-53.

¹² Ibid. 53-54, cf. 62 [MT, 54, cf. 63]. One should note that Lossky often used "mystical" as synonymous with "apophatic." For an analysis of Lossky's apophatic approach, consult Rowan Williams, "The *Via Negativa* and the Foundations of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of V.N. Lossky," 95-118 as well as the comparison of Lossky's apophaticism with Heidegger's philosophy, in Tomasz Węclawski, *Zwischen Sprache und Schweigen: Eine Erörterung der theologischen Apophase im Gespräch mit Vladimir N. Lossky und Martin Heidegger* (Munich: Minerva-Publikation, 1985). One can also refer to two review essays of *TM*, namely Illyd Trethowan, "Lossky on Mystical

manner of processions, but that we are able to say that these divine Persons are indeed "one" and yet "diverse."

In such a context Lossky proceeded to a discussion of the *filioque*. He was quite forward in stating that the "*filioque* was the primordial cause, the only dogmatic cause of the breach between East and West, the other doctrinal disputes were but its consequences,"¹³ or that the *filioque* was "the sole dogmatic grounds for the separation of East and West," adding that other dogmatic issues "are more or less dependant upon that original issue."¹⁴ His criticism of the West was that its trinitarian theology began from the common nature, and then proceeded to an analysis of the three Persons. Historically, the Orthodox thus interpreted in the *filioque* the tendency to emphasize the unity of nature to the detriment of distinction of Persons so that the hypostatic characteristics of paternity, filiation, and procession became swallowed up in the one nature (essence). The East has generally maintained that the principle of unity in the Trinity is the Father, and not the divine nature (or essence). The East's rejection of the *filioque*, for Lossky, relied upon the premise that the *filioque* seemed to impinge upon the monarchy (*monarchia*) of the Father, by either positing two principles of the Godhead, or by basing the unity of the Godhead primarily on

Theology," *Downside Review* 92 (1974) 239-247; and a somewhat less favourable critique by S. Tyszkiewicz, "La spiritualité de l'Église d'Orient selon Vladimir Lossky," *Gregorianum* 31 (1950) 605-612.

¹³ *TM*, 55, trans mine. See the comments in Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 76-90; and Jean-René Bouchet, "Vladimir N. Lossky, homme d'église," *Contacts* 31 (1979) 230-238.

¹⁴ *IR*, 67, cf. 72-76 [*IL*, 71, cf. 77-80].

the common nature, "which thus overshadows the persons and transforms them into relations within the unity of the essence."¹⁵ He continued:

For the West, the relations diversified the primordial unity. For the East, they signified at one and the same time the diversity and the unity, because they had reference to the Father who is principle, as well as recapitulation (*synkephalaiōsis*), of the Trinity.¹⁶

Here he again reiterated that the Persons and nature are, in one sense, simultaneous, without one being prior to the other, and that the East was defending a conception of the Trinity "which they considered to be more concrete, more personal."¹⁷ By placing the emphasis on the Father's monarchy, Lossky did not maintain that Persons precede nature, nor that the Son and the Holy Spirit are somehow inferior to the Father (which is a form of subordinationism), but his tendency was to distinguish between person and nature, and to preserve their mysterious equivalence.

Soteriology and Uncreated Energies

This personalist tendency of Lossky's trinitarian theology is important in its soteriological and anthropological dimensions, being based on his "nature" and "person" distinction. Lossky maintained that the divinization (*theosis*) of the person implies that

¹⁵ *TM*, 57 [*MT*, 58].

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 57 [*Ibid.* 58].

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 61 [*Ibid.* 62].

communion or union with God is not the union of a person with the divine nature, but the communion of a person with a divine Person. This process progressively leads to "a more and more intimate communion of the human person with the Holy Trinity."¹⁸ In this context, he referred to Palamas and the debates of fourteenth century, whose goals were to affirm the unity of God, and the diversity of Persons, by saying on the one hand that God is not participable in the divine essence, yet is participable via the divine energies.¹⁹ He wrote that we are unable "to participate in either the essence or the *hypostasis* of the Holy Trinity," however, we are able to participate in the essence via the energies, "forces proper to and inseparable from God's essence, in which He goes forth from Himself, manifests, communicates and gives Himself."²⁰

The union to which we are called is neither hypostatic—as in the case of the human nature of Christ—nor substantial, as in that of the three divine Persons: it is union with God in his energies, or union by grace making us participate in the divine nature, without our essence becoming thereby the

¹⁸ Ibid. 65 [Ibid. 67].

¹⁹ *TM*, 67. Much of Lossky's *Vision de Dieu* is a defence of this essence-energies distinction and of Palamas. John Meyendorff is also credited as the person responsible for reviving an interest in Palamas, especially through his study *St. Grégoire Palamas et la mystique orthodoxe*, *Maîtres spirituels* no. 20 (Paris: Seuil, 1959). For a critical, and at times problematic interpretation of Palamas, see Catherine M. Lacugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) 181-205.

²⁰ *TM*, 68 [*MT*, 70].

essence of God.²¹

Essence is communicable, not in itself, but by way of the energies. Lossky is thus perhaps the strongest or clearest example, of the three theologians under discussion, of a proponent of Palamite theology.

The importance of this essence-energies distinction had implications for his christological and pneumatological synthesis, as well as for his envisioning of the communion between persons and with the Trinity. He affirmed that in the economy, with respect to the economic manifestation of the Trinity, all the divine energies have their source in the Father, and are communicated by the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Based on this, as one example, one can say that the Father is the creator of all things, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. One can also say that it is through the Holy Spirit that we know Jesus Christ, because the Holy Spirit is the image of the Son. In this economy, neither Person simply manifests themselves, but witnesses to an Other, that is, the Son makes known the Father and the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Son, yet "[it] is important to note that the Person of the Holy Spirit remains unmanifested—having no image in another Person."²² I shall return to this explanation of the economic aspect of the Trinity, which in many ways hinges upon the application of the trinitarian nature-person distinction to Christian anthropology.

²¹ Ibid. 84 [Ibid. 87].

²² Ibid. 82 [Ibid. 85].

Christian Anthropology—"Nature" and "Person"

Along with his mystical (apophatic) theology, Lossky is also known for his theological anthropology, especially his work on the "image and likeness" of the person to God. In Lossky's anthropology, the person has a double character, namely personhood and nature. The nature is the composition of the person, while the person is the existence or manifestation of the nature. In his anthropology, Lossky sometimes used "person" and "individual" synonymously. Technically though, the notion of "individual" denotes elements which belong to the common human nature, while the theological notion of "person" denotes that which distinguishes it from nature. "[We] admit that what is most dear to us in someone, what makes him himself [/herself], remains indefinable, for there is nothing in nature which properly pertains to the person, which is always unique and incomparable."²³ Animals, for example, lack personhood, and are thus only individuals. However, personhood is related to individual beings when it becomes a question of "spiritual beings, [persons], the angels or God."²⁴

Being created in the image/likeness of God also implies "the idea of participation in the divine Being, of communion with God."²⁵ The mystery of the plurality (diversity) and

²³ Ibid. 116-117 [Ibid. 121].

²⁴ Ibid. 118 [Ibid. 123].

²⁵ Ibid. 113 [Ibid. 118]. Consult some of the analysis of Lossky's anthropology in Olivier Clément, "La théologie de l'homme chez Vladimir Lossky," *Contacts* 31 (1979) 190-205.

singularity (unity) of human persons reflect the plurality and singularity of the Trinity, which means that this "demands not solitude but communion. The good diversity of love."²⁶ This trinitarian notion presents the person as possessing "absolute diversity" yet "absolute identity."²⁷ Each person ideally exists not by excluding the others, nor by possessing the nature for oneself, and "supposes a relation to the other; one person exists 'to' or 'towards' the other ... [cf. John 1.1]."²⁸ Thus created persons potentially include the whole, that is all other persons, where the process of realizing the unity of nature is being constantly realized in the Church. As an individual nature, "he [/she] is part of a whole, one of the elements which make up the universe; but as a person, he [/she] is in no sense a part: he [/she] contains all in himself [/herself]."²⁹ However, in creation, persons exist in a condition that tends to exclude each other because of the sinfulness of humanity.

The Economy of the Son and Soteriology

This notion of the sinfulness of humanity was the motivating factor for Lossky to say that theology should be situated within the context of soteriology. He wrote that the divine plan was not fulfilled by Adam, but was fulfilled by the new Adam-Christ. The three barriers (sin, death, nature) which separate persons from God are impassable for persons,

²⁶ "Théologie Dogmatique," 12/45 (1964) 224, trans. mine.

²⁷ *IR*, 104, cf. 120.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 104 [*JL*. 106].

²⁹ *TM*, 118-119 [*MT*, 123].

but were annihilated by God "in the union of separated natures" in Christ, reaching their completion in Christ's death and resurrection. It is this union of two natures, the divine and the human, which is the final goal of creation.

In the fullness of time designated by God, although being already present and active in history through the divine energies, God entered the economy of salvation as a Person in Jesus. Referring to John of Damascus, Lossky stated that:

[The] Incarnation was accomplished by the action of the Holy Spirit who caused the Virgin to be fit to receive in her the Deity of the Word, as well as through the Word Himself who formed in the Virginal flesh the first-fruits of his humanity. Thus, in one and the same act the Word assumed human nature, gave it its existence, and deified it.³⁰

Citing Cyril of Alexandria, Lossky wrote that the entire mystery of the economy consists in the *kenōsis* of the Logos, an act which was the will of the entire Trinity.³¹ The accomplishment of the divine plan in time in the Son by the Trinity means that Jesus Christ cannot be separated from the Trinity, since he shares the same will and nature as the Father and Spirit.³² And Christ's ultimate victory was in the resurrection, and not simply his death

³⁰ The reference to John of Damascus is *De fide orthodoxa*, 3.2 (PG 94.983-984), referred to in *TM*, 137 [*MT*, 141-142].

³¹ *TM*, 140.

³² *Ibid.* 141.

on the cross and burial in the tomb.³³

The early Fathers, although they were concerned with christological issues, "never lost sight of the question concerning *our* union with God."³⁴ The person's ultimate vocation is to become a person created in two natures, in imitation of Christ, which is nothing less than union with God. This work accomplished by Christ, pertaining strictly to our human nature, is realized in the Body of Christ, the Church.

It is the Church, the pure and incorruptible milieu where one attains union with God; it is also our nature, as incorporated in the Church, as part of the Body of Christ in which one is integrated through Baptism.³⁵

However, and here is Lossky's crucial contribution to the christological and pneumatological synthesis, if in our "nature" we are members and parts of the humanity of Jesus Christ, our "persons" have still not yet reached union with the Godhead.³⁶ Christ's victory concerned our natures, but not our persons because:

The redemption and purification of nature do not yet provide all the conditions necessary for deification. The Church is already the Body of Christ, but [it] is not yet "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1.23). The work of Christ is consummated; now the work of the Holy Spirit

³³ Ibid. 145-147; cf. 149ff.

³⁴ Ibid. 150 [*MT*, 154].

³⁵ Ibid. 15, trans mine.

³⁶ Ibid. 151; cf. *OrT*, 125.

may be fulfilled.³⁷

Here we see again the distinctions Lossky introduced between "nature" and "person," and the new element of each's relation to either christology or pneumatology. Lossky thus set up a pairing of "nature" with christology (or the economy of Christ), and as we shall see next, of the "person" with pneumatology (or the economy of the Spirit).

The Economy of the Spirit

The starting point of this "trinitarian synthesis" is the incarnation, which introduced into history the divine Person of Christ, who redeemed our nature and restored it. Here one can say that only the Son "became" history through the incarnation. From his resurrection and glorification, a new reality in history was created, that is the Church. This church is based on "a two-fold divine economy: the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, the two Persons of the Trinity sent into the world. The two missions are at the basis of the Church, for the work of both is necessary so that we may attain union with God."³⁸

In terms of the Church, if Christ is the Head of the Body-Church, then Lossky presented the Spirit as the one who "fills all in all." The Church is Christ's "body" insofar as

³⁷ *TM*, 151, trans. mine.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 153, trans. mine. For a valuable comparison of a number of Western theologians and their syntheses between christology and pneumatology, see Josef Freitag, *Geist-Vergessen, Geist-Erinnern: Vladimir Losskys Pneumatologie als Herausforderung westlicher Theologie* (Würzburg: Echter, 1995) 115-169.

Jesus Christ is head, and the "fullness" insofar as the Holy Spirit fills the Church with divinity.³⁹ Referring to St. Basil, Lossky wrote that the Spirit in creation and redemption is accomplishing all things.⁴⁰ It was the Spirit who drove out demons, healed persons, and raised people from the dead, yet, "the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world before the Church and outside the Church is not the same as his presence in the Church after Pentecost."⁴¹ This is based on his interpretation of John 7.39, where the apostle wrote that, "The Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." It was only after Pentecost that Lossky said that the Spirit was sent into the world "considered as a Person," just as Christ was sent into the world as a Person in the Incarnation.⁴² This is an important point that echoes what was said about Christ "becoming" history (in the incarnation), because Lossky is also adding that the Spirit also "became" history (at Pentecost), though in a different manner from Christ. This point is of crucial importance in his synthesis in that it is one of Zizioulas's corrections of Lossky, namely, the former's insistence that only Christ "has a history" and has "become" history. (I will say more about this in the chapter on Zizioulas).

Lossky was also aware that there is a radical difference between the eternal processions of the Persons, and the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in the economy of

³⁹ *TM*, 153-154.

⁴⁰ Quoting Basil, *De spiritu Sancto*, 19.49 (PG 32.155-156), in *Ibid.* 154.

⁴¹ *TM*, 154, trans. mine.

⁴² *Ibid.* 154.

salvation (that is, in time). I have mentioned Lossky's theology that in the immanent Trinity, the Son and Holy Spirit proceed from Father as from a unique personal source. In the economy, on the other hand, the Son is sent by the Father in the incarnation, being made a person through the Spirit. The same is true of the Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Father and given by the Son. The Spirit and the Son, thus can, in one way, be said to be sent by their "own wills" which are identical to the will of the Father.⁴³ In the economy, the Son descended and fulfilled his mission through the Spirit, and so too did the Spirit come into creation by being sent by the Son. Both thus have a "relationship of reciprocity,"⁴⁴ which indicates that in his "trinitarian synthesis" there exists a "simultaneity" between christology and pneumatology. Reflecting on John 15, Lossky also added that the Spirit is a comforter sent in the name of the Son, and though distinct from the Son, the Spirit's "relationship to the Son is neither one of opposition nor of separation, but of diversity and reciprocity—thus, of communion in the Father."⁴⁵ Yet, Lossky added this important qualification:

Intimately linked as they are in the common work upon earth, the Son and the Holy Spirit remain nevertheless, in this same work, two persons independent of one of the other as to their hypostatic being. This is why the personal advent of the Holy Spirit will not have the character of a

⁴³ Ibid. 155-156.

⁴⁴ "Relation de réciprocité," in "Théologie Dogmatique," 12/45 (1964) 94; cf. *TM*, 156-157.

⁴⁵ "Théologie Dogmatique," 12/45 (1964) 94 [*OrT*, 39].

subordinated mission, in some sort functional in relation to that of the Son.

Pentecost is not a "continuation" of the Incarnation, it is its sequel, its result: the creature has become fit to receive the Holy Spirit and [it] descends into the world, fills with [its] presence the Church which has been redeemed, washed, purified by the blood of Christ.⁴⁶

Christ's work was consequently a preparation for the work of the Spirit, which means that for Lossky: "Pentecost appears as the goal, the final end of the divine economy on earth."⁴⁷ However, the Holy Spirit is the only one in the Trinity who does not have an image in another Person of the Trinity for the Spirit did not come to be revealed as a Person, but to bear witness to Christ, just as Christ bore witness to the Father. The Spirit remains hidden, a mystery.⁴⁸

In Lossky's synthesis, the work of Christ concerns human nature, which was recapitulated in his hypostasis, whereas the work of the Holy Spirit concerns each person singularly. The Spirit gives as a gift to each person the "fullness" of God, which is unique and "personal." This imparting of divinity is "impassably divided, and shared without division."⁴⁹

Christ becomes the unique image appropriate to the common nature of

⁴⁶ *TM*, 156, trans. mine.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 15, trans. mine.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 157.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 163 [*MT*, 166].

humanity, the Holy Spirit confers to each person created in the image of God the possibility of fulfilling the likeness in the common nature. The one lends his hypostasis to the nature, the other gives his divinity to persons, so the work of Christ unifies, the work of the Holy Spirit diversifies. Yet, the one is impossible without the other ...⁵⁰

The crucial point in Lossky's synthesis is to remember that Christ unites via his "nature," and that the Holy Spirit diversifies each "person." In the later transcription of his lectures, based on the "unity in diversity" of the Trinity, Lossky stated that each Person of the Trinity shares "integrally" with the Others, without confusion: "the more they are one the more they are diverse, since nothing of the communal nature escapes them; and the more they are diverse the more they are one, since their unity is not impersonal uniformity, but a fertile tension of irreducible diversity, an abundance of a 'circumincession' without mixture or confusion..."⁵¹ This again is another indication that Lossky was positing a simultaneity between the theologies of Christ and the Spirit.

Subsequently one also encounters in Lossky's theology what seems to be "two pentecosts," the one facilitating unity in the Church and the other diversifying in the personal sending of the Spirit.

Indeed, it is possible to distinguish two communications of the Holy Spirit to the Church: one was effected by the breath of Christ when he appeared to his

⁵⁰ Ibid. 163, trans. mine.

⁵¹ "Théologie Dogmatique," 12/45 (1964) 96 [*OrT*, 42].

apostles on the evening of the day of his resurrection (John 20. 19-23); the other by the personal coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1-5).⁵²

The first Pentecost was made to the Church as a body, to the apostles and the priests, yet quite distinct was the personal communication of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, hence after the resurrection and ascension of Christ. This "second" Pentecost shows the Spirit no longer being communicated to the Church as a corporate entity, making the Church one, but rather this communication is "*to persons*, marking each member of the Church with a seal of personal and unique relationship to the Trinity, becoming present in each person."⁵³ There is in Lossky two distinctions with respect to the activity of the Spirit in creation, namely, that before Pentecost, the Spirit's presence was "functional," while after Pentecost, the Spirit's work became "personal."⁵⁴ "Functional" refers to the Spirit's role in the fulfilment of the work of the Trinity in the whole economy, while "personal" pertains to the Spirit's role in the divinization of each person. In the history of the Church, the Spirit is mysteriously and invisibly imparted personally to each person in the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. The Spirit in this synthesis is not dependant upon the Son, for if it were, then the Spirit would appear as "a bond which connects us with the Son."⁵⁵ One wonders if this latter

⁵² *TM*, 163-164 [*MT*, 167].

⁵³ *Ibid.* 165 [*Ibid.* 168].

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 164.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 166 [*MT*, 169].

comment is the same as saying that the Spirit is not a principle of communion. Lossky, however, was concerned with preserving the notion that the Spirit is not somehow subordinate to the Son, nor merely an agent of Christ.⁵⁶

The Two Economies and the Church

I have already mentioned Lossky's distinctions between nature and person, while showing each's relationship to either christology or pneumatology. I now turn to the implications of his "trinitarian synthesis" for his "ecclesiological synthesis." What follows is a further elaboration of how he applied these trinitarian concepts to ecclesiology, for as Lossky stated:

In the realm of ecclesiology we find ourselves confronted anew by the distinction between nature and persons, a mysterious distinction of which we first caught a glimpse when examining the dogma of the Trinity in the Eastern tradition.⁵⁷

This is what allowed Lossky to build on the notion that the Church is the image of the Trinity.

Lossky wrote that the Son and Spirit both accomplish the same work on earth in creating the Church, yet each divine Person's role is not the same. A proper balance between christology and pneumatology, though, is necessary for a correct ecclesiology,

⁵⁶ Cf. *IR*, 101.

⁵⁷ *TM*, 173 [*MT*, 176].

which means that the Church is simultaneously the Body of Christ, as well as the fullness of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸ Unity is the unity of nature of each human *hypostasis* incorporated into the Church, which is manifested and contained in the unique Person of Christ, but it is the Spirit who endows the Church and each person with fullness and diversity. This fullness and diversity is a gift of the Spirit given "to the multiplicity of human *hypostases* each one of whom represents not merely a part but a whole."⁵⁹ The Spirit thus creates within the "one" Christ-Church many "christs." So, since "the Church is the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Church has a double foundation—it is rooted both in christology and in pneumatology."⁶⁰ In ecclesiology, the focus is not on individuals and collectivity, but on the multiplicity of persons who aspire to *theosis* through the unity of nature. "The Incarnation is the foundation of this unity of nature, [and] Pentecost is the affirmation of the multiplicity of persons within the Church."⁶¹ Christ thus unites in nature, while the Spirit diversifies according to person.

⁵⁸ Cf. Allchin, A.M. "Vladimir Lossky: le témoignage d'un théologien orthodoxe," 228.

⁵⁹ *TM*, 171 [*MT*, 174].

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 171 [*Ibid.* 174]. For some comparison of a number of Western theologians (including Henri de Lubac, Joseph Ratzinger, and also Vatican II) on the relationship of pneumatology to ecclesiology, in the light of Lossky's theology, see Freitag, *Geist-Vergessen, Geist-Erinnern*, 170-213.

⁶¹ *TM*, 173 [*MT*, 176].

Fullness, Unity and Catholicity

The theological mark of the Church, catholicity (or the Slavic *sobornost'*), is a favourite topic of Lossky's in that it embodies much of what he said about the relationship between nature and the person. The term catholicity means not only unity, but also a multiplicity. In fact, without unity one could not imagine the Church's other marks of holiness, catholicity and apostolicity because the Church will then no longer be one, but divided.⁶² The end and source of the Church's existence, to continue, is holiness. Without the mark of holiness, the Church would remain sinful and unredeemed, yet still awaiting the *eschaton*. And without catholicity, the Church would be "without Truth, without the assured knowledge of the data of revelation, without conscious and infallible experience of the divine mysteries."⁶³

Since in the Trinity there is a unity of nature, yet a diversity of Persons, each Person contains within itself the wholeness of divine being. So too in the Church is there a unity of nature, and each person contains the wholeness of the Church. The term points to a certain harmony between unity and wholeness, or an "identity of unity with multiplicity which makes the Church catholic in its wholeness as well as in each of its parts."⁶⁴ This primordial quality of the Church is fulfilled "in the midst of a multiplicity of cultural, national, social

⁶² *IR*, 168f.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 170 [*JL*, 172].

⁶⁴ *TM*, 173 [*MT*, 176].

and political forms."⁶⁵ The "identity of unity with multiplicity" refers to the "ecclesiological synthesis," in which Christ unites that which the Spirit diversifies.

In reference to unity, Lossky wrote that our unity is not just the primordial union of natures, but also the "final realization of this unity of human nature."⁶⁶ This is not a condition that exists in the future, but is the very condition of the existence of the Church in the "here and now." Without this final realization in time and space, the Church would not be a sacramental organism, and would not really participate in the eternal life of the Trinity, but would participate figuratively.

In the synthesis, Lossky set up what would be the consequences of seeing the Church simply in terms of its christological aspect with respect to unity. If the Church is united in Christ, as in one nature, then all participate and are united in this one Person of Christ. Here the Church is seen as one sole person of Christ, "in whom human *hypostases* are contained as particles of his unique Person."⁶⁷ Lossky opposed such a view because it would imply that persons are contained in some kind of super-person. The theological notion of person implies an absolute difference, hence "it is impossible to admit that a person or persons—divine or created—might be contained in a kind of supra-person in its

⁶⁵ Vladimir Lossky, "The Temptations of Ecclesial Consciousness [tr. T.E. Bird]," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988) 247.

⁶⁶ *IR*, 182 [*IL*, 184].

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 185 [*Ibid.* 187].

parts."⁶⁸ His trinitarian theology conceived of a person with different natures (Christ), or persons with a common nature (Trinity) or a common nature divided among individuals (humanity), but "as for a person or *hypostasis* containing other persons as parts of a whole, such a notion would be contradictory."⁶⁹ Lossky was consistently quick in defending personal plurality or diversity. It thus seems that Lossky was ruling out envisioning Christ as a "corporate person," as someone who is both the "one" and the "many."

However, Lossky wrote that our unity of nature in Christ does not exclude human "polyhypostasy."⁷⁰ The ecclesiological text of Matthew 18.20 points simultaneously to the unity of our nature in Christ and to the personal relationship between the divine *hypostasis* and created *hypostases*. He re-wrote the text to say that "where two or three (personal multiplicity) are gathered in my name (unity of nature realized in the Church which bears the name of the Son), there am I *in the midst of them*."⁷¹ Christ words do not affirm that he contains persons within himself, but rather they show him as a person who is "with" other persons. To affirm that there are other distinct persons who are not subsumed in Christ, is to affirm their dignity, freedom and diversity. This again, is the pneumatological aspect of

⁶⁸ Ibid. 185 [Ibid. 186]. He said that a "corporate" Christ would be similar to the mythical figure Uranus devouring his children, which in a theological sense would be the annihilation of each person's consciousness.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 186 [Ibid. 188].

⁷⁰ Ibid. 186.

⁷¹ In *ibid.* 186-187 [*IL*, 189].

the Church, or the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Christ can be seen as a corporate person in Lossky's "ecclesiological synthesis" if one understands the one-many distinction as indicating that unity in Christ is through an entering into communion with his body, and not through an absorption into it.

Further, since I have been discussing the christological and pneumatological synthesis in ecclesiology, I should note how this synthesis bears upon catholicity. In its christological aspect, catholicity has a negative character in that the Church is redeemed by the blood of Christ, and is holy, sinless and free of determinism. Truth is thus allowed to freely manifest itself. However, this negative approach of "nature recapitulated in Christ" is not sufficient, for a positive one must also be added, and that is that the truth should exist in all its fullness. This fullness refers to the work of the Spirit. This is consonant with Lossky stating the Church is not an extension of the Incarnation nor simply the work of Christ.

"The pneumatological element of the Church must not be underestimated, but fully accepted on an equal footing with the christological, if the true foundation of the catholicity of the Church is to be found."⁷² In Christ, each nature is redeemed, but in the Spirit, each person is made a "conscious collaborator (*synergos*)" with God to reveal and witness to the Truth.

"The relation of the work of Christ to that of the Holy Spirit in the Church would seem to have the character of an antimony: the Holy Spirit diversifies what Christ unifies."⁷³ This synthesis works both ways, for Lossky added that without this personal diversity in the

⁷² Ibid. 175 [Ibid. 177].

⁷³ Ibid. 175 [Ibid. 178].

Spirit, natural unity could not be realized. "There can be no unity of nature without diversity of persons, and no persons fully realized outside natural unity. Catholicity consists in the perfect harmony of these two terms: unity and diversity, nature and persons."⁷⁴ This is thus the mysterious identity of the parts (persons, local churches) with the whole (Christ, the Church), and the whole with the parts. This relationship of the whole with the parts is also conceived of in terms of the notion of consubstantiality. The whole and the parts are simultaneously catholic, and one cannot exist without the other.

Catholicity and universality coincide, noted Lossky, but they are not synonymous for the former is something more intimate to the Church. It is a mode of knowledge of the Truth, which is the responsibility of all the members of the Church. "Catholicity is not the abstract universalism of a doctrine imposed by the hierarchy, but a living tradition always preserved everywhere and by all."⁷⁵ To say that catholicity is imposed by the hierarchy would be to confuse catholicity with apostolicity. Lossky even remarked that since all are enjoined to protect the Church's catholicity, even a layman is "bound to resist the bishop" if the bishop should fall into error.⁷⁶

Lossky was always cognizant to point out that it is from the point of view of soteriology that he was approaching doctrine of the Church. "It is solely from this point of

⁷⁴ Ibid. 176 [Ibid. 178].

⁷⁵ Ibid. 173 [Ibid. 176]. This is in part taken from Vincent of Lérins's "every, always and by all [ubique, semper, ab omnibus]" formula in his *Commonitory*, 2.3.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 173 [Ibid. 175].

view that we intend to examine Eastern ecclesiology: the Church regarded as the sphere wherein the union of human persons with God is accomplished."⁷⁷ The person is called to union (*theosis*) with God through the Church, by union with the Body of Christ, and by receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

Baptism and the Eucharist

How is this union accomplished sacramentally? The sacramental life is the constant struggle for that grace of the Spirit which must transfigure the person's nature, and hence, move the person along the way of divinization. It is through Baptism that we are united to the Body of Christ. Baptism is the "image of the death of Christ," which is already the beginnings of our resurrection.⁷⁹ This is part of the reason that he believed re-Baptism sinned against the uniqueness of the Church.⁸⁰ Yet, to grow continually and to rid oneself of sin requires a constant rooting of one's life in the Body of Christ, that is in the unity of nature of Christ. Although Baptism is the incorporation of persons into Christ, this needs to be completed by the sacrament of Chrismation, the "sacrament of diversity in the Holy

⁷⁷ *TM*, 174 [*MT*, 177].

⁷⁸ Citing Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 5.24.1 (PG. 7.966), in *TM*, 174.

⁷⁹ *TM*, 176.

⁸⁰ "The Temptations of Ecclesial Consciousness," 250. I again recall some of the remarks made in Erickson, "The Reception of Non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church."

Spirit.⁸¹

The mystery of Pentecost is as important as the mystery of the Redemption.

The redeeming work of Christ is an indispensable precondition of the deifying work of the Holy Spirit.⁸²

If we neglect this second important dispensation, wrote Lossky, then we risk de-personalizing the Church and making freedom based on some sort of sacramental determinism.⁸³

Lossky singled out the Eucharist as the sacrament where this union is most perfectly expressed and carried out. The Eucharist, as the body and blood of Christ, "is a realization of the unity of our nature both within Christ and, at the same time, with all members of the Church."⁸⁴ In the Eucharist, the Church is seen as a single nature united to Christ.

The sacramental unions which the Church offers us—even the eucharistic union, the most perfect of them all—relate to our nature insofar as it is received into the person of Christ.⁸⁵

In the ecclesial community, and through the sacraments, our nature enters into union with the divine nature of the Son, and our human nature becomes consubstantial (*homoousios*)

⁸¹ *IR*, 106 [*IL*, 108].

⁸² *Ibid.* 107 [*Ibid.* 109].

⁸³ *Ibid.* 107.

⁸⁴ *TM*, 178 [*MT*, 180].

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 180 [*Ibid.* 183].

with the deified nature of the humanity of Christ. Nevertheless, what is left for the persons to attain their true perfection is only realizable at the *eschaton*. In order to safeguard the freedom of the person from any determinism, or annihilation of personal freedom, Lossky also maintained that in the Church "our nature receives all the objective conditions of this union. The subjective conditions depend only upon ourselves."⁸⁶ In writing that the Church is a theandric organism, Lossky was careful to mention that this includes both divine and human aspects, which means that the grace of the Spirit does not destroy freedom, but requires a response from each person.

It is necessary that persons should become two-natured by uniting themselves in a created nature with the fullness of grace, "with the divinity, adapted to each member of the body of Christ, which the Holy Spirit confers."⁸⁷ But, according to Lossky, unity in nature is still insufficient for salvation due to the existence of many persons in the Church, all of whom are called to this union. "For the Church is not only one nature in the *hypostasis* of Christ: it consists also of multiple *hypostases* in the grace of the Holy Spirit."⁸⁸ The unity and multiplicity cannot be considered exclusive of each other, but should be seen as conditioning one another. The paradigm that Lossky set up is that through sin, there occurred divisiveness or multiplicity. This initial division is able to be overcome in Christ and through a unity of nature in the Church, which simultaneously places multiplicity or

⁸⁶ Ibid. 180 [Ibid. 183]; see also *OrT*, 126.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 179 [Ibid. 182].

⁸⁸ Ibid. 179 [Ibid. 182].

diversity in its proper relation to God, with this latter gift being bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Thus the christological aspect of the Church is revealed in the pneumatological.

This is the unfathomable mystery of the Church, the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, one in Christ, multiple through the Spirit; a *single human nature* in the *hypostasis* of Christ, *many human hypostases* in the grace of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹

The ultimate perfection of this union in the communion of saints, though, will occur in the *eschaton*, and is only provisionally (temporally) realized in the Church. With reference to the Eucharist, Lossky echoed this theme, saying that Christ is both the sacrificer and the sacrifice, offering to the Father what is offered in the earthly church, meaning that there is no separation between the earthly church and the heavenly church.⁹⁰ This is related to the notion of union, which Lossky said, is above all, a sacramental and liturgical conception of being one in Christ's body, in the "whole Christ."⁹¹ Here are possible intimations of Florovsky's correlation of ecclesiology into christology, or the doctrine of whole Christ (*totus Christus*).

I have already mentioned that in Lossky's view Christ unites all into his Body through Baptism. This union is accomplished through Christ's common nature as the new Adam, where the multiplicity of persons in the Church are included into Christ's *hypostasis*.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 180, trans. mine.

⁹⁰ *IR*, 102.

⁹¹ Ibid. 102.

This "unique man" in Christ, however, while he is one through his renewed nature is nevertheless multiple in persons: he exists in many persons. If human nature finds itself reunited in the *hypostasis* of Christ, if it is an "enhypostasized" nature—existing in one *hypostasis*—the human persons, the *hypostases* of this united nature are not suppressed.⁹²

Lossky was concerned to safeguard the importance of the person in his ecclesiology, when he said that the Church, while it has one nature in Christ, it also "includes many *hypostases*."⁹³ There exist the "many" who also exist as "one." So, in Baptism we symbolically die with Christ, only to rise with him, to become "members of this unique body, historically and concretely existing on earth, but with its head in heaven, in eternity, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity."⁹⁴

Ecclesiological-Christological Heresies

Lossky used examples of early christological heresies in order to rule out certain ecclesiological approaches. He singled out here nestorianism, monophysitism, monotheletism, and appollinarianism. Problems in ecclesiology occur, he maintained, because the "church in its christological aspect, appears as an organism having two natures,

⁹² *TM*, 162, trans. mine. In *OrT*, 125, Lossky wrote that this multiplicity of persons in no way contradicts the "ontological unity" of nature common to all.

⁹³ *TM*, 162 [*MT*, 166].

⁹⁴ *IR*, 102 [*JL*, 104].

two operations and two wills."⁹⁵ The "nestorian" ecclesiological heresy tends to divide the Church into the heavenly or perfect realm, and into an earthly and imperfect realm. The "monophysite" tendency is to see the Church as essentially divine, where divine necessity is imposed and leaves no place for human synergy or freedom with the divine Persons. One may also tend to negate the economy of the Church in regard to the external world, or the opposite, to sacrifice the truth to the exigencies of the ecclesial economy (a danger which he said exists in the ecumenical movement as "ecclesial relativism"). And finally, the "appollinarian" heresy denies the human aspect of the Church, where for example, councils are envisioned as a sort of *deus ex machina*, independent of those who were present. A correct vision of the Church is to say that:

[All] that can be asserted or denied about Christ can equally well be applied to the Church, inasmuch as it is a theandric organism, or, more exactly, a created nature inseparably united to God in the *hypostasis* of the Son, a being which has—as he has—two natures, two wills and two operations which are at once inseparable and yet distinct.⁹⁶

This is what Lossky called the "Chalcedonian dogma of ecclesiology," echoing Florovsky's position of ecclesiology being a "chapter of christology." The context, however, is that of affirming that the Church, like Christ, has two natures, both human and spiritual, so the

⁹⁵ For the explanation of these ecclesiological heresies, see *TM*, 183-184 [*MT*, 186-187], and "The Temptations of Ecclesial Consciousness," 245.

⁹⁶ *TM*, 184 [*MT*, 187].

question remains as to if Lossky did indeed strictly hold that the definition of the Church is part of the definition of Christ, or was he saying something more than Florovsky?

Apostolicity & Ministry in the Synthesis

Compared to his comments on the notion of catholicity, Lossky wrote quite a bit less on the other marks of the Church. His theology of ministry was related to his notions of the apostolicity of the Church. In his ecclesiology, the close interplay between the pneumatological and christological aspects also had implications for the institutional aspects of the "ecclesiological synthesis."

A church, commented Lossky, without apostolicity would be a church without the other marks of the Church. Apostolicity encompasses the historical aspect of the Church. Without the "divine power conferred on the apostles by the risen God-man (John 20.22-23) and transmitted down to our own days by their successors, what would the Church be?" asked Lossky.⁹⁷ His response was that such a church would be disincarnate, abstract, and sectarian.

Lossky's theology of ministry stemmed in part from his conception of the two Pentecosts, the one at the Last Supper, where Christ bestowed the Spirit to his apostles, and the other, the personal descent of Spirit. Christ's actions at the Last Supper can be spoken of qualifiedly in terms of his "instituting" the Church. The ministerial aspect is rooted in the christological aspect of the Church, which consequently ensures a permanent

⁹⁷ *IR*, 169 [*IL*, 171].

operation of the Spirit in the Church, "an operation which is functional in relation to Christ."⁹⁸ Zizioulas expresses this as Christ "instituting," and the Spirit as "constituting" the Church. As for the first Pentecost, Christ conferred to his apostles his Spirit. Lossky stated that this "impersonal union with the Holy Spirit, this conditional sanctity of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, bestows upon the theurgic acts of the clergy an objective character which is independent of persons, and above all of intentions,"⁹⁹ thus, for example, in the celebration of the sacraments, there are two wills and two operations which occur simultaneously. To illustrate, as the priest consecrates bread/wine and prays the *epiklēsis*, the Spirit effects the sacrament; as the priest absolves, transgressions are remitted by the will of God; and when the bishop lays hands in ordaining, the Holy Spirit confers sacerdotal grace. The same can be said of episcopal authority, albeit in a slightly different conception. Lossky noted that the acts of episcopal power have a binding character, for the bishops act in the name of divine authority, so that in "submitting to the will of the bishop one is submitting to the will of God" (although this still involves a personal element of the bishop).¹⁰⁰ As a result, councils express the harmony of wills of bishops and of God. These canonical structures exist in order to preserve the uniqueness of the Church before the world, as well as to safeguard each person's freedom.¹⁰¹ This canonical structure thus safeguards the unity of the Church,

⁹⁸ *TM*, 184 [*MT*, 187].

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 184 [*Ibid.* 187].

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 184 [*Ibid.* 188].

¹⁰¹ "The Temptations of Ecclesial Consciousness," 248.

and is a responsibility principally of the apostles and their successors.¹⁰²

Two Aspects of the Church

The christological aspect in Lossky conditions the institutional aspect of the Church, but never far from this consideration is the pneumatological dimension.

Here the christological and pneumatological aspects are in accord with the catholic character of the Church. By the power which it holds from Christ the Church *proclaims* that which the Spirit *reveals*. But the function of defining, of stating, of causing mysteries which are unfathomable to human understanding to be contained in exact dogmas, this belongs to the christological aspect of the Church, that aspect which is grounded upon the incarnate Word.¹⁰³

In the christological aspect of the Church, "the objective and unchangeable features" which are rooted in the fact that "Christ is the Head of His mystical body and that our nature is contained in his *hypostasis*," meaning that the Church is an organism of two natures.¹⁰⁴ In this christological aspect, the Church possesses "perfect stability" imaged on the cornerstone of Christ. This leaves incomplete Lossky's vision of the Church for it fails to take into account the call to attain union with God in the Church, "the more important in that it

¹⁰² Ibid. 249.

¹⁰³ *TM*, 185 [*MT*, 188-189].

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 187 [Ibid. 190].

concerns the very end of the Church; it affects that union with God which must be brought about in every human person. This is the pneumatological aspect of the Church, rooted in the mystery of Pentecost.¹⁰⁵ This dynamic character, as opposed to the static christological character, is geared toward the *eschaton*. Here there consequently seems to be a preference on Lossky's part toward the pneumatological aspect of the Church. Using the above-mentioned notion that Christ "instituted" the church, then perhaps one can also speak of the Spirit as "constituting" the church, that is, in its role of diversifying and divinizing.

Lossky continued that the two aspects are inseparable, "and yet, in the first the Church exists in the *hypostasis* of Christ, while in the second we can catch a glimpse of its own being, distinct from that of its Head."¹⁰⁶ Lossky spoke of the Church as both the Bride and the Bridegroom, applying the latter image to the christological dimension of the Church, that is, the *hypostasis* of Christ. Setting up this Pauline image of the Bride and Bridegroom, and applying christology to the latter, naturally led Lossky to speak of the pneumatological dimension of the Church as being the Bride. He did not speak here of the Church as a *hypostasis* of the Spirit, which would apply to the Bridegroom aspect, because the Spirit does "not in his personal coming bestow upon the Church his personal *hypostasis*: he remains hidden, unrevealed."¹⁰⁷ The Spirit does, though, relate to the persons to whom are bestowed the divine energies and leads persons to their ultimate perfection, but:

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 187 [Ibid. 190].

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 188 [Ibid. 192].

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 189 and 190 [Ibid. 192, and 193].

[The Spirit] does not become the *person* of the Church. The Holy Spirit does not contain within [itself] the human *hypostases*, as Christ contains the nature, but gives [itself] separately to each person. The Church in its own being, considered as the bride of Christ, would thus appear as a multitude of created *hypostases*. The person, or rather, human persons are the *hypostases* of the one nature of the Church.¹⁰⁸

The Church and each person is thus the Bride. The Church thus does not possess a *hypostasis* of its own, since no person has attained perfect union with God, that is, apart from Mary, the Mother of God.

[She] was raised from the dead and borne up to heaven—the first human *hypostasis* in whom was fulfilled the final end for which the world was created. Thenceforth the Church and the entire universe have their crown, their personal achievement which throws open the way of deification to the whole of creation.¹⁰⁹

Lossky concluded that "the mystery of the Church is contained in the two perfect persons—the divine Person of Christ and the human person of the Mother of God."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 189, trans. mine.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 190-191 [*MT*, 194].

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 192, trans. mine. Cf. *IR*, 206. Consult also Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 56; and his "La théologie de l'homme chez Vladimir Lossky," 198-201.

The *Eschaton*

I have been alluding to the notion of the *eschaton* in Lossky's theology, speaking of the final and perfect fulfilment of the person in union with God. Lossky included in this notion that all of creation will be transfigured and united to God.¹¹¹ In Lossky's synthesis, eternity became present in time when the person was able to cooperate in the divine plan of salvation, that is, after the death and resurrection of Christ.¹¹² With respect to the liturgical notion of *anamnēsis*, Lossky could affirm that the notion does not only mean commemoration, "rather does it denote an initiation into a mystery, the revelation of a reality which is always present in the Church."¹¹³ This reality is not a future hope that will be realized, but it is a present reality (again, based on his theology of Baptism), which will be consummated in the future.¹¹⁴ The eschatological era began with the descent of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1.4-5), and involved the whole created cosmos.¹¹⁵ In this schema, creation will always exist even though in the *apocatastasis* it will be transfigured into an eternal

¹¹¹ *TM*, 234. Consult Clément, "La théologie de l'homme chez Vladimir Lossky," 198-201 for further analysis of this "cosmic dimension" of Lossky's anthropology and eschatology. See also Allchin, "Vladimir Lossky: le témoignage d'un théologien orthodoxe," 225.

¹¹² *IR*, 221.

¹¹³ *TM*, 186 [*MT*, 189].

¹¹⁴ "Théologie Dogmatique," 13/49 (1965) 101; *TM*, 176. Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 68ff.

¹¹⁵ *IR*, 222, 225; and "Théologie Dogmatique," 12/45 (1964) 219-220, respectively.

newness.

The dual nature of the Church, as both temporal and heavenly, was also contained in the analysis of ecclesiological heresies. The Church contains a human and an earthly, and at times sinful, dimension, yet it is also a heavenly reality. The Church's weakness and sinfulness are transcended by the grace of God in the Spirit, who endows the Church with its fullness.¹¹⁶ Lossky wrote that since the historic Church, in time and space, encompasses within itself both the created cosmos and the eternal heavens, which includes persons, angels, and the living and dead, that therefore Orthodox eschatology is "essentially ecclesiological."¹¹⁷ Since in eternity the Church will appear as the Kingdom of God, Lossky characterized the Church as a "macro-anthropos."¹¹⁸

It is important to note again that Lossky's theology was concerned with soteriology, that is, with things that lead to the deification of the person. I have shown that he posited the Spirit as the principle of this personal deification who calls persons to union with God. Lossky on this account wrote:

For the Holy Spirit is the sovereign unction resting upon the Christ and upon all the Christians called to reign with Him in the age to come. It is then that this divine Person, now unknown, not having His image in another

¹¹⁶ Cf. *TM*, 243-244.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 106 [*MT*, 111]. Cf. Allchin, "Vladimir Lossky: le témoignage d'un théologien orthodoxe," 226, 228.

¹¹⁸ *TM*, 175, citing Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia* 2-4 (PG. 91.667-671).

Hypostasis, will manifest Himself in deified persons: for the multitude of the saints will be His image.¹¹⁹

The latter sentence is important in that it shows that Lossky held that the "multitude of saints," the Church, will be transfigured in eternity into the image of the Spirit, and presumably not into an image of Christ. The question remains as to how this fits in with the Scriptural image of the church as the Body of Christ, or does his approach ultimately lead to envisioning the Church as the Body of the Spirit? The ambiguity is that Lossky rejected the latter, by saying that in the economy, Spirit does not contain all the human *hypostases*.

Conclusion

Lossky's theological synthesis was based on two pillars, namely his nature-person distinction and his striking a balance between pneumatology and christology, especially as they relate to ecclesiology. Since Christ redeemed human nature, all persons in the Church are united in him via his deified human nature, but to ensure the personal freedom and the integrity of each person, one must also say that the Spirit diversifies what Christ unites. In the Church one is "united" in Christ, yet "many" in the Holy Spirit.

This vision is what allowed Lossky to speak of an "identity of unity with multiplicity" as the basis of catholicity. Catholicity is the perfect harmony of unity with

¹¹⁹ *TM*, 169 [*MT*, 173]. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 226, also finds this a distinctive feature of Lossky's theology. See also Clément, "La théologie de l'homme chez Vladimir Lossky," 202.

diversity, nature and persons. Each "part" of the Church is catholic, as is the "whole." This relation of the whole with the parts he spoke of in terms of consubstantiality. Since he wrote of the person containing the whole, but also being a part of the Church, one wonders if he would have envisioned Christ as a corporate person, who as a whole contains also all the parts. He answered in the negative, that one cannot conceive of Christ, in his being both Head and Body, as a "super-person" who contains all. However, Lossky did use the notion of "poly-hypostasy" in referring to Christ as a person who is with other persons. This was influenced by his insistence on guaranteeing personhood and diversity wrought by the Spirit, which was his balancing of pneumatology and christology. This is coupled with his holding that the Spirit is not dependant upon the Son, for if it were, then one would see the Spirit as a bond which connects persons with the Son. One can ask if this means that he rejected the ideas of the Spirit as being a principle of communion and of the Spirit becoming the person of the Church, hence qualifiedly a corporate person. This is interesting, in that in the same work Lossky wrote that in eternity, the multitude of saints will be the image of the Holy Spirit which, in the absence of other comments on the notion, excludes the communion of saints from being an image of Christ.

Since Lossky also spoke of two "pentecosts" in reference to the "founding" of the church, one being christological (the Spirit is given to the apostles by Christ for their ministry and mission), and the other pneumatological (a new era of the Spirit in the economy), the latter is seen as the sending of the Spirit in history, perhaps akin to the event of Christ's incarnation. The church is now in the era, or economy, of the Spirit.

In Lossky's theology of the immanent Trinity, he said that Christ and the Spirit are "simultaneous" to one another, and that each indwells one another. In the economy, both enjoy a "relationship of reciprocity" since the work of one is impossible without the other. And since the Church is now in the era of the Spirit, was he positing a "simultaneity" of the Spirit with Christ in the economy, or was he leaning in the direction of a "priority" or "succession" (temporal or economical) of pneumatology? This question, in one sense, almost becomes redundant in that Lossky began to speak of only one economy in his final years.¹²⁰

One can also ask whether or not his "ecclesiological synthesis" ultimately failed in that it did not adequately integrate the pneumatological with christological. There seems to be a dichotomy in his nature-Christ and person-Spirit schema, where each divine Person is left to dwell or work in their own delimited spheres of nature or personhood. Should the two divine Persons not be integrated more closely, for after all the Spirit not only sends the Son, but the Son also gives his Spirit? Can the Spirit both "unite" and "diversify" all in the Church, and can Christ also not mediate or participate in this process? This would still include a simultaneity between christology and pneumatology in his "trinitarian synthesis."

In reference to his speaking about Palamas and saying that the person's union with God is neither hypostatic nor substantial, one can ask what is the condition of such a union.

¹²⁰ This is what Clément reports that Lossky said in some of his final lectures, namely, that he advocated a "one Logo-Pneumatic economy." In Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 48, 63.

Lossky replied that the union is with the divine nature through the divine energies.

However, the oddness of this approach, especially in light of Lossky's stress on the diversity and freedom of each person, is that since we do not posit such a strong dichotomy between the Persons of the Trinity in terms of nature-person, why should such a distinction between nature and person be made in reference to humans? I mean, that in the Trinity, nature and Person are simultaneous, and in speaking of communion with God, one speaks not of relations with a nature, but with the Persons of the Father, Son and Spirit. Why not such a similar stress as in anthropology, where persons relate to persons, and to divine Persons? Human beings do not relate as natures to each other, but as persons (which of course, are manifestations of human nature). A better integration of the notions of "nature" and "person" in his anthropology could have led to parallel improvements in the explanation of the relationship between christology and pneumatology in his "ecclesiological synthesis." I turn next to Nissiotis's working out of this synthesis.

CHAPTER 4

NIKOS NISSIOTIS

- PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHRISTOLOGY AND THE EPICLETIC CHURCH -

So far I have dealt with the two Russian Orthodox theologians Florovsky and Lossky, but now my attention turns to the first of two Greek theologians, namely, Nikos Nissiotis. A number of Nissiotis's articles begin with warnings of not falling into unitarian patrimonism, christomonism, filioquism or pneumatomonism.¹ These warnings related in part to his desire to reform contemporary trinitarian theology and to include a balanced theology of the Holy Spirit, so that the Holy Spirit is not seen merely as an "impersonal

¹ Eg. Nissiotis, "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity for Church Life and Theology," *The Orthodox Ethos*, ed. A.J. Philippou (Oxford: Holywell, 1964) 33; "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique au service de l'unité de L'Église," *Istina* 12 (1967) 329; and "Die Theologie der Tradition als Grundlage der Einheit," *Um Einheit und Heil der Menschheit*, ed. J.Robert Nelson and Wolfhart Pannenberg (Frankfurt am Main: Otto Lembeck, 1973) 206. See also the references to Congar in note 91, which follows. Cf. also Wacław Hryniewicz, "Der pneumatologische Aspekt der Kirche aus Orthodoxer Sicht," 125-130, who relies on much of Nissiotis's interpretation of this topic.

power" or agent of Jesus Christ.² Despite stating that there should be a balance between christology and pneumatology in all theology, there is a tendency in his writings to emphasize the theology of the Spirit in his development of a "pneumatological christology." This pneumatological christology is identically what I have termed the "trinitarian synthesis." In terms of the spectrum of the trinitarian syntheses mentioned in my introduction, on one end there stands Florovsky with his christological leanings, (with Lossky somewhere in the centre attempting a balance between pneumatology and christology), and at the other end, Nissiotis with his priority for pneumatology.

I begin this chapter by elucidating the trinitarian theology of Nissiotis, and then I will relate his pneumatological christology to his ecclesiology. Nissiotis recognized the latter's importance in an article written shortly before his tragic death, when he stated that, "Ecclesiology remains the crucial issue for Christian theology in ecumenical perspective."³ Topics included within the methodological parameters of this study, again are

² "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 38.

³ Nissiotis, "The Church as a Sacramental Vision and the Challenge of Christian Witness," *Church, Kingdom, World: The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign*, Faith and Order Paper no. 130, ed. G. Limouris (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986) 99. Compare his comments in 1965: "Ecclesiology forms a large chapter in Christian theology," in "The Main Ecclesiological Problem of the Second Vatican Council and the Position of the Non-Roman Churches Facing It," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 2 (1965) 32.

He also said that through his pneumatological ecclesiology one can "more comprehensively" approach the four marks of the Church, in "Pneumatological Christology as a Presupposition of Ecclesiology," *Oecumenica: In honorem K. E. Skydsgaard*, ed. F.

apostolicity, catholicity, eschatology and time, worship and the Eucharist.

The Immanent Trinity and Communion

As with the other theologians under discussion, Nissiotis's starting point was the theology of the Holy Trinity. For him, the Trinity is a unity of three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all of whom are in communion with each other, so that being in relationship, or communion, is central for understanding divine revelation and creation.⁴ God is not an isolated entity, but a being always in a mutual movement within the Godhead. The essence of God is love, effected by the Holy Spirit via personal communion with the Father and the Son.⁵ "Personal" here for Nissiotis meant that there exists a will, inspired by love, to establish communion with another person. Referring to St. Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto*, Nissiotis noted that what is common in the nature of the three Persons of the Trinity is their communion in the divine nature and their inseparability.⁶ The unity of the Trinity is a unity by virtue of the essence of the three Persons, where each of them retains their unique

Kantzenbach & V. Vajta (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1967) 251.

⁴ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 40.

⁵ Ibid. 41; cf. Nissiotis, "Called to Unity: The Significance of the Invocation of the Spirit for Church Unity," *Lausanne 77: Fifty Years of Faith and Order*, Faith and Order Paper no. 82, Emilio Castro et al., (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1977) 57.

⁶ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 41. He also refers to the Spirit as being the Spirit of communion, but provides no exact reference to St. Basil's work.

characteristics, so that "[within] the Trinity there is a sort of ontological communication."⁷

The word "person" is a "tentative human" expression, wrote Nissiotis, to describe the three *hypostases* of the Trinity and to designate the activity of God in the divine economy.⁸

Within the relationships of the Trinity, Nissiotis used the classical trinitarian explanation that the Father is non-birth (non-generation), the Son is begotten in eternity and then born in time, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and is sent in time by the Son (cf. John 15.26). The Father reveals the whole divine economy by the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. In this relationship, the Spirit is not subordinated to the Son.⁹ The Holy Spirit in the Trinity, as a principle of unity or communion in the Godhead, is also the principle of unity between the Trinity and the Church. Christ reveals this hypostatic union within the Trinity, and this "profound sense of the hypostatic union is experienced in the Church through the Holy Spirit."¹⁰ The Holy Spirit accomplishes and brings to completion the work of the Saviour, which is communion (hence unity), vertically between all persons and God, and horizontally, as communion among all persons (cf. Galatians 3.5ff.; Colossians 2.11-

⁷ Ibid. 43. For a general overview of Nissiotis's triadology see Torrance, "The Trinitarian Theology of Nikolas Nissiotis," 103-109; and although a bit dated, S.P. Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 230-234.

⁸ Nissiotis, "Interpreting Orthodoxy: The Communication of Some Eastern Orthodox Theological Categories to Students of Western Church Traditions," *Ecumenical Review* 14 (1961) 7.

⁹ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 42.

¹⁰ Ibid. 43.

12). In line with Palamite theology, Nissiotis spoke of this communion with God as effected through the divine energies, and not with God's essence.¹¹

Anthropology and *Theosis*

In one of his earlier writings (1961), Nissiotis wrote that the mystery of the Trinity is revealed primarily in the incarnation. Creation manifests the love and unity of the Trinity, where through Christ there exists a movement to re-establish communion between God and humanity. Definitively, the incarnation and resurrection restored the human nature to its original relationship with its Creator.¹² This relationship is marked by sin, but through a process of *theosis*, the person is regenerated into a new creation and eventually attains union with God.¹³

The fall, sin, atomizes, separates, splits, divides: the redemption and the act of the Spirit personify, unify and only thus regenerate. The nature of [the person] is found in the movement between these two opposites ... which are reconciled by the Spirit of God, given to [persons] as new life which [they] appropriates in freedom. In this way Jesus as the incarnate truth becomes for [persons] both the life and the means to achieve it in the Spirit, who brings

¹¹ Ibid. 42.

¹² "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 8.

¹³ Ibid. 7, 13; cf. "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 44.

[persons] in the Ecclesia back to communion with the Trinitarian God.¹⁴

Like Lossky, Nissiotis spoke of *theosis* as being the goal of Christian life, to share in the divine life and energy.¹⁵ The human person is to be understood in the light of Christ, (John 1.4) who is the prototype of what it means to be a person. In creating the person in God's image, God "implants in him [/her] love, which is of [God's] very essence."¹⁶ This "imageness" is not simply recovered through Christ's redemptive act, but it also calls one forward to the person's final end, which is *theosis*, and hence union with the Trinity. "Through the Holy Spirit [the person] becomes the receptacle of the act of the Trinitarian God in Christ."¹⁷ In terms of anthropology, in the 1960s, Nissiotis noted that it should be "the chief concern of all theology,"¹⁸ which one can contrast with his later position (already mentioned) that affirmed the importance of ecclesiology. Although this christological approach to anthropology referred to the whole trinitarian economy, Nissiotis's early theology (pre-1964) might seem similar to Florovsky's in Nissiotis affirmation that the "christocentric approach to all problems of theology is a necessary presupposition."¹⁹ The

¹⁴ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 57.

¹⁵ Ibid. 47.

¹⁶ Ibid. 48.

¹⁷ "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 9.

¹⁸ Nissiotis, "Christus, das Licht der Welt," *Kyrios* 1 (1961) 19. Cf. Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 232-234.

¹⁹ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 45; cf. 48.

question I consider in this next section is whether or not he consistently maintained this position or was leaning in the direction of pneumatology.

Pneumatological Christology

Each Person of the Trinity operates in the economy of salvation, despite fulfilling separate roles in it. For example, the Father elects Israel, while the Son reveals the Father, and the Holy Spirit witnesses to the Son and seals the work of Christ. Since it is the Holy Spirit who unites the three Persons in the Trinity, so too does the Spirit unite persons in the Church into a dynamic diversity.²⁰ Thus the Spirit both "unites" and "diversifies" persons in the Church. Nissiotis insisted that in ecclesiology one must avoid isolating Christ from the Holy Spirit. The place of the Holy Spirit in ecclesiology allows one to clarify the distinction between Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice and its actualization in history or time in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit makes the Christ event at once trans-historical, yet "ever present in time."²¹ The Holy Spirit, after Pentecost, is essential for the perfection and establishment of Christ's presence, who makes Jesus's work live in the Church and in all persons. (I will say more about Nissiotis's notion of the presence of the Spirit in history in a later section on the epicletic nature of the Church).

In repeating that one must not separate Christ from the Holy Spirit, Nissiotis spoke of Christ's resurrection and ascent to the Father as allowing the Holy Spirit to descend and

²⁰ Ibid. 61.

²¹ Ibid. 61; "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12.

be present in creation in a new way, gathering all into one family of the Church.²² It is only in and by the Holy Spirit that Christ is present in the Church, for both are at work in the whole of creation, effecting creation, regeneration, and preservation. The being of the Church is thus a "microcosmos" of creation.²³ In reacting to christomonism, Nissiotis developed what he called a "pneumatological christology" for ecclesiology:

The aim of pneumatological christology is the new, direct and personal presence of God by his Spirit and through a distinctive community. This is the only means by which we can receive the grace of God and experience [this] new communion with [persons] who are now cleansed by the blood of Christ. It is the descent of the Holy Spirit which makes this purification possible, but only through [its] historical community.²⁴

Here he added that God acts in time through a relationship in Christ (christology) in order to effect communion between God and persons and amongst persons themselves (pneumatology).²⁵ This pairing of "pneumatological christology" in ecclesiology was also

²² "Pneumatological Christology," 266; and "La christologie pneumatologique," 440.

²³ "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12.

²⁴ "Pneumatological Christology," 237. In "La christologie pneumatologique," Nissiotis also argued that pneumatological christology is a proper approach and framework in responding to the crisis in ecology, an approach which also overcomes the erroneous dualism between matter and spirit (the transcendent).

²⁵ Ibid. 237-238.

called by Nissiotis "pneumatological ecclesiology."²⁶

A balanced pneumatological christology situates Christ as the focal point in the relationship between God and persons, where God and persons meet in a vertical relationship, however, one must also say that there is a horizontal pneumatological presence of God in salvation history and in the Church. The Spirit is not only active in history after Pentecost, but before it, in inspiring the prophets and realizing the incarnation in time by creating the link between God and persons in Mary (Luke 1.35; Matthew 1.18).²⁷ Christ is

²⁶ See for example the wording in the title: "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique au service de l'unité de L'Église," *Istina* 12 (1967) 323-340. He also spoke of "pneumatological christocentrism," in "Towards Restoring Church Communion," *Mid-Stream* 26 (1987) 532.

In 1985, referring to the Munich document on "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity" (agreed upon by the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church), Nissiotis revealed his pneumatological bias in commenting: "Based on a trinitarian, *especially a pneumatological approach*, this [Munich document] represents an identity of opinions on the crucial issues of ecclesiology [ital. mine]." In "The Meaning of Reception in Relation to Results of Ecumenical Dialogue on Basis of Faith & Order Document," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985) 147-174. Compare these comments with my synopsis, in "Ecclesiology in the International Orthodox-Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue," 360-362; and Michael A. Fahey, *Orthodox and Catholic Sister Churches: East is West and West is East*, Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 1996 (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1996) 20-31ff; as well as with Nissiotis's more tempered comments in "Towards Restoring Church Communion," 532-533.

²⁷ "Pneumatological Christology," 240.

sanctified and chrismated by the Spirit (Luke 4.18), and he acts in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4.1, 12.28). The Spirit's role in the economy is so central that Nissiotis stated:

The whole life of Jesus as the Christ of God depends upon the Spirit and is inspired by the Spirit. ... In the incarnation and the historical life of Jesus the energy of *the Spirit is the decisive element*, because it is the Spirit who makes the "link" possible and who maintains, by [its] work, the union between God and [persons] in the historical person of Jesus.²⁸

A decade later, Nissiotis echoed the same position when he affirmed that:

[The Spirit's] energy is the *conditio sine qua non* for the historical accomplishment of the *martyria* of Christ, continually renewed in the Church ... Without Pentecost the Church would never have been more than a promise, a dream, an expectation.²⁹

The Holy Spirit realizes in time the eternal communion between God and persons. The Holy Spirit is crucial for the personal revelation of God, for it is the Spirit "who enacts and completes the divine economy. Without [it] neither the incarnation, nor faith in Christ and

²⁸ Ibid. 240, ital. mine; cf. 24; see also "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique," 328; and "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," *Theology Today* 19 (1963) 490; "Chrétienté: fin et/ou permanence," 19. See Schillings's comments, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 231.

²⁹ "The Theology of the Church and Its Accomplishment," *Ecumenical Review* 29 (1977) 72.

his lordship is possible."³⁰

One gets a sense of the great role Nissiotis attributed to the Spirit from the following passage:

[Contemporary] theology ... confesses the Holy Spirit as God in person, as he who operates the unity of Father and Son in the being of the God, as well as the unity of God and man, as he by whom the world is created and constantly renewed, by whom Christ is incarnate (Luke 1.35; Matthew 1.18-20), as he who guarantees the Messianic mission of Christ (Luke 4.14, 18), offers in God the blood of Christ shed for the salvation of the world (Hebrews 9.14), causes Christ to rise from the dead (Romans 1.4; 8.11), establishes the Church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1), and sends the Church on its mission. It is he who operates man's transfiguration (1 Corinthians 3.17), leads the Church into all truth (John 16.23); it is by him that the world will be convinced (convicted) of justice, judgement and sin; it

³⁰ "Pneumatological Christology," 241. For a similar emphasis on pneumatology in ecclesiology, see also Joseph Kallarangatt, "The Trinitarian Foundation of an Ecclesiology of Communion," *Christian Orient* 11 (1990) 3-16. This latter author frequently cites Nissiotis and Congar in his ecclesiology, likely due to their influence on him. See his dissertation entitled *The Holy Spirit, Bond of Communion of the Churches: A Comparative Study of the Ecclesiology of Yves Congar and Nikos Nissiotis* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1989). See also Thomas F. Torrance, "The Trinitarian Theology of Nikolas Nissiotis," 106-107.

is he who gives us access to the Father and who will confirm us in faith (Romans 8.16; Galatians 4.6); it is he who gives us liberty in Christ and binds us to Christ until his return at the end of time (*arrabon*), in this way inaugurating in time the eschatological age.³¹

In the context of the above quote, it thus seems that Christ is relegated to a "passive" role in the economy, where the primary agent and divine operator in history is the Spirit.

In some of his mature writings (mostly from the 1970s onward), Nissiotis attempted to gently qualify these strong pneumatological leanings by stating that the Church then must be thought of in terms of Christ and the Spirit,³² and a "wholistic ecclesiology" should be based upon "authentic christological premises."³³ Nevertheless, his tendency was to say that pneumatological christology is based on the Christ event, "but it sees it [the Christ event] as possible only through the act of the Spirit."³⁴ One can maintain, like Nissiotis, a strong pneumatological dimension or a priority of pneumatology over christology, without at the same time negating the christological element. The christological is not abrogated by the elevation of the pneumatological to prominence or decisiveness.

³¹ For the sake of simplicity, in this quote I have departed from my convention of using inclusive language. The quote is from "Called to Unity," 51. For his comments on Mary with respect to the incarnation and christology, see "Pneumatological Christology," 240; and "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 10-11.

³² "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 101.

³³ Ibid. 101.

³⁴ "Pneumatological Christology," 243.

The Founding of the Church

In Nissiotis's triadology and theology of Pentecost, the Spirit's presence in the Church is the result of the procession of the Spirit from the Father, and its sending by Christ in time.³⁵ The descent of the Spirit establishes the Church in history, so that without Pentecost, there would be no Church, and hence no historical presence of Christ in creation.³⁶ Christ's presence in the Church is similarly because of the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is only after Pentecost that the apostles are able to proceed with their ministry and to establish a visibly structured community.

This Spirit "establishes a visible community, a well organized institution,"³⁷ which is consonant with Nissiotis's belief that the Church was founded at Pentecost. Would this mean then, that the Spirit "instituted" the Church, unlike Florovsky's and Lossky's Christ as "institutor"? For Nissiotis, the founding of the Church in time at Pentecost meant that:

Pentecost is the *telos*, the ultimate end of the revelation in Christ. At the same time, it is the beginning of a new era, that of the immediate and permanent presence of the revelation in history. Pentecost does not mark the inauguration of a religion of the Spirit, but the establishing in time and space

³⁵ Ibid. 242.

³⁶ Ibid. 242; "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 485; cf. "Is There a Church Ontology in Luther's Ecclesiology?" *Luther et la Réforme allemande dans une perspective oecuménique*, (Chambésy-Geneva: Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarchat Oecuménique, 1983) 404ff.

³⁷ "The Theology of the Church and Its Accomplishment," 73.

of all the gifts of the incarnation.³⁸

Echoing a similar theme as Zizioulas, Nissiotis said that "the pneumatological Pentecost is christological. Its essence is the communion between God and [persons] realized in Jesus."³⁹

After Pentecost, the People of God become the Body of Christ, or the communion of saints.

Christ consequently becomes omni-present in the Holy Spirit. Reflecting on Vatican II's decree on ecumenism, Nissiotis added that:

The theology of the Holy Spirit ... seems to be a weak point of Vatican II and which is of paramount importance, especially when one tries to state principles of ecumenical collaboration. ... Ecumenism has an impossible task if consistent conclusions are drawn up from a basis which is not fully pneumatological and if the Spirit is not mentioned as the Paraclete of truth and founder of the historical Church.⁴⁰

³⁸ Trans. mine from Nissiotis, "Pneumatologie orthodoxe," *Le Saint-Esprit*, F.J. Leenhardt et al., (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1963) 102-103; cf. "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12. See also Bernard Dupuy, "Nikos Nissiotis (1925-1986), théologien de l'Esprit-Saint et de la gloire," 230; and Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 232.

³⁹ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 488-489.

⁴⁰ Nissiotis, "Orthodox Reflections on the Decree on Ecumenism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3 (1966) 338. In reference to his being an official Orthodox observer at the Second Vatican Council, see also "Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils in Orthodoxer Sicht," *Kerygma und Dogma* 10 (1964) 153-168; "Ecclesiology and Ecumenism of the Second Session of the Vatican Council II," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 10 (1964) 15-36; "Constitution sur l'Église: un pas en avant," *Lumière et Vie* 14

Pentecost is not a secondary event to the redemption accomplished in Christ, but rather Pentecost "perfects this salvation in man, and makes it present in history."⁴¹

Nissiotis wrote that one should not venture into pneumatomonism in such an approach because the establishment of the Church is the activity of the whole Trinity.⁴² Everything ultimately comes from the Father, who is the origin and *telos* of everything.⁴³ Trinitarian revelation comes into history via the other two persons of the Trinity, who act together, carrying out the Father's will. The Church is the fulfilment of salvation in Jesus Christ in a concrete form, where the Holy Spirit completes this event.⁴⁴ As Christ was the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so now Nissiotis put forward the Spirit as the fulfilment in time of Jesus Christ. Again, he warned one not to identify the Church directly with Jesus, for it is only the Spirit which unites Christ as Head with his Body, the historical Church.⁴⁵ In

(1965) 21-28; "Mouvement oecuménique et Vatican II: un point de vue orthodoxe," *Rencontre oecuménique à Genève*, ed. Augustin Bea et al., (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1965) 95-116; "Okumenische Bewegung und Zweites Vatikanisches Konzil: Eine orthodoxe Betrachtung," *Kerygma und Dogma* 11 (1965) 208-219; and "The Main Ecclesiological Problem of the Second Vatican Council and the Position of the Non-Roman Churches Facing It," 31-62.

⁴¹ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 62.

⁴² "Pneumatological Christology," 243.

⁴³ Ibid. 243.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 244; "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 244.

his theology, he insisted that a "strong pneumatological approach" in ecclesiology was required to counter contemporary problems in ecclesiology.⁴⁶

The Epicletic Nature of the Church

Nissiotis's pneumatological leanings led him to speak of the "epicletic" nature of the Church. The Church, in the *epiklēsis*, continually invokes the Spirit to descend upon the gathered community of believers. Since the time of the early Church, stated Nissiotis, the *epiklēsis* has been the culminating point of the liturgy where the Spirit mysteriously transforms the eucharistic elements.⁴⁷ In the liturgy, the Holy Spirit is invoked "as God in person and substance."⁴⁸ He stated, in reference to defining the Church:

[The] Church is the permanent *epiklēsis* of the Holy Spirit from the Father and in virtue of the salvation of Christ. If we absolutely need a definition of the Church, this is the best we can give!⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid. 250; "Called to Unity," 50-51.

⁴⁷ "Called to Unity," 54.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 54.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 54. In a note in the same paragraph, Nissiotis referred to Paul Evdokimov (1901-1970) as one of the "major pioneers of contemporary pneumatology." Since Nissiotis's works generally do not contain many notes, there is a difficulty in ascertaining his influences and his sources.

For other definitions of the Church by Nissiotis, he wrote that while realizing our inability to "define" the Church, we can say that the Church is "the mystery of the Holy

In the *epiklēsis*, he held that the Spirit acts in "place of the exalted Christ, re-enacting the whole of the divine economy as if Christ with the Father were present among us here and now," while further on in the same work he elaborated that the Spirit is the "continual presence" of the grace of the Trinity.⁵⁰ This was in line with his anthropology, which indicated that the goal of the incarnation was to enable us to receive the Holy Spirit.⁵¹ Via the *epiklēsis*, the Church is founded upon communion with God and persons, and amongst persons in the community. Referring to Irenaeus, Nissiotis repeated that, "Where the Spirit is, there is the Church," and *vice versa*, which he supported by Christ's promise to send the Comforter to all who invoke his name (Matthew 18.20).⁵²

The communion of the Holy Spirit is not simply the activity of this Person nor the gift of the Spirit in the Church, but the communion of the third divine Person is communion with the personal *hypostasis* of the Holy Spirit.⁵³ The Holy Spirit is communion because in

Spirit realizing the communion between God and man," in "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 492. Earlier, he also wrote that "the Church is the realization in time of the divine economy decided before the foundation of the world through the election in Christ of all those who would believe in him. It is a transhistorical event in Creation which unites its origin, its actual state and its fulfilment," in "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12.

⁵⁰ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 39 & 42, respectively.

⁵¹ "Called to Unity," 54.

⁵² Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1 (PG 7.966), cited in "Called to Unity," 55.

⁵³ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 485.

and through the Holy Spirit the Trinity is made one, and present in the Church.⁵⁴ The Holy Spirit works out the communion between the three divine Persons, between God and persons and between members of the Church so that when the Spirit acts it "creates a personal-corporate reality, the *ecclesia-koinōnia*."⁵⁵ This again, is communion realized in time. In reflecting on Vatican II's third session and work on the schema on the Church, Nissiotis wrote that there was not sufficient mention "of the communal aspect of the Church, the idea of the Church as *koinōnia* in Christ of all members built and framed together in him by the charismata of the Spirit."⁵⁶ This repeated his position that the Holy Spirit is the one who builds Church unity in Jesus Christ.

As mentioned, the emphasis on "person" by Nissiotis was used to indicate that a person is always in movement towards another person, whereby one becomes aware of oneself. The Spirit "is the communion, acting out of communion, creating communion and leading us back to the original communion between creator and creature."⁵⁷ Faith in God thus has to pass through the Church-communion in order to attain communion with God, which means that the Spirit only acts through a corporate body of persons, which is the Church. Nissiotis wrote that this "is why no ecclesiology is possible unless we begin with

⁵⁴ Ibid. 485.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 486; "Called to Unity," 55 speaks of this also as the Body of Christ.

⁵⁶ In "The Main Ecclesiological Problem of the Second Vatican Council," 37.

⁵⁷ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 487.

the pneumatological aspect."⁵⁸ So if Florovsky could write, "Ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology," then perhaps in a qualified way one can say that Nissiotis would have written, "Ecclesiology is but a chapter of pneumatology" as the Church is necessarily part of the definition of the Holy Spirit in its role as the builder of communion.

In comparing Eastern and Western ecclesiologies, Nissiotis set up an interesting notion of "communion ecclesiology."⁵⁹ He remarked that the East, on the basis of liturgical experience, developed a "theology of participation in the incarnate Logos," which sought to understand how one could participate in the event of Christ. For the West, "on the contrary," he wrote that it sought to interpret "the mode of salvation" by asking how it was possible to "receive redemption in Christ." Thus the East had a theology of the incarnation, while the West had a theology of grace, the cross and salvation. Nissiotis mentioned that these two approaches were "equally legitimate," but that both led to different visions of mission and presence in the world.

The theology of the incarnate Word and of participation issued in a eucharistic theology, an ecclesiology of communion, whereas the theology of redemption issued in a prophetic theology, outward looking in a catechetical and activist sense.⁶⁰

Further, he mentioned that these two approaches could be "mutually integrated by a

⁵⁸ Ibid. 487.

⁵⁹ In "Called to Unity," 59-60; cf. "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 100f.

⁶⁰ "Called to Unity," 60.

theology of Holy Spirit based on the practice of the *epiklēsis*.⁶¹ This "epicletic ecclesiology" thus integrates both the particular churches (in eucharistic synaxis) and the universal Church (in its prophetic dimension).

Two Decisive Moments in the Economy

Nissiotis was possibly echoing Lossky's notion of the "two economies" of Christ and of the Spirit when he affirmed that there are two central moments in the divine economy. The first is the accomplishment in time of reconciliation and redemption through the Christ event, and the second is the giving of grace to persons when they invoke the Spirit (the Pentecost event),⁶² both of which must be distinguished, while recognizing that they are intrinsically united. The pneumatological aspect "incorporates" or "transubstantiates" the christological so that the Christ event becomes the Church via the Holy Spirit, which means that the people of God, via the body of Christ, now become the communion of the Holy Spirit. He added that in this vision, the Word of God that was incarnate now becomes the spoken Word, and that the flesh of Christ reveals "its expiatory grace and becomes the omni-present Spirit."⁶³ Pentecost completes the victory already accomplished by Christ and a new era begins where this victory is perpetuated in time and space in the Church.⁶⁴ And it

⁶¹ Ibid. 60.

⁶² "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 488.

⁶³ Ibid. 488.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 489.

is in the catholicity of each local or particular Church that one finds the integrity and criteria of this new era.

Catholicity

Nissiotis set up catholicity as a key concept for ecclesiology, and the "key-notion and reality for the study of our theme of Church unity and the world's renewal."⁶⁵

Catholicity is not a geographical construct, nor a hierarchical discipline, but denotes the fullness or wholeness of truth bestowed upon the Church by the Spirit of Truth.⁶⁶ "The limited congregation bears the fullness of truth, because, through Baptism, the Eucharist, and preaching, the communion accomplished in Jesus between God and [persons] is represented."⁶⁷ This wholeness of truth and grace is present in every ecclesial gathering which shares, with a bishop at its centre, in a sacramental life so "[accordingly] there is a priority of the sacramental-eucharistic communion over the universal extension of it which is its result. ...Personal-ecclesial communion has priority over all other forms which make it

⁶⁵ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 102. I should note that Nissiotis's work pre-dates some current "communion ecclesiology," especially in light of the fact that the Faith and Order Commission did not officially address the theme of *koinōnia* until 1993 at their fifth conference. For this subject, and some Orthodox contributions to the theme, consult *On the Way to Fuller Koinōnia*, Faith & Order Paper no. 166, ed. T. Best and G. Gassman (Geneva: W.C.C., 1994).

⁶⁶ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 491.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 491.

manifest in history."⁶⁸ Catholicity, he stressed, thus does not mean universal, but the wholeness or fullness of God's grace mediated via personal and concrete expressions of communion with specific persons and the Church at specific times and places.⁶⁹ Elsewhere, Nissiotis wrote that the local Church forms "part" of the divine economy, "part of the whole of the One Church," and that such a Church bears the "wholeness of the truth."⁷⁰ The trend in this presentation of catholicity is that the local Church does not exist simultaneously with the universal Church, but is the latter's precursor. The local expression of catholicity in sacramental communions "validates, exalts and enacts more deeply and fully the universal dimension of catholicity."⁷¹ Catholicity, in its qualitative and quantitative sense, passes first through the local Church whereby one becomes a member of the universal Church.⁷² He makes it clear that the local-universal distinction is not mutually exclusive, and that the qualitative-universal dimension is also of great importance due to God's activity and presence in the economy, beginning principally in the act of divine creation. One nevertheless wonders if Nissiotis here was borrowing from Afanas'ev's "eucharistic

⁶⁸ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 102-103.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 103.

⁷⁰ "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12. Cf. his comments in "Partikularität und Einheit in der Sicht der Orthodoxie," *Aksum-Thyateira*, ed. by G. Dragas (London: Thyateria House, 1985) 569-578.

⁷¹ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 103.

⁷² Ibid. 103.

ecclesiology," which affirmed the priority and importance of the local Church over the universal.

Apostolicity & Ministry

Nissiotis's notion of catholicity was also extended to elucidate his theology of apostolicity and ministry. He explained that Jesus's relations with the apostles indicated that he related (and relates) to a distinct community of believers, and in such a community, the Holy Spirit finds the point of contact in which to realize the communion between God and the Church.⁷³ This has a trinitarian basis. The Father sends the Son and Spirit to establish communion with persons, so that the "trinitarian approach to the charismatic aspect of the Church implies always a corporate divine action realized in the human corporate reception of the grace."⁷⁴ Via Baptism, all persons are incorporated into the royal priesthood of all believers, offering together eucharistic (thanksgiving) sacrifices, yet there arises in the apostles and their successors a new sacerdotal service, which Nissiotis calls a *leitourgia* of the Word of God for the community and in the community.⁷⁵

Orthodoxy has here a very important contribution to make ... for it is

Baptism which consecrates the people of God as full members of the Body of Christ, through the Chrismation of the Holy Spirit, so that they become

⁷³ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 494.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 495.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 495; "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 64.

part of the royal priesthood which is the wider concept of the ministry. It is in this sense that the personal ministry of those consecrated in the diaconate of the Church can be possible. I would maintain that there is such a personal ministry and that it is inseparably united to the priesthood of the whole people of God in the Church.⁷⁶

The distinction between persons as "royal priesthood" and as *leitourgiōs*, "which is absolutely necessary," is primarily of charismatic than of functional character.⁷⁷ The ordained ministers are set apart, not as a special priesthood, and they derive their authority from both the apostolic ministry and from the community, all in the power of the Spirit.⁷⁸

Since the Holy Spirit unites the members of the Church with Jesus, making each one a member of the Body of Christ, Nissiotis held that the institutional structure of the Church

⁷⁶ "The Eastern Orthodox in the Ecumenical Movement," 189-190.

⁷⁷ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 495, and 496; "Called to Unity," 63; cf. "Is There a Church Ontology in Luther's Ecclesiology?" 405. "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 121 has references to the diaconate as being synonymous with the priesthood of all believers: "To be a Church member means to be in diaconal service."

⁷⁸ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 496. See his comments on the *sensus fidelium* and "reception" with regard to authority, in "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 17-18. Similar themes are analysed with respect to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (B.E.M.) document, in "The Meaning of Reception in Relation to the Results of the Ecumenical Dialogue on the Basis of the Faith & Order Document," 147-174. The B.E.M. document is published as: *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: W.C.C., 1982).

is only meant as "an instrument of service" or *diakonia*.⁷⁹ There should exist no dichotomy between the "institution" and the "event" of faith, both being given and sustained by the Holy Spirit. His notion of "event" was related to the living in faith in Christ, and through communion with God in the sacraments.⁸⁰ He thus characterized the Church as "one and unique sacramental event."⁸¹ The institutional aspect of the Church is the means of grace whereby the Spirit bestows charisms to all members of the Church in order to build up the Church and to evangelize (mission).⁸² This institutional aspect has no independent value, but is the "channel of the charismatic life of the Spirit" which means that the Church, for Nissiotis, is "in [its] essence charismatic."⁸³ In spelling out common elements that root us in the Body of Christ, Nissiotis cited the following: Baptism and trinitarian confirmation followed by the *epiklēsis*; the eucharistic celebration centred on the *epiklēsis*; the proclamation of the Gospel; mission and social service; eschatological expectation.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ "Called to Unity," 57.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 51; cf. 57.

⁸¹ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 110; cf. "'Is There a Church Ontology in Luther's Ecclesiology?'" 404.

⁸² "Called to Unity," 57 and 55. See also Schilling, 235ff., 241ff.

⁸³ Ibid. 58; and 57ff; and "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 492, respectively.

⁸⁴ "Called to Unity," 61-62. For some comments on "mission," refer to "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 23-25. Here he wrote that being in Christ (i.e. the Church) and being sent by the Spirit (i.e. mission) are two aspects of the same event. Cf. also "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 114-116f; and "The Ecclesiological Foundation of Mission From the

Nissiotis attempted to strike a balance between the charismatic and institutional, by reminding one not to see the Church as merely a charismatic body,⁸⁵ despite his emphasis on this charismatic dimension of the Church.

As for the institutional aspect, Nissiotis argued that the New Testament interchanged the words bishop and presbyter. Bishops are not the "creating elements or sacred authorities of Church unity; but they are the guardians of the pre-existing community of believers and the guardians of their eucharistic gathering."⁸⁶ In his pneumatological ecclesiology, Nissiotis also spoke of the bishop in the Church as:

[Its] charismatic centre and [who] constitutes at the same time the pivot of the two principle elements of ecclesial life: the personal and the communitarian. Through him the trinitarian life is incarnated in personal communion among [persons].⁸⁷

In relation to apostolicity, this mark of the Church is located primarily in the community and the bishop is the guardian of it.⁸⁸ The gift of apostolicity is not given directly to a bishop's

Orthodox Point of View," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 7 (1961-1962) 22-52.

⁸⁵ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 63.

⁸⁶ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 497; cf. "Called to Unity," 63; "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 13.

⁸⁷ "Le sacerdoce charismatique, le laïcat et l'autorité pastorale [d'une perspective Orthodoxe]," *Verbum Caro* 14 (1960) 230. Cited in Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 236-237.

⁸⁸ "Spirit, Church, and Ministry," 497.

see or only to the faith of the community, but is transmitted to the body of the Church, and is made manifest through persons who are personally responsible for bearing this gift.⁸⁹ Apostolicity is fully expressed by the "collegiality of all the bishops and by the personal priesthood in the one universal Church."⁹⁰

In criticising theologies of christomonism or imbalanced christocentrism, he said that such theologies led to identifying the Church in terms of "institution," and implied that the hierarchy was given authority solely and directly from Jesus Christ.⁹¹ In such an approach, no reference was made to the faith of the historical community. An opposite tendency was to refer everything to the personal and individual faith of the believer, and relegate the

⁸⁹ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 64. See also the summary in Dupuy, "Nikos Nissiotis," 230-231.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 64; "The Eastern Orthodox in the Ecumenical Movement," 190.

⁹¹ "Pneumatological Christology," 235. Nissiotis tended to associate christomonism and pneumatomonism, though not exclusively, with the Western churches. For example, see "Called to Unity," 51; "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 35-37; "Pneumatological Christology," 235; "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique," 323-324f. There was, however, a favourable appraisal of Luther, in "Is There a Church Ontology in Luther's Ecclesiology?" Cf. Schilling, "Nikos A. Nissiotis," 237. Dupuy analyses christomonism in terms of the *filioque*, in "Nikos Nissiotis," 228-229.

Yves Congar had terse reactions to Nissiotis's generalizations, in *The Word and the Spirit*, 113 (and 120, note 31), 117 (and 121, note 52), as well as "Pneumatologie ou 'christomonisme' dans la tradition latine?" *Revue théologique de Louvain* 45 (1969) 394-416. For a critique of Nissiotis's own Church's approaches, see "Called to Unity," 53.

institutional aspect of the Church to a secondary or negligible importance.⁹² The institutional Church was not considered because it was not the charismatic work of the Spirit. The latter approach he labelled as "pneumatomonism." In one case the Holy Spirit is seen as guaranteeing a pre-existing order of the institutional Church, and in the latter case the Holy Spirit acts on behalf of Christ for the salvation of the individual.⁹³ These imbalances in ecclesiology occurred, again, because the importance of Pentecost for the Church was ignored or not sufficiently affirmed.⁹⁴

Worship, Holiness & Time

Nissiotis continued the Orthodox tradition of affirming the importance of the eucharistic celebration for the life of the Church, although it is not a dominant theme in his writings. In discussing the place of worship in the Church, one can get a sense of what the notions of time and eschatology meant for him.

In his ecclesiology, Nissiotis spoke of the Church living "out of," "in" and "for" communal worship.⁹⁵ In the Church's worship, two aspects, the eschatological and

⁹² "Pneumatological Christology," 235.

⁹³ Ibid. 239.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 240.

⁹⁵ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 67.

historical, are intimately joined for worship is the "pivot of history."⁹⁶ In this pneumatological christology, the Church is a continuously renewed event of the Spirit (eschatological dimension) while being an established and permanent christological reality (historical dimension).⁹⁷ The Church looks towards the future in expectation while realizing that it is in the era of the Holy Spirit, who makes present the grace of the Trinity and the kingdom of God.⁹⁸ It looks in hope towards the future by virtue of the salvation already accomplished by Christ in the past.⁹⁹ The Church is thus on its way to its eschatological end, so it is not yet perfect, even though the Kingdom is already at hand.¹⁰⁰ The era of the Paraclete is present in anticipation in history, although the "future age, the *eschaton*, is with him [i.e. the Spirit]."¹⁰¹ This means that the *anamnēsis* is directed backwards to "the historical moment of salvation," but the communion of elements is enacted in the future eschatological age, so that the Church is placed between the past and the future. One can

⁹⁶ Nissiotis, "Worship, Eucharist and Intercommunion: An Orthodox Reflection," *Studia Liturgica* 2 (1963) 194; and "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 67.

⁹⁷ "Pneumatological Christology," 247, 249.

⁹⁸ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 65ff.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 65ff.

¹⁰⁰ "Pneumatological Christology," 250; "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 14; "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 101f.

¹⁰¹ "The Main Ecclesiological Problem of the Second Vatican," 38.

say then that the *anamnēsis* is also a memory of the future.¹⁰²

Nissiotis's pneumatological christology "as a basis of ecclesiology has a particular importance when we move between security of the past and future vision laying emphasis on the future dimension."¹⁰³ He wrote that worship is "the place and time prepared in this world for the abiding of Eternity and the divine presence," which means that worship is a foretaste of the "meta-historical future by historical elements grounded in the historical incarnation of Jesus."¹⁰⁴ The Church participates in this final fulfilment by "anticipation," so that "eschatology, thus "becomes in the sacrament a real presence in history."¹⁰⁵ Nissiotis concluded, as mentioned, that the Church is "one and unique sacramental event,"¹⁰⁶ where the whole creation is renewed in the Spirit and by being in Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5.18ff.; Revelation 21.5).

"Worship is primarily the act of God, in which the Father, answering the request of

¹⁰² "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 67; cf. "Is There a Church Ontology in Luther's Ecclesiology?" 406; Compare his comments that the resurrection makes time a forward-looking process, in "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 15.

¹⁰³ "Towards Restoring Church Communion," 527.

¹⁰⁴ "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 15.

¹⁰⁵ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 109. Elsewhere he wrote that the Church has a saving and sanctifying purpose for creation "which is already potentially saved; that means that everything belongs to its saving word and sacrament," in "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 20. This, he maintained, is a fundamental ecclesiological statement.

¹⁰⁶ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 110.

the Body of his Christ, sends his Spirit" so that in the worshipping Church, Christ is present only through the energies of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁷ Christ becomes both the offering and the unique High Priest as the Head of the Church. As a consequence, in the worship of the Church, via the *epiklēsis*, the Church recapitulates and enacts the whole of the divine economy, which brings about the unity of the cross, resurrection, Pentecost and the eschaton: "Worship thus moves from the past towards the assured future."¹⁰⁸ In Nissiotis's ecclesiology, the Eucharist most perfectly manifests this epicletic nature of the Church.

The Eucharist

For Nissiotis, as well for Orthodox theology, the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist and within the community does not depend upon the words of institution, but because Nissiotis emphasized the Pentecost-event, the sacramental presence depends upon the *epiklēsis*.¹⁰⁹ This emphasis is another constitutive element which revealed his priority for the Holy Spirit in the economy. In the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are "immediate, visible manifestations of this holy action" of the Spirit.¹¹⁰ This God-human communion is also realized in the preaching of the Word, and not only in the eucharistic synaxis.¹¹¹ The

¹⁰⁷ "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 68-69, and 68, respectively.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 69.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 69.

¹¹⁰ "Pneumatological Christology," 245.

¹¹¹ "Interpreting Orthodoxy," 12.

heart of the Church is the sanctifying energy of the Spirit, who unites us to the Body of Christ, yet this activity is not automatic for it too requires a response from the believer, which is nothing other than *metanoia* or repentance, a process begun already at Baptism.¹¹² Again, the ultimate goal of communion is *theosis*. As for the Church, Nissiotis wrote that the Church is the great sacrament, the charism of God where one receives the grace of God.¹¹³ The theological notion of sacraments expresses the reaching out "to be in relation" (communion), and the Eucharist pre-eminently and directly expresses the "grace of God communicated by the Spirit" in light of the cross and resurrection of Christ.¹¹⁴

In the Eucharist, where the elements of the sacramental nature of the Church directly express the grace of God communicated by the Spirit in virtue of the cross and resurrection of Christ, we offer our thanksgiving with worldly means, and on the part of the whole world, so that we all become, anew, sharers in the body and blood of Christ and at the same time "we do show" the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11.26).¹¹⁵

The sacramental nature of the Church culminates in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is a witness to the restored and renewed communion between God and persons, and amongst all persons.

¹¹² "Pneumatological Christology," 244-245.

¹¹³ Ibid. 250; cf. "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 110.

¹¹⁴ "The Church as a Sacramental Vision," 111.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 111.

Conclusion

Nissiotis was less original than the other theologians under discussion. His tendency was to borrow or reflect some of the insights and theology of Lossky, and perhaps even of Zizioulas. Like all the Orthodox theologians mentioned, his ecclesiology emerged from the theology of the Trinity, stressing notions such as person, and nature and communion or relation among persons. One recalls Lossky's principle about nature being restored and unified by Christ, while persons are brought into a diversity in the Spirit. For Nissiotis, it is the Spirit who is set out as the one who both unifies and makes persons in the Church a multiplicity, or a personal-corporate reality. He shared with Lossky and Florovsky the soteriological dimension of ecclesiology, but differed from the latter's christocentricity. He was much more like Lossky in stressing the Spirit's role in the economy and the Church, going so far as to say the theology of the Spirit is the decisive element, emphasizing that it was through the Spirit that Christ was incarnated and that the Church was founded. The Church was seen by him as the "permanent *epiklēsis*" of the Spirit whereby persons are called to communion in the *hypostasis* of the Spirit. Although he did not relegate christology to a greatly inferior position in his theology, it seemed to play a secondary role in his theology, which means that Christ's role in the economy of salvation was envisioned by him as being superseded by that of the Spirit. In the language of the methodology of this study, when speaking of the synthesis between christology and pneumatology, one can say thus that he exhibited a tendency to posit a "priority" of the Spirit over that of Christ, by saying pneumatology conditions christology, and hence his ordering of the words of his

synthesis as "pneumatological christology." By way of a contrast between christology and pneumatology, his pneumatology was more pronounced because he did not sufficiently integrate or develop his christology into the "trinitarian synthesis." Possible further refinements in his theology were prevented because of his early death.

Perhaps his moving to the priority of the Spirit in ecclesiology was motivated by his ecumenical contacts, as well as being a reaction to some of Roman Catholicism's perceived christocentricity in its ecclesiology (witness his comments about Vatican II¹¹⁶). Nevertheless, his pneumatological emphases were established fairly early on in his career. Since some of his work pre-dated trends in contemporary ecumenism's appropriation of communion ecclesiology (and the theological notion of *koinōnia*), like Lossky and Florovsky, he stressed the notion of catholicity as a grounding principle in ecclesiology, this is despite the fact that notions of communion and "being in relation" were present in his theology of the immanent Trinity. Nissiotis's strong pneumatology also placed emphasis on the believing charismatic community, where institutional structures (like the bishop) serve the Church. In terms of the Church's organized life, it is in the Eucharist that one enters into communion with God, with both the historical Church and the eternal communion of saints. The Church in time and the Church in the Kingdom are one and the same, and Nissiotis

¹¹⁶ Compare the comments on Nissiotis's participation in the Council by Stransky, "Nikos Nissiotis: Three Sketches," 467, who wrote: "... one need only compare the rather cautious article by Nissiotis in *The Ecumenical Review* after the first session of the Vatican Council in 1962 with a similar but more open essay in 1966, after the Council's conclusion."

maintained the delicate dialectic between the historical ("already") and the eternal (the "not yet") Church in his ecclesiology. It is to Zizioulas that I now turn in his working out of the this tension between the historical and eternal aspects of the Church in his trinitarian synthesis.

CHAPTER 5

JOHN ZIZIOULAS

- PERSON, COMMUNION AND SIMULTANEITY -

John Zizioulas adopts, in a manner similar to Florovsky, the principle that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology."¹ Zizioulas affirms most emphatically the principle of simultaneity of christology and pneumatology that Lossky proposed and which was in varying expressions already contained in the theologies of Florovsky and Nissiotis. Zizioulas's synthesis between the theologies of the Spirit and of Christ does not advocate a preference or precedence of one over the other, but affirms that the two should be conditioned by each other. Much of the basis for such an approach emerges from his theological notion of the person, especially as it relates to the Triune God and to communion (*koinōnia*). In fact, the key integrating concept in his "trinitarian synthesis" is this notion of communion. This trinitarian synthesis impacts his conception of time,

¹ In "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," *International Catholic Review-Communio* 1 (1974) 143; "Ordination—A Sacrament? An Orthodox Reply," *The Plurality of Ministries*, Concilium, Vol. 74, ed. H. Küng & W. Kasper (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 34.

eschatology, and the activity of God in history. Zizioulas shares many similarities with the other theologians in explaining the relationship of the Eucharist to catholicity, ministry, apostolicity, and Church unity and holiness, yet because of the way he develops his theology of the Triune God, his "ecclesiological and trinitarian syntheses" differ in uniquely significant respects from the others.

I have noted in the chapter on Florovsky that this theologian not only had reservations about his trinitarian synthesis, but that he also had reservations about the trinitarian synthesis proposed by Lossky. Florovsky, however, remained adamant, despite his own recognized weaknesses in his pneumatology, in preserving his theological principle that ecclesiology is a vital chapter of christology. Zizioulas recognizes the important contributions of Florovsky and Lossky, and he too offers his reflections on them. Despite Florovsky's influence on Zizioulas, in commenting on his late teacher's synthesis, Zizioulas admits that Florovsky "indirectly raised the problem of a synthesis, without however offering any solution to it," and tended to lean in the direction of christology.²

Discussing Vatican II and trends in ecclesiology that built their foundations on christology and only later added pneumatology as an appendage, Zizioulas introduces a comment made by Congar.³ Congar relayed that two (anonymous) Orthodox observers at the Council stated that "if we must propose a schema 'De Ecclesia,' two chapters would

² *BC*, 124.

³ *Ibid.* 123.

suffice: one on the Holy Spirit, the other on Christian man."⁴ Perhaps Congar was referring to Nissiotis here, judging by the latter's pneumatological emphases,⁵ nevertheless, Zizioulas responds to this comment by concluding that the current Orthodox synthesis between christology and pneumatology "is in this respect by no means satisfactory."⁶

Zizioulas consequently adds that Khomiakov did not explicitly address the problem of a trinitarian synthesis, and that "his views can make sense only if a strong dose of pneumatology is injected into ecclesiology."⁷ The only Roman Catholic he refers to in this section is Johann Möhler and his work on the unity of the Church,⁸ saying that his

⁴ Trans. mine from Yves Congar, "Actualité d'une pneumatologie," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 23 (1973) 121.

⁵ In fact, Congar referred to Nissiotis on the following page of the above mentioned article, but not directly in connection with the comments of the Orthodox observers. One can here again refer to Congar's explicit references to Nissiotis in *The Word and the Spirit*, 113 (and 120, note 31), 117 (and 121, note 52); and the opening paragraphs of "Pneumatologie ou 'christomonisme' dans la tradition latine?" 394ff.

⁶ *BC*, 124.

⁷ *Ibid.* 124.

⁸ *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (Tübingen, 1825). Möhler later distanced himself from this early work of his, offering a more balanced ecclesiology in his later works. For a synopsis of this early work and its relation to communion ecclesiology, see Dennis M. Doyle, "Möhler, Schleiermacher, and Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996) 468-469, 474-478; and the related article by the same author, "Journet, Congar, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997) 462-463.

pneumatology was so strong that it made the church a charismatic society rather than the Body of Christ.⁹

In the introduction I noted that Zizioulas spoke of Lossky's great importance in Orthodox theology, singling out two aspects of Lossky's synthesis. The first is his distinction between nature and person. Zizioulas's position is that:

This seems to offer material for a synthesis between christology and pneumatology in ecclesiology. And yet its actual schematization makes Lossky's position extremely problematic.¹⁰

The reason is that Lossky's positing of a distinct economy of the Spirit has "more or less pushed [ecclesiology] towards the side of pneumatology" and in the end, a separate economy of the Spirit "becomes questionable and in fact renders the synthesis so difficult that it must be abandoned."¹¹

Zizioulas also mentions two other Orthodox theologians who insisted on the importance of pneumatology and christology in their trinitarian syntheses, and who recognized the deficiencies in theologies that separated christology from pneumatology. These two were Boris Bobrinskoy and, relevant for our study here, Nikos Nissiotis. Both provided, Zizioulas states, "an important corrective of the views expressed by Khomiakov

⁹ *BC*, 124.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 125.

¹¹ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 144, and *BC*, 125, respectively. See also "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 20.

and to a large extent also Lossky, although the priority given to pneumatology is still preserved in both Nissiotis and Bobrinskoy."¹² In Zizioulas's overview of these theologians, he concludes that the synthesis between pneumatology and christology is "probably one of the most important questions facing Orthodox theology in our time."¹³

The Triune God and the Person

Zizioulas consistently insists that the starting point of all theology including ecclesiology should be the doctrine of the Triune God.¹⁴ Faith in God is not just about theoretical propositions, but is a way of relating one's existence to faith.¹⁵ For Zizioulas, there is only one God who exists in a Triune way, that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁶ Being the Triune God is not a secondary aspect of God's being, but is of an "ontological character."¹⁷ Zizioulas further explains that there are basically two possible ways of

¹² *BC*, 126.

¹³ *Ibid.* 126.

¹⁴ "The Mystery of the Church in the Orthodox Tradition," *One in Christ* 24 (1988) 295; cf. "The Church as Communion," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994) 6. For a parallel elucidation of Zizioulas's trinitarian theology, consult Miroslav Volf, *Trinität und Gemeinschaft: Eine ökumenische Ekklesiologie* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1996) 72-77.

¹⁵ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 19. See Yves Congar's comments on this in "Bulletin d'ecclésiologie," 89.

describing God's being. One way is to say that God is one because of the Father (in terms of *monarchia*), while the other approach speaks of God's oneness in terms of the divine *ousia* (essence or nature).¹⁸ In this latter case, by speaking of nature as prior to the person (*hypostasis*), the Trinity appears as a secondary aspect of God's being. In other words, from an ontological point of view, what is shared (nature) is prior to who shares in it (the Persons). The second problem with this *ousianic* approach is existential because God does not exist because of an impersonal factor like *ousia* or nature, but because of a Person, namely the Father. For Zizioulas, God's existence is not due to an "*ousianic* tautology" (i.e. God exists because God exists), but is caused by a Person who brings about being.¹⁹ This allows for the possibility of created persons, that is humans, to be freed from the "priority of substance," and to enter into God's way of being through divinization.

These foundational principles led Zizioulas to a discussion on the *filioque*, a topic he observes is often surrounded by polemic and mythology.²⁰ His comments on the topic are more tempered than those of Lossky. He admits that in the East, it is possible to speak of the Holy Spirit as coming eternally from the Son only in two senses. The first is that the Son is the "mediating" principle in the procession of the Spirit from the Father (*ek patros*

¹⁸ He associated the roots of the *ousianic* approach with the West, beginning with Augustine. The *monarchia* approach is the Eastern approach. In "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 24ff.

¹⁹ Ibid. 25.

²⁰ Ibid. 26.

di'yiou), and the second is that the Son, as mediator of the spiration, in no way becomes the cause (*aition*) of the Holy Spirit's procession.²¹ If we say that the Father and the Son are both causes of the Spirit's procession, then we either say that *ousia* is the first cause of this spiration or that there are two causes, or two gods. Neither alternative is acceptable for Zizioulas. One of the few times that Zizioulas refers to Palamas occurs in such a discussion, where he maintains that the Palamite controversy was about the priority of the person over substance.²² Even the early Church dealt with issues of the priority of the person over substance.²³

The theological notion of "person" is thus a core idea in Zizioulas's theology:

Person is now the *ultimate* ontological category we can apply to God.

Substance is not something ontologically prior to Person ... but its real

²¹ Ibid. 26, citing Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor. Cf. "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective," *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, Congresso teologico internazionale di pneumatologia (Rome, 1982), 2 vols., ed. J.S. Martins (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983) 1: 41-46.

²² "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 27. The other place that he refers to Palamas is in "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 51 on the same point. Zizioulas states that in the theology of the West, the priority of substance in God's being is no longer significant. In "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 27.

²³ "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 31-35. He mentions here Arianism, Nicea and Athanasius, and the Cappadocians.

existence is to be found in the Person.²⁴

A Person is the source of divine existence who effects divine existence in freedom and love.²⁵ At times Zizioulas even shows his preference not to refer to the unity of God in terms of substance, nor to the Father's monarchy, but to interpret St. Basil of Caesarea²⁶ and say that unity is in terms of divine communion.²⁷ Therefore, God is by definition a

²⁴ Ibid. 36; cf. "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975) 401-408; and "On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood," *Persons, Divine and Human*, King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology, ed. Christoph Schwöbel & Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 33-46.

²⁵ "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 37.

²⁶ Ibid. 33f. The reference to Basil is *De Spiritu Sancto* 18.45 (PG. 32.150): "... ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῆς Θεότητός ἐστιν ἡ ἔνωσις."; Cf. *BC*, 134.

²⁷ Zizioulas's views in this area have been contested by André de Halleux, "Personalisme ou essentialisme trinitaire chez les Pères cappadociens?" *Revue théologique de Louvain* 17 (1986) 129-155, 265-292; as well as John Wilks, "The Trinitarian Ontology of John Zizioulas," *Vox Evangelica* 25 (1995) 63-88. Both write that Zizioulas misinterprets the trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians, especially St. Basil. An attempt to put the debate in perspective and temper their critiques is found in Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 242-253ff. Consult also Constantin Agoras, "Hellénisme et Christianisme: La question de l'histoire de la personne et sa liberté selon Jean Zizioulas," *Contacts* 44 (1992) 253-259; and Michel Stavrou, "Le fondement de la personnalité: la théologie trinitaire dans la pensée de Jean Zizioulas," *Contacts* 48 (1996) 268-291. For an exposition of some aspects of the ecclesiology of St. Basil, see Paul J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of

relational being,²⁸ which is to say (in his famous phrase): "being means life, and life means communion."²⁹

Immanent / Economic Trinity and Apophatic Theology

In light of this perspective, Zizioulas asserts that it is important to make the doctrine of the Triune God relevant for the Church. The basis of this discussion are two dimensions of speaking about the Triune God, namely, in terms of the "economic" Trinity (God as revealed in salvation history) and in terms of the "immanent" Trinity (God as God mysteriously exists in the Godhead). Certain theologies have tended to suggest that God in history is, in God's own eternal being, one and the same, by making a direct correlation in saying that the "economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity."³⁰ If applied strictly, this could

Mediaeval Studies, 1979).

²⁸ "The Church as Communion," 6.

²⁹ Hence the title of his book *Being as Communion*. The reference is from the "Introduction," *BC*, 16. See McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 134. For a synopsis of McPartlan's book, consult my review in *Logos* 35 (1994) 600-602.

³⁰ This theological principle, that the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, *et vice versa*, has been popularized mostly by Karl Rahner, in *Theological Investigations*, trans. K. Smith (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961) Vol. 4: 77-102. Although most of the discussions on this stem from this Rahnerian principle, Zizioulas also comments on the trinitarian theologies of Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) and James Mackey, *The Christian Experience of God as Trinity* (London: SCM, 1983). In "The Doctrine of God

lead to the classical monistic conception of God's existence being inseparably linked with the existence of the world. Early Church controversies saw the emergence of the doctrine of "creation from nothing" (*creatio ex nihilo*) to show that God existed before the creation of the world (matter), and that God existed despite the existence of the world, thereby securing God's absolute ontological freedom and transcendence.³¹

For Zizioulas, the apophatic approach to theology can ensure that there remains a distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. It is necessary to be able to refer to God without at the same time referring to the created world, even though apophatic theology also runs the parallel risk of separating history from eschatology.³²

If God *is* Trinity he must be so also outside the economy. If he cannot be *known* as Trinity except in and through the economy this should not lead us to construct our trinitarian doctrine simply on the basis of the economy.

Without an apophatic theology, which would allow us to go beyond the

the Trinity Today," 23; cf. "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 50-51.

³¹ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 23. Cf. Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A.S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).

³² The latter aspect here is a critique of Vladimir Lossky. In "Eschatology and History [extracted from: "Eschatology and History," *Cultures in Dialogue: Symposium for P. Potter*, ed. Thomas Weiser (Geneva, 1985) 30-39, plus comments]," *Whither Ecumenism? A Dialogue in the Transit Lounge of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Thomas Weiser (Geneva: W.C.C., 1986) 67; "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 20.

economic Trinity, and to draw a sharp distinction between ontology and epistemology ... or between *being* and *revelation*, God and the world become an unbreakable unity and God's transcendence is at stake.³³

Zizioulas's qualification is that in the apophatic approach, one could say that the "economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity," only if one also said that the "immanent Trinity is not exhausted in the economic Trinity."³⁴ This point is also important for dialogue with other faiths, in that if the economic Trinity really is the immanent Trinity, then the incarnation is projected onto God's being, and God becomes a suffering God, an assertion that both Jews and Muslims would reject.³⁵

The Synthesis Between Christology and Pneumatology

Further to the theological principles that underlie Zizioulas's theology, there is his synthesis between christology and pneumatology. Unlike Nissiotis, he does not think that the West was ever christomonistic, and despite his criticisms that the Roman Church has

³³ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 23-24.

³⁴ Ibid. 24. He refers here, and in other places, to Congar's critique of Rahner's axiom. See Yves Congar's, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:11-18. For a comparison of the ecclesiology of Congar and Zizioulas on pneumatology and ordination, see Joseph Areepplackal, *Spirit and Ministries: Perspectives of East and West* (Bangalore, India: Dharmaram Publications, 1990).

³⁵ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 22, 24.

tended to begin with christology and only later add pneumatological elements,³⁶ his basic argument is that christology should be conditioned by pneumatology.

Of note in analysing a development in thought is Zizioulas's early programmatic address of 1967, where he held that:

The fundamental character of the Eucharist consists in the fact that it is a gathering and an act and that the *total mystery of Christ*, the whole Christ [*le Christ total*] and the salvation of the world is revealed, lived and concentrated in it.³⁷

In this article he only mentions the Spirit once, but this did not thereby exclude the activity of the Spirit, who descends in the *epiklēsis* to renew creation and bring about the

³⁶ "The Mystery of the Church," 295. This is another facet of his critique of Vatican II. See "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 22; "Implications ecclésiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie," *Communio Sanctorum: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Jacques von Allmen*, Boris Bobrinskoy, Yves Congar et al., (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1982) 143ff.

Zizioulas again cites Congar in this respect. In *BC*, 127; and "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 144 citing Congar's, "Pneumatologie ou 'christomonisme' dans la tradition latine?" 394-416. For a comparison largely of the ecclesiology of Congar and Nikos Nissiotis, consult Joseph Kallarangatt, "The Trinitarian Foundation of an Ecclesiology of Communion," 3-16.

³⁷ Trans. mine from "La vision eucharistique du monde et l'homme contemporain," *Contacts* 19 (1967) 85.

eschatological age.³⁸

In the preface to the French translation of his dissertation, published almost thirty years later, Zizioulas voiced some hesitations to its publication.³⁹ These stem from his admission that his theology in some respects has developed. He mentions the importance of synodality and primacy in the church as one area and, more important for our study, is that he lists first the "significance of pneumatology for ecclesiology." In that Preface he thus wrote:

The study here presents an accentuated christological character that could neglect the role of the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Church. Every effort of the author in the course of his subsequent works has been to achieve a correct synthesis between christology and pneumatology.⁴⁰

Here is where we see an implicit example of Florovsky's early influence on Zizioulas in christology, which Zizioulas has subsequently expanded upon.

In his more mature works, Zizioulas reflects that for some theologians, the Holy Spirit is seen as an "agent" of Jesus Christ, and as a "janitor" who opens the doors to Christ,

³⁸ McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 213-214, referring to Zizioulas's, "La vision eucharistique du monde et l'homme contemporain," 91.

³⁹ *L'Eucharistie, l'Évêque et l'Église durant les trois premiers siècles*, [Orig. pub. in Greek: *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῖα Εὐχαριστία καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας*].

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 7, trans. mine.

and who aids in our ability to listen to the Word and to believe in God.⁴¹ Such an approach primarily neglects that the Spirit is the one who makes Jesus be the Christ (Saviour), which includes the giving of a personal identity to Christ, since it is through the Spirit that he is born and resurrected.

Referring to Athanasius and Irenaeus, Zizioulas writes that the two held that pneumatology and christology should exist simultaneously, and not as successive or separate phases of God's relation to the world.⁴² "No matter how specific the role of the Spirit is ... it is extremely dangerous for the unity of the economy to speak of a special 'economy of the Spirit.'"⁴³ This can be taken as a rejection of Lossky's proposal of two economies of the Son and of the Spirit. The problem is not whether one accepts the importance of pneumatology or christology, but the problem occurs in the questions of "priority" and "content."⁴⁴ The question of "priority" revolves around whether one says that the Spirit is dependant on Christ, or vice versa, and the "content" refers to the particular facets of the theology of the Spirit and of Christ.

In fact, Zizioulas does not posit a priority, but rather that pneumatology and

⁴¹ "The Mystery of the Church," 296.

⁴² "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 143; "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 32ff. See the comments of Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 101-102.

⁴³ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 144.

⁴⁴ *BC*, 127.

christology should exist "simultaneously."⁴⁵ In the New Testament, we read that the Spirit was given by Christ (cf. John 7.39), yet there is no Christ until the Holy Spirit begins to do the work of God. In the latter case, the Spirit is not only a forerunner to Jesus, but as mentioned, one who "constitutes his very identity as Christ" at the Baptism in the Jordan (Mark 1.9-11) or at Christ's birth (Luke 1.35).⁴⁶ Both views (or a priority), Zizioulas argues could also be present in the same biblical narratives, such as in Luke and Acts, and John. In referring to the liturgical practice of the early Church, Zizioulas comments that in some places Baptism preceded Chrismation (Confirmation), while in other places (Syria, Palestine), Chrismation preceded Baptism. If one accepts that Chrismation is the giving of the Holy Spirit, the practice of one ecclesial community might have reflected a priority of pneumatology over christology, while in the case of Baptism preceding Chrismation, there might have been a priority of christology over pneumatology.⁴⁷ Despite this, the two rites were united in one synthesis "both liturgically and theologically."⁴⁸ The conclusion that Zizioulas draws from this is that assigning a priority to pneumatology or to christology does not constitute a problem so long as both are understood to form one synthesis. The issue of

⁴⁵ See his comments on the "in-stitution" and "con-stitution" of the Church in "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 147. Cf. also, Gaëtan Baillargeon, "Jean Zizioulas, port-parole de l'Orthodoxie contemporaine," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 111 (1989) 180-181.

⁴⁶ *BC*, 127-128.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 127.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 128.

priority can thus remain on the level of a *theologoumenon*.⁴⁹ Differences between the Eastern and Western churches, however, occurred when either one of christology or pneumatology became theologically dominant.⁵⁰

Eschatology and Communion

In Eastern and Western theology, the activity of God *ad extra* is one and indivisible. Where there is the Son, there is also the Father and the Spirit, etc., nevertheless, each Person of the Triune God contributes to the divine economy in different ways.⁵¹ These contributions are thus directly relevant for ecclesiology.

The Son is the only one who becomes incarnate, and as a result the Father and Spirit are involved in history, but only the Son "becomes history."⁵² Time can not be introduced into the Spirit and the Father, for that would negate their particular roles in the economy. Only the Christ event (birth, death, resurrection) "assumed history" and has a "history." Zizioulas asserts that even Pentecost should be linked to the Christ event in order to be part

⁴⁹ Ibid. 129.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 129. For an exposition of various Orthodox approaches to trinitarian theology, see Boris Bobrinskoy, "Models of Trinitarian Revelation." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39 (1995) 115-126.

⁵¹ "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council," 38.

⁵² *BC*, 130.

of the "history" of salvation.⁵³ The Spirit's role in the economy is to free the Son from history, so that in his death, Christ is raised by the Spirit (Romans 8.11). When the Spirit acts "on history," the last days are inaugurated and bring about the "beyond history" since "the first fundamental particularity of pneumatology is its eschatological character" (Acts 2.17ff.).⁵⁴ The Spirit in the economy also fashions Christ into a "corporate personality" (as Son of Man, Servant of God) because the Holy Spirit is the principle of communion (2 Corinthians 13.14), who as a result, makes the Church be the Body of Christ.⁵⁵ The Spirit permeates reality by making it relational—a communion with God.⁵⁶ Christ as a "pneumatic" being is in his essence relational, which also means that the Church's essence too is relational (i.e. to be in communion).⁵⁷ Lossky spoke of all persons being united in Christ through nature, and the Holy Spirit as diversifying persons. Zizioulas too speaks of the Spirit as diversifying, but he also adds that the Spirit also simultaneously unites all into a unity. And what is made "one," or what is constituted as "one," is none other than the corporate Christ. The Spirit thus can only unite by diversifying, and oppositely, diversify what is united. Here Zizioulas echoes Nissiotis's position that the Spirit both unifies and diversifies.

⁵³ Ibid. 130.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 130; "Implications ecclésiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie," 143ff.

⁵⁵ *BC*, 131. Cf. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 114, 247.

⁵⁶ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 145.

⁵⁷ "The Church as Communion," 6.

Other aspects of the work of the Spirit are sanctification and inspiration, yet it is the aspects of eschatology and communion that have become decisive for Orthodox ecclesiology, and since Orthodox ecclesiology has been formed by the liturgy, communion and eschatology enter into the Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist.⁵⁸ "The eschatological community *par excellence* is to be found in the Eucharist which is thus the heart of all ecclesiology."⁵⁹ Pneumatology as expressed through eschatology and communion is "con-stitutive" of the Church.⁶⁰ Zizioulas argues against seeing the Spirit as merely an "animator" of a Church that somehow already has been instituted for it is the Spirit who "makes the Church be."⁶¹ He uses the language of Christ "instituting" the Church, while the Spirit "constitutes" the Church.⁶² This is similar in some respects to what

⁵⁸ *BC*, 131.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 131, n.19; cf. "Déplacement de la perspective eschatologique," *La chrétienté en débat: Histoire, formes et problèmes actuels*, G. Alberigo et al., (Paris: Cerf, 1984) 98.

⁶⁰ *BC*, 132.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 132.

⁶² Zizioulas in one place refers to Nissiotis's "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique au service de l'unité de l'Église," *Istina* 12 (1967) 323-340 in that the Church became a historical reality through the Holy Spirit. In *BC*, 161.

Congar argued a similar principle of "co-institution" by the Spirit, adding that the Church is equally "co-instituted" by Christ. In *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 2:7ff. In "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 28, Zizioulas accepts Congar's usage of "co-institution" by Christ and the Spirit. Cf. "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 147-148; "Implications ecclésiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie," 143. See also

Lossky maintained.

The Triune God and the Ecclesiological Synthesis

Zizioulas makes it clear that he thinks that the Church should not be looked upon primarily as an institution, but more as a "way of being" or "event."⁶³ Nissiotis also had spoken of the Church as an event, or as the charismatic life of the community in the Spirit. I have noted that the notion of communion is one of the primary elements in Zizioulas's ecclesiology, which means that the Church is "a set of relationships making up a mode of being, exactly as is the case of the Trinitarian God."⁶⁴ The Church is a reflection of God's way of being, and a balanced ecclesiology would make the doctrine of the Triune God existentially relevant to a person's way of being. What follows is a discussion on the second dimension of this study, namely, the "ecclesiological synthesis" in Zizioulas's works.

As God is relational, in terms of the communion existing among the divine Persons, so too should the Church be relational. The Spirit makes communion possible, but the Spirit also makes Christ be a "corporate person," meaning that Christ's existence is conditioned by the existence of the "many" (i.e. the Church).⁶⁵ By being born of the Spirit, it is not possible to conceive of Christ as an individual, but as a corporate being who relates. A relational

Bobrinskoy, "Models of Trinitarian Revelation," 119.

⁶³ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 27.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 27.

⁶⁵ "The Mystery of the Church," 299.

being draws its identity and personhood from communion or relations with others. This again, is modelled on the Triune God, where God's being lies in the relational existence of the Triune God—there is no Father without the Son nor without the Spirit. The identity of the "one" God draws its identity from the Father's relations with the Son and Spirit, etc., and not from the divine essence. Thus, there is no "one" Person without the Others, which also applies directly to Christ. Christ is conceived of as both "one" and the "many." He is not first "one" who then relates to the "many," but is simultaneously "one" and "many" because as "one" he relates to the "many."

And yet, the "mystery hidden before all ages" in the will of the Father is nothing else but the incorporation of this other element, of us, or the many, into the eternal filial relationship between the Father and the Son. This mystery amounts therefore, to nothing but the Church.⁶⁶

So the existence of the body (Church) is a necessary condition for the "Head" to be a head and the "Body" to be a body. This is the point where Zizioulas echoes Florovsky's axiom that "christology without ecclesiology is inconceivable," that the Church is a core part of the identity of Christ.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid. 300.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 299; *BC*, 124. Here again is Florovsky's principle that "christology is but a chapter of ecclesiology."

The Church's Epicletic Nature

As the Church is also "constituted" by the Holy Spirit, relationships are freely established by the Spirit. What is more, history is not a sufficient justification for the establishment of institutions for the Church must always be "constituted" anew.⁶⁸ "There is nothing given in the Church—be it ministry or sacraments or other forms of structure—which is not to be asked for as if it had not been given at all."⁶⁹ This epicletic nature of the Church is most evident in the eucharistic synaxis because the words of institution are insufficient apart from the invocation of the Spirit to make the Eucharist what it is supposed to be. The Eucharist was "instituted" christologically (at the Last Supper), but it is celebrated by the Church after the resurrection pneumatologically (that is, after Pentecost).⁷⁰ In Zizioulas's christological-pneumatological synthesis, the Church is "constituted" epicletically and whatever was instituted by Christ in history can not be a sufficient ground for the ultimate eschatological reality: "A new event is always needed."⁷¹ In other words, without Christ, there is no Church (community or communion), yet, without the *epiklēsis*, Calvary is no

⁶⁸ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 28. Cf. Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 106-112.

⁶⁹ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 28; "Eschatology and History," 69.

⁷⁰ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 148.

⁷¹ "Eschatology and History," 68. Cf. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 270, 287.

longer Calvary.⁷²

Creation and Holiness

With the descent of the Spirit, a new age is inaugurated, which is the age of the Kingdom. Since the Church's nature is "epicletic," the Spirit acts upon history and creation from the future. The Church's identity thus does not proceed from what it currently "is," or what it "was," but from what it "will be" in the future.⁷³ In fact, the *eschaton* should not be thought of as an end, but rather as the beginning of the Church's life because the Kingdom has come with Christ's resurrection.⁷⁴ "The Church must be conceived of as the place where [persons] can get a taste of [their] eternal eschatological destiny which is communion in God's very life."⁷⁵ The only way to taste this future identity is through the celebration of the sacraments and in the encounter with the Word. In Zizioulas, this future identity is most fully realized and experienced in the celebration of the Eucharist, while sacraments such as Baptism and Chrismation are only intended to lead to this full redemptive experience.

Salvation is offered to the whole of creation, so that death may be eradicated from the cosmos. Celebration of the sacraments are crucial for this to occur because they involve

⁷² "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 148.

⁷³ "The Mystery of the Church," 296.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 296.

⁷⁵ "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," 28.

all of creation in the being of the Church (Colossians 1.15-20).⁷⁶ History is thus not discarded, but is involved and transformed in the *eschaton* because this future reality validates history.⁷⁷ The Church liturgically anticipates the ultimate salvation of the cosmos (cf. 1 Corinthians 15.26ff.), a belief which is part of the basis of Zizioulas's concern for the crisis in ecology.⁷⁸ Although the Church lives in this world, it is not of this world, which means that the Church is an icon of the Kingdom.⁷⁹ He comments:

I agree with the view that the incarnation introduces eschatology into history but this does not mean that the eschatological God has been enclosed by

⁷⁶ "The Mystery of the Church," 296.

⁷⁷ "Eschatology and History," 66, 68-69. Cf. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 136, 270.

⁷⁸ See for example, "Preserving God's Creation: Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology," *King's Theological Review* 12 (1989) 1-5, 41-45; 13 (1990) 1-5. These lectures form the basis of his book *Creation as Eucharist: A Theological Approach to the Ecological Problem* [in Greek] (Athens: Ekdoseis Akritas, 1992). For a review article of his book, see Philip Sherrard, "Metropolitan Zizioulas' 'Creation as Eucharist,'" *Epiphany* 13 (1993) 41-46; as well as a shorter review by Christos B. Christakis, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 40 (1996) 323-326.

See also similar comments by Zizioulas, in "Ecological Asceticism: A Cultural Revolution," *Sourozh* no. 67 (Feb. 1997) 22-25. This article reflects some of the comments made in an unpublished talk for the Commission on Faith and Order's Consultation with Younger Theologians (Turku, Finland; August 3-11, 1995) entitled, "Faith and Order Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," 1-6.

⁷⁹ "The Mystery of the Church," 300.

history. The *eschaton* must be allowed to reaffirm itself anew, and this is the essence of the Eucharist as I understand it. Otherwise, the *eschaton* does not determine history but history captures the *eschaton*.⁸⁰

The Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, creates life in an "event" of communion by making present this future reality (the *eschaton* or the Kingdom) in the here and now, in a particular local community.⁸¹

Zizioulas often refers to Maximus the Confessor's interpretation of pseudo-Dionysius when speaking of the iconic character of the Church. It is worthwhile thus to quote the often repeated passage he utilizes:

[The Areopagite] calls "images [icons] of what is true" the rites that are now performed in the synaxis For these things are symbols, not the truth ... from the effects. That is, from what is accomplished visibly to the things that are unseen and secret, which are the causes and archetypes of things perceptible. For those things are called causes which in no way owe the cause of their being to anything else. Or from the effects to the causes, that is, from the perceptible symbols to what is noetic and spiritual. Or from the imperfect to the more perfect, from the type to the image; and from the image to the truth. *For the things of the Old Testament are the shadow;*

⁸⁰ "Eschatology and History," 73.

⁸¹ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 148; "Eschatology and History," 66.

*those of the New Testament are the image [icon]. The truth is the state of things to come.*⁸²

In this section, Zizioulas explains that in ancient Greek thought, what is a "cause" was thought to be logically and chronologically prior to the "effect." However, Maximus reversed this order and spoke of the "cause" being in the future, or in the eschatological Kingdom. For example, the Eucharist is the "result of the Kingdom which is to come."⁸³ Thus the ultimate identity ("truth") of the Eucharist and the Church lie in the future, and not in the past ("shadow") or in the present ("icon"), where their archetype is located. In the Eucharist, the Church participates in "the *ontological content* of the prototype."⁸⁴

This interrelation between history and eschatology is also related to the liturgical notion of *anamnēsis* or the eucharistic memorial. It is true that the anamnestic aspect recalls God's presence and acts in the past, hence in history, but more importantly the *anamnēsis* is directed towards the future since the last days have already been inaugurated.⁸⁵ In fact Zizioulas argues that "[you] need to give decisive priority to the *eschaton* over history, as if

⁸² Ital. mine, from Maximus Confessor, *Scholia in ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 3.3.2 (PG 4.137), quoted in Zizioulas, "The Eucharist and the Kingdom [Part I]," *Sourozh* no. 58 (1994) 5-6; see also, *BC*, 99.

⁸³ "The Eucharist and the Kingdom [Part I]," *Sourozh* no. 58 (Nov. 1994) 6.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 11.

⁸⁵ *BC*, 187-188.

the Word of God was coming from the end and not from the past."⁸⁶ In terms of the liturgy:

[What] happens in the community of the Church, especially in its eucharistic structure, has no meaning in itself apart from its being a reflection—not in a Platonic but a *real* sense—of the community of the Kingdom of God. This mentality is so fundamental that there is no room for the slightest distinction between the worshipping eucharistic community on earth and the actual worship in front of God's throne.⁸⁷

In its worship, the Church not only remembers and experiences its past, but it also "remembers" and experiences the eschatological Kingdom. In this way, since Zizioulas speaks of the Spirit acting on history and bringing about the *eschaton*, the *anamnēsis* could also be said to be a memory of the future.⁸⁸

As there is a trialectic between the Father, the Son and the Spirit, so too in worship and prayer is there a parallel dialectic between Christ and the Church. In the dialectic Christ-Church, at first sight it seems that the Church offers its prayers to the divine Christ. However, Zizioulas argues that the reality is much more complex. For him, when the Church prays to the Father, it is Christ who also prays to him for us and with us.⁸⁹ Christ is also one who receives the prayers, sitting next to the Father. The prayers are heard by God

⁸⁶ "Eschatology and History," 68.

⁸⁷ *BC*, 232-233.

⁸⁸ Cf. "The Mystery of the Church," 296.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 297.

since they come from his only begotten Son. In Zizioulas's understanding of Christ as a "corporate person," we see that this implies that Christ has "identified himself so much with the ecclesial community" that there can be no real dichotomy between Christ and the Church (that is, apart from the sinfulness of humanity).⁹⁰ Nevertheless, there is total communion between Christ and the Church, so that Christ is not envisaged simply as a mediator.⁹¹

This identification of the Church with Christ is again based upon the Chalcedonian doctrine, where the divine and human natures were united yet not "confused" (i.e. "without change, confusion, admixture").⁹² The distinction, yet equivalence, in ecclesiology between the "uncreated" (the glorified corporate Christ-Church) and the "created" (earthly church), both makes redemption a reality, but a reality that awaits ultimate completion in the *eschaton*.

By being conditioned pneumatologically, the Church is in its eschatological dimension also celebrating as part of the communion of saints. Here the Spirit, in the ecclesiological synthesis, not only inaugurates the "last days," but is also the principle of

⁹⁰ Ibid. 297. Baillargeon says that there is too close of an identification between Christ and the Church, which leaves little room for the notion of the Church *in via*, or the Church as composed of sinners. In Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 255-257.

⁹¹ "The Mystery of the Church," 297.

⁹² "Christologie et existence: La dialectique créé-incréé et le dogme de Chalcedon," *Contacts* 36 (1984) 167-168. The distinction "created" and "uncreated" is spoken of by Zizioulas in terms of a "dialectical relationship."

communion with the Kingdom of the last days. The Church is thus "holy" and her members "saints" (*hagioi*) by partaking in the holy things (*hagia*).⁹³

The holiness of the Church is thus related to the identification between Head and Body acquired at the moment when the Head (Christ) brings to the Father the prayers of the community.⁹⁴

In the eucharistic synaxis, accompanied by the descent of the Spirit, the Church "transcends in [itself] the world and offers it to God in the Eucharist."⁹⁵ This transcendence, made possible by the Spirit, presupposes baptismal purification and repentance (*metanoia*), and the "paschal" aspect of the Eucharist. The church's dual existence is "in" this world, but "not of" this world. "The Church is a community that lives within history, and therefore within the fallen state of existence," which means that "the essence of Christian existence in the Church is *metanoia* (repentance)."⁹⁶ The Church is made of sinners who are constantly in need of reconciliation, yet we affirm the Church's holiness and sinlessness. Again, Baptism is associated with forgiveness and incorporation into the Kingdom to come, yet the Eucharist preeminently realizes this communion with the saints, and the reconciliation of the

⁹³ "The Mystery of the Church," 298.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 298.

⁹⁵ *BC*, 162; "Eschatology and History," 69ff.

⁹⁶ "Communion and Otherness," *Sobornost* 16 (1994) 11; cf. "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 155.

entire cosmos with God.⁹⁷ For Zizioulas, Baptism and Chrismation are given in view of the Eucharist, and as such they are like a "partial-communion" awaiting fulfilment in the Eucharist.⁹⁸

Event and Institution

Since the Church is "what [it] is by becoming again and again what [it] will be" in an epicletic way through prayer, and preeminently in the Eucharist, Zizioulas is able to say that the Church is an "event."⁹⁹ However, he does not leave out a consideration of the institutional aspect of the Church. The Church as event indicates that the Church is not a permanently structured society, but this does not imply that the Church is void of any institutional aspects: "It means that not all such aspects pertain to [its] true identity which is eschatological."¹⁰⁰ The basis for the justification of institutional elements in the Church have to be related to the notion of the Church as "event." These elements stem from the event of the eucharistic community, which celebrates the inbreaking of the Kingdom in each local church. For Zizioulas:

[Institutions] such as episcopacy or the structure of the eucharistic community or the distinction between laity, priests and bishops, or even

⁹⁷ "Communion and Otherness," 15.

⁹⁸ "The Church as Communion," 15.

⁹⁹ "The Mystery of the Church," 301. Cf. Volf, *Trinität und Gemeinschaft*, 98.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 301.

conciliarity, stem from the Church as event and Mystery, precisely in the celebration of the Eucharist.¹⁰¹

Ministries involved in the celebration of the Eucharist are therefore the key ministries.¹⁰² In the section on the ordained ministries in the Church, and their relationship to the local and universal Church, I will show how this is worked out by Zizioulas.

Catholicity and Unity

In the process of relating the Triune God to the Church, one can assert that since the one God exists in a diversity of Persons, the one Church exists in a diversity of churches and of people.¹⁰³ The expression of this one Church is in the communion of many local churches: "communion and oneness coincide in ecclesiology" where the "one" and the "many" exist simultaneously.¹⁰⁴

There is no Church which can be conceived in [itself], but only in relation to something else—in this case to God or Christ and to a certain locality, i.e. to the world around [it].¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 301.

¹⁰² "Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement," *Sourozh* no. 21 (Aug. 1985) 18ff.

¹⁰³ *BC*, 145-149; 135.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 135. Cf. Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 125-126.

¹⁰⁵ "The Church as Communion," 7.

Zizioulas wrote this comment in a discussion about St. Paul's letters to the "Church at Corinth" or the "Church of God" which exists in a given place. In the early communities, social and natural divisions (gender, age, Greek, Jew, etc.) were transcended in the eucharistic community, and hence the community was "catholic" (cf. Galatians 3.28).¹⁰⁶ Here the activity of the Spirit both diversifies and simultaneously united all members of the community.

In the Church, there are two institutional levels of relating: the local and the universal. On the local level, no Christian can exist as an individual in direct communion with God, but must be part of local community (being in communion with other persons). Unity or oneness imply an interdependence among churches and amongst persons. This also means that there exists "diversity" within the community as each person is endowed with certain charisms in the building up of the Body of Christ. Each person is needed exactly because they are different.¹⁰⁷ Not all persons are apostles or teachers, and not all have the charisms of tongues or various ministries. The only conceivable limit to diversity, for Zizioulas, is that it should not destroy the unity of the Church.¹⁰⁸

The Spirit particularizes (by diversifying) each community in the body of Christ by making each local church a "full" and "catholic" Church and safeguards the universal unity

¹⁰⁶ *BC*, 152.

¹⁰⁷ "The Church as Communion," 9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 9.

of the Church.¹⁰⁹

[Catholicity] is neither an objective gift to be possessed nor an objective order to be fulfilled, but rather a *presence*, a presence which unites into a single existential reality both what is given and what is demanded, the presence of him who sums up in himself the community and the entire creation by his being existentially involved in both of them. The Church is catholic only by virtue of [it] being where this presence is (Ignatius), i.e. by virtue of [it] being inseparably united with Christ and constituting his very presence in history.¹¹⁰

A Zizioulian synthesis of pneumatology and christology posits the full catholicity of each local Church. Afanas'ev, known for coining the phrase "eucharistic ecclesiology," argued that wherever the Eucharist is, there is the Church.¹¹¹ Here the Eucharist makes the Church, a point Zizioulas would accept.¹¹² In this respect, he again echoes his teacher Florovsky's saying that the sacraments constitute the Church.¹¹³ Yet, Zizioulas maintains that there is a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 10.

¹¹⁰ *BC*, 159-160.

¹¹¹ Eg. "'Una Sancta,'" *Irénikon* 36 (1963) 459.

¹¹² "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 18, 20-21. See Paul McPartlan, "'You Will Be Changed Into Me': Unity and Limits in de Lubac's Thought," *One in Christ* 30 (1994) 60.

¹¹³ "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God [Part II]," *Sourozh* no. 59 (Feb. 1995)

danger in Afanas'ev's ecclesiology (which can also be an implicit critique of Nissiotis), that leads to a priority of the local church over the universal.¹¹⁴ Where pneumatology is weak or subordinated to christology, the local church is subordinated to the universal Church, where christology is weaker than pneumatology, the local church is not adequately related to the "one" Church.¹¹⁵ According to his ecclesiology, the universal and local churches exist simultaneously.¹¹⁶ The dialectic emerges that "oneness" (universal unity) can not precede the event of "communion" (the many), yet there is no communion prior to the oneness of the Church.¹¹⁷ Christ is constituted by the Spirit in his Body as one Person, who is simultaneously diversified in the Spirit into the many. There is no "one" without the "many."¹¹⁸ This principle also applies to ministry, where no one ministry can exist without the other ministries.¹¹⁹

The Ordained

Looking more closely at ordination, one can see Zizioulas's pneumatological and

¹¹⁴ *BC*, 133. For a comparison of Afanas'ev and Zizioulas, see McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 226-235.

¹¹⁵ "The Church as Communion," 10.

¹¹⁶ *BC*, 154, 158.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 135.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 135.

¹¹⁹ "Communion and Otherness," 16.

christological basis for a theology of ministry. Because of Zizioulas's "ecclesiological synthesis," he is able to identify the church's ministry with that of Christ.¹²⁰ This ministry exists simultaneously with the pneumatological aspect since it is the Spirit who bestows upon persons the charisms of ministry, and this same Spirit is the principle of communion between the community and its various ministries. Referring in part to Nissiotis, Zizioulas writes that:

The identification of the Church's ministry with that of Christ is possible only if we let our *christology* be *conditioned pneumatologically*. This can happen if we see the mystery of Christ as being *initiated* by the Father who actually sends the Son in order to fulfill and realize the eternal design of the Holy Trinity to draw [persons] and creation to participation in God's very life. ... What, therefore, the Spirit does through the ministry is to constitute the Body of Christ *here and now* by *realizing* Christ's ministry *as* the Church's ministry.¹²¹

Ministry too exists for the divinization of the person, which is communion in the very life of the Triune God (cf. Luke 6.35; 2 Peter 1.4) so that the church's ministry is to be "seen in

¹²⁰ BC, 21; cf. "Ordination—A Sacrament?" 33-39. See also Areeplackal, *Spirit and Ministries*, 2.

¹²¹ BC, 210-211. The reference to Nissiotis is "La pneumatologie ecclésiologique," 322-340.

existential *soteriological* terms."¹²² By allowing the Spirit to condition the very identity between Christ and ministry, communion with the Triune God involves the presence of the Saviour, and since the Spirit is the Spirit of communion, there is an interdependence between ministry and the community.¹²³

This condition is expressed concretely in the fact that ordination can only be done within a particular community and be related to this particular community, and it must take place within the context of a eucharistic assembly.¹²⁴ Ordination depends upon the prayers of the community (the "Amen"), and not just on an act of transmission of divine grace. The act of ordination is also not something the community does, but it is a response to the activity of God.¹²⁵

If ordination is approached in this way, ministry ceases to be understood in terms of *what it gives* to the ordained and becomes describable only in terms of the *particular relationship* into which it places the ordained.¹²⁶

This is the proper understanding of ministry, as a charism of the Holy Spirit and as service (*diakonia*). A certain hierarchy is thus implied because of the specificity of relationships within the community (cf. 1 Corinthians 12-13), which is a reflection of the hierarchy

¹²² *BC*, 211.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 212.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 213; "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 19.

¹²⁵ *BC*, 218; cf. "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 149.

¹²⁶ *BC*, 219-220.

among the Persons of the Triune God.¹²⁷

In Zizioulas's approach, there is also no such thing as a non-ordained person in the Church.¹²⁸ By virtue of Baptism and Chrismation, which involves a "laying on of hands," a person is ordained into a community. The baptized are not simply incorporated into the Church as Christians, but they become members of a particular order (*ordo*) within the community. Baptism in this sense is an act that constitutes the community and is not something that comes after a pre-existing Church.¹²⁹ Since each person is endowed with different charisms, Baptism constitutes the "existential *locus* of the convergence of the *charismata*" (1 Cor. 12.7ff).¹³⁰ Each person, although only "one," enters into a communion in which they become "corporate," that is, they also become the whole Church (the

¹²⁷ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 151.

¹²⁸ *BC*, 215ff; and 153; "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God [Part III]," *Sourozh* no. 60 (May 1995) 35. Cf. Emmanuel Clapsis, "The Sacramentality of Ordination and Apostolic Succession: An Orthodox-Ecumenical View," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985) 425-426.

¹²⁹ *BC*, 216; "Eucharistic Prayer and Life," *Emmanuel* 85 (1979) 192. Zizioulas has often been criticized for neglecting the importance of Baptism in ecclesiology. A typical critique is found in Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 254-255. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 268-274 believes that Baillargeon's criticisms are unfounded.

¹³⁰ *BC*, 217 citing an earlier article "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist," *Sobornost* 5 (1969) 644-652. Cf. "Communion and Otherness," 16; and "Déplacement de la perspective eschatologique," 97.

"many").¹³¹ Here again is the Holy Spirit's role in diversifying yet uniting.

Bishops & Apostolicity

In ensuring unity and guaranteeing diversity, Zizioulas singles out the ministry of oversight (*episkopē*), finding a normative ecclesiological model in Ignatius of Antioch's writings.¹³² The bishop or overseer is the minister of unity, both within his own community and amongst other local churches. At the local level, the bishop stands as an icon of Christ, visibly doing what Christ does invisibly, that is, offering the prayers of the community and the community itself to the Father.¹³³ Here Christ stands among the community in its offertory prayer (*anaphora*). According to the trinitarian synthesis, since nothing exists in itself but only as a result of communion, the bishop does not stand apart from the community, but stands amongst the community in communion with other persons in the Church. This latter aspect is preserved in many churches in that there is no ordination of a bishop outside of a concrete local community,¹³⁴ and that such ordinations require the presence of two or three other bishops. At the local level, the bishop is thus the "one" who

¹³¹ "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," 152, citing Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia* 4 (PG. 91.671).

¹³² "The Church as Communion," 10. One need only look in *BC* for the many references to Ignatian ecclesiology, for example, *BC*, 221, 250, as well as "Episkopē and Episcopate," 31ff.

¹³³ "The Mystery of the Church," 298; "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 19-20.

¹³⁴ *BC*, 137.

encompasses the "many."¹³⁵ Presbyters form a college around the bishop, much as the apostles did around Christ.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, Zizioulas's call for a restoration of the proper place of the bishop as a presider at the eucharistic celebration poses certain problems in dealing with the roles of presbyters as presiders.¹³⁷

The notion of a bishop being ordained into a community correspondingly impacts Zizioulas's explanation of apostolicity. Ecumenism in space refers to a communion among local churches, bishops, synods, or regional churches.¹³⁸ Ecumenism in time refers to the Church's apostolicity. The bishop does not succeed the apostles in himself, but as both head and member of the community. Apostolicity consequently refers to the succession of communities: "apostolic succession is essentially a matter of charismatic identification of the various communities in time."¹³⁹ Apostolicity is not a chain of episcopal or individual ordinations—it must encompass the concrete eucharistic community in which the ordinations

¹³⁵ Ibid. 153.

¹³⁶ "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 20; *BC*, 153. Cf. Volf, *Trinität und Gemeinschaft*, 107.

¹³⁷ See *BC*, 247-260.

¹³⁸ "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 25.

¹³⁹ "Ministry and Communion," 240; "Orthodox Ecclesiology," 26; and "Apostolic Continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a Synthesis of Two Perspectives," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975) 75-108. Cf. the analysis of Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 141-152.

take place.¹⁴⁰

Further, a proper synthesis between pneumatology and christology is also achieved through the notions of primacy and synodality. This aspect more particularly applies to the regional or universal levels of communion.¹⁴¹ Synodality involves all the local churches in a communion. Without synodality, unity risks being sacrificed in favour of the local church, yet a synodality that suppresses the local church leads to universalism.¹⁴² Both individualism and collectivism are transcended in conciliarity by way of the process of "reception."¹⁴³ In terms of primacy, on the local, regional and universal levels, the many churches exist in a communion visibly expressed in a "first one" (*primus*). The communion of many local churches finds its unity in the "one," yet this "one" (*primus*) can do nothing without

¹⁴⁰ BC, 166-169. See also his comments in "Apostolic Continuity of the Church and Apostolic Succession in the First Four Centuries," *Louvain Studies* 21 (1996) 153-168. Presumably this point is a rejection of "titular bishops" (i.e. bishops ordained into localities that do not currently have any communities, where such communities had existed in the past). See the comments on this topic by Jean-Marie Tillard, *L'Église locale: Ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité*, *Théologie et sciences religieuses: Cogitatio fidei* no. 191 (Paris: Cerf, 1995) 276.

¹⁴¹ "The Institution of Episcopal Conferences: An Orthodox Reflection," *The Jurist* 48 (1988) 376-383.

¹⁴² "The Church as Communion," 11.

¹⁴³ Cf. Zizioulas's, "The Theological Problem of 'Reception,'" *One in Christ* 21 (1985) 187-193.

communion with the "first ones" (the many) of the other local churches.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

The central themes in Zizioulas's ecclesiology are his synthesis between christology and pneumatology, based on the theology of communion. Both the Spirit and Christ have specific missions within the economy of salvation. Zizioulas says it is necessary to recognize and keep in balance these important roles. Related in this synthesis are his key concepts of personhood and communion. Part of the integrity or wholeness of being a person, whether in the Triune God or in humanity, is that personhood implies communion—being a person means being in communion. In this theology, the Spirit is the principle of communion, who unites persons into the corporate Christ, and who also works upon history to bring about the *eschaton*. I have shown how these trinitarian principles influence the way in which he develops his notions of time and eschatology, especially in terms of the epicletic nature of the Church and the *anamnēsis*; the marks of the Church; and ministry. Again, the notion of communion is at the root of his "ecclesiological synthesis." This chapter has also noted some of the significant themes that Zizioulas borrows from Florovsky ("ecclesiology is a chapter of christology"), as well as Lossky's positing of the simultaneity of pneumatology

¹⁴⁴ "The Church as Communion," 11. Cf. Nicholas Lossky, "L'ecclésiologie dans une perspective orthodoxe," *Science et Esprit* 48 (1996) 7-14. Many of N. Lossky's references to the theology of primacy are drawn from Jean-Marie Tillard's works. Again, for a comparison of some aspects of the ecclesiology of Tillard and Zizioulas, consult Tataryn, "The Munich Document and the Language of Unity," 648-663.

and christology. Here too Zizioulas shares Nissiotis's position that the Holy Spirit both diversifies and unites, and that the nature of the Church can be conceived of as an "event." An extended comparison of the four theologians is thus the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

- THE SPECTRUM OF SYNTHESSES -

The preceding chapters have indicated similarities and differences in the theologies of Florovsky, Lossky, Nissiotis and Zizioulas. I labelled the "trinitarian synthesis" the methodology of analysing them according to the relationship between christology and pneumatology. This theme showed the content of each theologian's synthesis, and whether these theologians had shown a preference for either pneumatology or christology, or whether they advocated a simultaneous reflection on the theologies of the Son and Spirit. My study was less concerned with the inter-trinitarian relations of the immanent Trinity, and more with the economic Trinity. Little mention has been made of God the Father, not because of this divine Person's absence from the economy, but because the ecclesiological analysis here concerned the "two hands of God," namely, the Son and the Spirit.

The second dimension of my study was what I characterized as the "ecclesiological synthesis." This dimension sought to explain the ways in which this Orthodox foursome applied their "trinitarian syntheses" in ecclesiology, in other words, how they related their

christologies and pneumatologies in explaining the nature of the Church and its marks (unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity). This dimension was also concerned with each theologian's sacramental theology, specifically Baptism, Eucharist and ministry.

Throughout the chapters I also indicated the degree to which each theologian exhibited what has come to be known as a "theology of communion (*koinōnia*)," foreshadowing or echoing contemporary developments on the theme. In a related perspective, the "trinitarian and ecclesiological syntheses" were examined to see if the theologians articulated a notion of the "corporate" character of Christ. In this analysis I noted the ways in which the theologians dealt with the idea of the "presence" of Christ and the Spirit in the Church, and the degree to which they envisioned the Church as being an "event."

The Trinitarian Spectrum and Temporal Priority

At the beginning of this study I proposed a spectrum of trinitarian syntheses as a tool for categorizing each thinker's theology. This spectrum was not right nor left, liberal nor conservative, but a spectrum that categorised each theologian in relation to the others. As a whole, the spectrum generally turned out to look like the following: Florovsky–Zizioulas / Lossky–Nissiotis. This was not a radical nor broad spectrum, but one with minute gradations visible through various nuances in each theologian's writings.

On one end of this analytical line was Florovsky. Florovsky leaned toward a christological approach in ecclesiology, maintaining that the christological dimension of the

Church should be given precedence or preference over the pneumatological. This was based on his belief that all Orthodox theology evolved out of the dogma of Chalcedon. Florovsky also illustrated his ecclesiology through the two scriptural images of the Church as the Body of Christ and the People of God. The latter image he associated with pneumatology, stressing such notions as continuity with the People of Israel, and the notion of being in a community. The Body of Christ image was associated with christology, stressing redemption and communion in Christ. He opted for giving preference to the christological element in ecclesiology because, as he noted, the Church is the Body of Christ, not of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. The Church is therefore an integral part of the definition of Christ because the uniting of the two natures in Christ signalled the inclusion of humanity into Christ's body and his work of redemption. Florovsky consequently spoke of ecclesiology as being a vital chapter of christology, where ecclesiology and christology were correlated into the doctrine of the "whole Christ" (*totus Christus*).

Lossky was in the centre of this trinitarian spectrum through his positing of a simultaneity between christology and pneumatology. His trinitarian theology emphasized the notions of "person" and "nature," and their being eternally simultaneous in the immanent Trinity. His concern with soteriology and the divinization of the person enabled him to speak of redemption as being brought about in human nature by Christ. As divine nature is a principle of unity in the Trinity, so too is nature a principle of our unity in Christ and in the Church. However, although Christ has redeemed nature, persons have yet to achieve union with God. Christ's works were consummated, whereas what is still awaiting consummation

is the work of the Spirit, the one who will diversify and divinize persons. Lossky thus set up the pairing of a theology of nature with christology, and a theology of the person with pneumatology. The work of Christ unifies, while the work of the Spirit diversifies. There is no preference of one over the other, as both work in the economy of salvation for our union with God. He spoke of the two economies of the Son and of the Spirit as having a "relationship of reciprocity," which means that in his system pneumatology and christology are simultaneous yet distinct from one another. In Lossky's comments on Pentecost there does, however, seem to be a "temporal priority" of the Spirit over Christ. This is because he emphasized the Spirit's descent as the final goal of the divine economy, and in his positing of a separate economy of the Spirit. This in no way negated the simultaneity between pneumatology and christology in his synthesis because both are equally integrated in his theology of the Church.

In referring to a "temporal priority," I have in mind two differentiated and precise ideas. A "temporal priority" of the Spirit means that since Christ's work on earth was consummated, the Church is now in the era (history) of the Spirit, and that the Spirit is now the prime "actor" in the economy. This idea is more pronounced in Lossky and Nissiotis, while a corresponding "temporal priority" of Christ is present in Florovsky and Zizioulas. A "temporal priority" of Christ posits the Son as the only one who "became" history and "has" a history, and that it is only with Christ that one enters into a personal relationship. This is an important nuance (and a further refinement of the language of priority or simultaneity), even though it does not decisively settle the question of a priority of either pneumatology or

christology. However, in the case of the four theologians, it could be a pointer indicating where they end up in our spectrum. Holding a temporal priority of Christ can mean either a christological leaning (Florovsky), or a simultaneity between christology and pneumatology (Zizioulas). A simultaneity of pneumatology and christology is also found in cases of a temporal priority of the Spirit (Lossky), yet this temporal priority of the Spirit could also lead to pneumatological emphases (Nissiotis). These differentiated notions simply point to what "temporality," Christ's or the Spirit's, tends to be slightly more pronounced in each theologian's trinitarian syntheses.

To continue discussion of the spectrum, I placed Zizioulas in the centre with Lossky, even though Zizioulas is closer to Florovsky than is Lossky. I say this because Zizioulas adopted Florovsky's principle of ecclesiology being a chapter of christology, and that in a different manner than Lossky, there is a "temporal priority" not of the Spirit, but of the Son. Again, a "temporal" priority in no way negates the simultaneity of pneumatology and christology in the divine economy. In Zizioulas's schema, only the Son "has a history" and has "become history." Pentecost is the final goal of the economy insofar as it is attached to the Christ event. Nevertheless, Zizioulas bases his theology on the trinitarian notions of "person" and "communion." He is, in fact, the strongest or most explicit proponent among the four of the notion of "communion." The Persons in Trinity, one in nature, are all in divine communion and all exist simultaneously. Zizioulas extended this simultaneity to effect a simultaneity in the "trinitarian synthesis." In the divine economy, christology and pneumatology should exist simultaneously and be conditioned by one another. This

simultaneity between Christ and the Spirit occurs on a similar plane as Lossky's Christ uniting via his nature. However, Zizioulas is saying more than this. Although it is true that Christ unites in his nature, it is the Spirit who is the principle of communion and the one who makes Christ a corporate person by diversifying that which he unites. Zizioulas affirms that the Spirit both unites and diversifies the one whole Christ (*totus Christus*). Like Lossky, Zizioulas posits a simultaneity or a "relationship of reciprocity" in the trinitarian synthesis. But, he envisages this in a unique manner different from Lossky; and Zizioulas, like Florovsky, rejected Lossky's notion of the two economies of the Son and Spirit.

Nissiotis might seem to belong with Lossky and Zizioulas in the centre because, like them, he advocated a balanced relationship between christology and pneumatology. However, because I have noted that there are different nuances in each of the four theologians, he is placed on the spectrum opposite to Florovsky, though on the end even from Zizioulas and Lossky. As I noted, Lossky tended to be closer to Nissiotis because of the former's emphases in terms of a "temporal priority" in the economy of the Spirit, whereas Zizioulas tended more to a "temporal priority" of the Son, and was consequently closer to Florovsky. Like the other three theologians of this study, Nissiotis too adopted the classical explanation of the Trinity in terms of persons and nature. However, his contributions to this debate stemmed from his theology that being in communion is part of the core identity of the Trinity and is central in understanding divine revelation and creation. In this theology, he shared many of the same notions of communion as his contemporary Zizioulas. Like Zizioulas, Nissiotis also spoke of the Spirit as both diversifying as well as

unifying persons in the Church. Like Lossky, but more emphatically, Nissiotis leaned in the direction of a definitive "temporal priority" of the Spirit. He held that Christ's resurrection allowed the Spirit to descend and be present in creation in a new way, despite his situating Christ as the focal point of the vertical relationship between God and human persons. Regardless of his affirmations that there should be a balance between pneumatology and christology, Nissiotis spoke of the Spirit as being the "decisive element" in the economy. This was reflected in his ordering of the words "pneumatological christology," and not the opposite ordering of "christological pneumatology," which would give greater prominence or priority to the Son.

The Notion of Divine Presence

In sections dealing with time and eschatology, I showed the effects of the theologian's different trinitarian syntheses, and described how Florovsky wrote of Christ and the Spirit continually "abiding" and "indwelling" in the Church in a new way. Florovsky spoke of the Spirit as not continually descending upon the Church, but being constantly present in history, and thus both Christ and the Spirit, in a sense, "became history." By "becoming history" I mean, actually entering into created time as a Person. For Florovsky, just as Christ was incarnated and became history, so too with Pentecost, though in a different manner, did the Spirit also become present in time. God guides as a "presence" in the Church from within history, yet, Florovsky wrote that he was not satisfied in his explanation of the mode and character of this "presence." This was for him the "crucial and

ultimate" problem of ecclesiology. Florovsky's notion of presence also led him to speak of the *anamnēsis* as a memory of the past. The Eucharist is a remembrance of the Last Supper throughout history, until the eschaton. In fact since Christ and the Spirit are present in history, each Eucharist "is" the Last Supper itself. Such a strong stress on history tended to blur the eschatological element of expectation and fulfilment in the Eucharist, and indicated Florovsky's christological foundations.

For Lossky, the incarnation signalled the presence of Christ in history. Before and after this event, the Spirit was active in history, both throughout the Old Testament era as well as during Christ's lifetime, inspiring prophets, healing, casting out demons, etc. In Lossky's words, the Spirit before Pentecost was active in history in a "functional" sense. Pentecost, however, saw the descent of the Spirit into the world as a Person so that like Christ, though in a differentiated manner, the Paraclete also "became" history. However, the role of the Spirit is not now "functional," but becomes "personal" in the Spirit's activity of diversifying and divinizing each created person. In his synthesis, Lossky for the most part spoke of two economies—the "economy of the Son" and the "economy of the Spirit"—although his later mentioning of a preference for one Logo-Pneumatic economy was left undeveloped. I have already noted the way in which this economy of the Spirit led to his positing of a "temporal priority" of the third Person. In terms of the *anamnēsis*, this act is not simply a commemoration of a past event that is present in history, but it is also a recognition of a present reality that awaits its ultimate fulfilment in the eschaton. In its christological dimension, Lossky's system maintains a continuity with history, while at the

same time in its pneumatological dimension it is forward-looking (eschatological).

Nissiotis did not deal explicitly with the theme of "presence," but one could analyse his theology along these lines. He wrote that Pentecost is the supreme goal of the revelation of Christ, and that it is the immediate and permanent presence of that revelation in history. The Spirit makes present in history all the gifts of the incarnation and resurrection. In fact, he spoke of Pentecost as being essentially christological in that it realized the communion of persons in Christ, so that Christ now becomes omnipresent in the Spirit. This notion of Pentecost being christological is a view that Zizioulas also shares. Nissiotis's reluctance to say that the Spirit also "became" history or is "present" in history was reflected in his comments on the epicletic nature of the Church. He wrote of the Church continually invoking the Spirit in the *epiklēsis* to repeatedly descend upon the Church. Perhaps he was echoing Lossky's notions of the two divine economies of Christ and the Spirit, saying that the pneumatological "incorporates" or "transubstantiates" the christological economy. Here again is his insistence on a "temporal priority" of the Spirit. His comments on the Church as a "permanent *epiklēsis*" also do not provide a clear answer to the notion of how Christ and the Spirit are present in history, but he did write that the Spirit makes the Christ-event at once ever present in time, yet transhistorical (i.e. eternal). In terms of the *anamnēsis*, Nissiotis spoke of its dual nature as a memory of the past that awaits fulfilment in the future. Despite his preference for speaking of the Church more in charismatic terms, his pneumatological leanings did not singularly stress the eschatological nature of the Church to the detriment of the historical.

Zizioulas provides the most coherent and developed explanation of what this notion of "presence" is and how it applied to the "trinitarian synthesis." He holds that only the Son has "become" history and has a history, and like Nissiotis, notes that Pentecost should be linked with the Christ-event in explaining the nature of Christ's presence in the Church. The Spirit is the One who frees Christ from history, thereby allowing the inauguration of the last days. Here the Spirit does not "become" history, but works "on" history from the future. Since, like Nissiotis, Zizioulas speaks of the Church as an event, he also speaks of the epicletic nature of the Church where a new event is always needed in order for the Church to relate to the eschatological Kingdom. This means that the Church moves from not what it was or is, but towards what it will be in the future. Therefore, the *anamnēsis* is not a memory of the past, but it is a memory of the future. The eschatological nature of the Spirit's descent from the future rules out a "presence" of the Spirit in history, which is counter to Florovsky's or Lossky's solutions. In the Spirit, that is, through the *epiklēsis*, the Church becomes again and again in the corporate Christ what it will be in the future. There is in this way in Zizioulas's theology, despite his simultaneity between christology and pneumatology, a "temporal priority" of the Son.

The Notion of Event

Having referred to the ways these theologians spoke of the "presence" of Christ or of the Spirit in the Church, there arises the question of the relationship of "presence" with the concept of "event." None of these four theologians spoke of the Church as solely an

"event" or merely a "charismatic society."

Florovsky held that Christianity is not primarily about ideas or institutions. Though he stopped short of explicitly developing a notion of the Church being an event, his theological thrust could have led to such a position. For him, the history of salvation is composed of various events of God's intervention. In the scope of my study, the incarnation or redemption were "events," generally referred to as the Christ-event. These events were decisive in the history of Christianity, where an ultimate eschatological reality was being realized within the stress of historical happenings. These events in the post-resurrection Church were brought about by the presence of the Spirit and of Christ.

Lossky's theology seems even less likely to contain the concept of the Church as an event, however, one could look to his notion of the Spirit's role in the Church as possibly providing some clues as to the concept of "event." Lossky spoke of Christ's redemption of nature as something that was already accomplished, yet awaiting fulfilment in the eschaton. This might seem to be a static and completed reality. However, the Spirit is the one who brings to fulfilment Christ's act of redemption through a dynamic activity of personally diversifying each member of the Church. This Spirit works in the economy as a presence within history in the process of divinization. Such dynamic activity could lead to speaking of the post-Pentecost Church as an event of communion with the Spirit who is present in the Church.

Nissiotis's notion of the epicletic nature of the Church similarly made the Church's existence dynamic and *in via* towards the eschaton. He even referred to faith as being an

"event." Through the Church's constant invocation of the Spirit in the *epiklēsis*, Nissiotis envisioned the Church as a continuously renewed event of the Spirit, or the permanent *epiklēsis* of the Spirit. In fact, the whole identity of the Church is one unique sacramental event, which places the Church in the dichotomy between the "already," but "not yet." This aspect was revealed in Nissiotis's stress on the charismatic nature of Church. This "event-ness" of the Church is most visibly expressed, for Nissiotis, in the eucharistic celebration.

Zizioulas's notion of "event" is related to "being in communion." Being in communion is the basis of life. In his ecclesiological synthesis, what Christ instituted is not a sufficient ground for the ultimate eschatological reality, so that a new event is always needed. This new event occurs in the invocation of the Spirit, who brings about the eschaton and fosters communion between persons and Christ. He used the phrase that "the Church is becoming again and again what it will be in the future" because the true identity of the Church is eschatological. The event of communion in-breaks history from the future, thereby transcending time and its temporal progression of life and death, to reach into the existence of eternal life, which is never static but dynamic. These events of communion are most perfectly realized in the Eucharist where the Church becomes "identically" the eternal Kingdom. This eschatological constitution is a dynamic event. What is constituted by the Spirit is none other than the corporate Christ.

The notion of event can be a helpful approach in envisioning the relationship between the "presence" of Christ or the Spirit. One can speak of a "presence" of Christ in the economy insofar as "he had a history" and, in a sense, "became history." But one must

also remember the parallel identity of Christ as the one who was raised from the dead, and is now the glorified Lord. I have also shown that one must be clear in indicating what it means to speak of the Spirit's presence in the Church. Maintaining that the Church is now in the era of the Spirit, or that after Pentecost the Spirit is present in the Church the same way as was the incarnated Christ, tends to "historicize" this third Person. Here I refer to a "temporal priority" of the Son over the Spirit only insofar as to indicate that it was only Christ who became a historical person and dwelt among us, which in no way threatens the simultaneity of christology and pneumatology in the trinitarian synthesis. The Spirit does not become an "incarnate" Paraclete because part of its identity is eschatological, hence, being transcendent to creation.

A more helpful solution is to speak of the Spirit's presence in the Church as coming from the future, so that the Spirit is not present "in" history, but is present "on" history from the eschaton. The simultaneity between pneumatology and christology also requires a correlating of this pneumatology of eschatology and communion with the christology of the glorified corporate Christ. Thus the Spirit provides, so to speak, the possibility of communion between the historical Christ-Church and the eschatological communion of saints (both of which are the body of the corporate Christ). This preserves the balance between the historical and the eternal Church, and maintains a balance between the differing yet related missions of Christ and the Spirit. Such an approach also allows one to define better in what manner Christ "institutes" the Church, and reveals the manner in which the Spirit "constitutes" the Church, making the Church the body of the corporate Christ and an

eschatological reality.

The Corporate Christ

Florovsky's doctrine of the "whole Christ" allowed him to envision Christ as a corporate person, by both seeing him as the "one" and the "many." Florovsky's comments on the Church as the Body of Christ indicated that the Church is a community of persons who abide and dwell in Christ, and in whom Christ is himself abiding and dwelling in the Spirit. Christ's entering into glory simultaneously included a call to all persons to be in and with him, meaning that Christ needs persons to be the Body. On the basis of the Chalcedonian dogma, of the uniting of two natures in Christ, Florovsky insisted that the humanity of Christ was at once his own, yet all-inclusive. Christ is both the "one" and the "many," and hence a corporate person. Christ is the whole Christ, both the body and the head. In Christ, all of humanity is potentially included. The Church therefore becomes part of Christ's identity and integrity, and thus Florovsky could write that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology."

Lossky also spoke of the "one" and the "many" in discussing the Trinity. In terms of his nature-person distinction, Lossky posited that in the Church we are one in Christ, yet many in the Spirit, and each of these "parts" is a whole or is fullness. Since he wrote that each person contains the whole, this could have led to his speaking of Christ as a corporate person. He seemed to reject a notion of corporate personality, in order to safeguard the freedom of determination of each person, when he said that Christ is not some kind of

super-person who contains everyone. However, he accepted a notion of a corporate Christ in terms of "poly-hypostasis." Christ is a person who "is with" other persons, or in our present-day language, Christ is in communion with others. In this schema, Christ unites in his nature, but the Spirit diversifies each according to personhood. There was some ambiguity in Lossky's theology in what concerns the Church becoming the Body of Christ or the Spirit being a corporate Person, in that although he rejected the notion of the Spirit as being a principle of communion, he spoke of the Church in eternity becoming an image of the Spirit. Lossky was silent on the notion of whether or not the Church in eternity will become the image of the body of Christ. Perhaps he could have been alluding to the Church being the Temple of the Spirit, but explicitly stating that the Church in eternity will become the "body of the Spirit" is a notion that Zizioulas and Florovsky would emphatically reject because for them what is constituted as one and whole is simply the Body of Christ.

Nissiotis's theology had some of the peripheral elements which would enter into a discussion of the corporate nature of Christ. Like Zizioulas, Nissiotis spoke of the Spirit as both a principle of communion (unity) as well as a principle of diversity. Where the Spirit acts, it creates the personal-corporate reality of the Church. The Church for him is a communion in Christ of all persons, incorporated into him by the communion of the Spirit. It is this Spirit that builds unity in Christ. However, here his theology was not explicit.

Zizioulas, again influenced by Florovsky's conviction that "ecclesiology is but a chapter of christology," has the clearest and most developed notion of Christ being a corporate person. Zizioulas often remarks that Christ is simultaneously an individual and a

corporate person, who is both the "one" who encompasses within himself the "many." For him, Christ's existence is conditioned by communion, or is dependant on "being in relation" (i.e. being in communion). This means that there was no progression from Christ being an individual who then became corporate, but does mean that Christ is a corporate person from the outset. Without the many, Christ is not the Christ, but an individual. The Spirit is the principle of communion who fashions Christ into a corporate being. Like Nissiotis, Zizioulas saw the Spirit as both uniting and diversifying each person into the Body of Christ. Christ as a person draws his identity from being in relation with others. Christ is both the "one" and the "many" because by being the "one" he relates to the "many." This notion of the corporate character of Christ is rooted in the Trinity, where no one Person exists without the Others.

The Ecclesiological Synthesis—Catholicity or Communion

What I have mentioned by way of summary above is the "trinitarian syntheses" of each of the theologians. Now I turn to a summary of the second dimension of this study, that is, the way these trinitarian syntheses impacted or influenced each theologian's ecclesiologies (the "ecclesiological synthesis"). All of these theologians, in addition to their unique trinitarian syntheses, had an over-arching principle that characterized their ecclesiologies. Florovsky, Lossky and Nissiotis frequently spoke of catholicity as key to the identity of the Church. While it is true that all the theologians mentioned the notion of communion, only Zizioulas explicitly made it the core of his synthesis. The concepts of

catholicity and communion do not negate each other, but they do point to the theological consequences and preoccupations of the foursome's trinitarian syntheses.

For Florovsky, catholicity (*sobornicity*) and communion are not unrelated terms. Catholicity refers to the inner quality and wholeness of each local church and of the universal Church. It is an ontological principle of the Church which is based on Florovsky's theology of the *totus Christus*, of the whole Christ being present in each church. Each local church is not simply a part of the whole Church, but is a microcosm of the universal Church. It is Christ's and the Spirit's "presence" in the Church that makes the Church "catholic."

Like in Florovsky, catholicity is also a favourite theme of Lossky's. I repeat that his theology was rooted in the distinction between nature and person, and christology and pneumatology, respectively. Christ unites in nature, and the Spirit diversifies according to personhood. He explained catholicity in terms of not only unity, but also multiplicity. The mark of unity is related to catholicity in that the relationship between unity and multiplicity means that the Church is catholic as a whole as well as in its parts.

With his pneumatological leanings, Nissiotis wrote of catholicity as being bestowed upon the Church by the Spirit of Truth. He gave prominence to the local church over the universal Church by explaining that the gift of catholicity is given in concrete and personal expressions of communion at definite times and places. This local dimension of catholicity validates and enacts the universal dimension of catholicity, because catholicity first passes through the local church. He did not ignore the importance of the universal dimension of

this mark of the Church, but tended to speak more in terms of its local expressions.

Zizioulas echoed Florovsky's and Lossky's theologies of catholicity when he characterized it as being a "presence" of Christ who sums up and unites all in himself. Each local church is a catholic or "whole" Church—it is a microcosm of the one universal Church. The local churches and universal churches exist simultaneously because of their catholicity, with there being no priority of the local over the universal, *et vice versa*. His notion of catholicity is based upon the Spirit diversifying as well as uniting all into the Body of Christ. The one Church and the many churches exist simultaneously by virtue of the communion effected by the Spirit. Each Church possesses catholicity only by being in communion with other churches, and since the Spirit brings the eschatological Christ to be present from the future, each Church is endowed with the Truth possessed by the glorified Lord.

Unity & Communion

It is quite difficult to speak of the "ecclesiological synthesis" in terms of each mark of the Church without mentioning the other marks of the Church. These theologians recognized that no one mark of the Church can exist without the others. Yet, for the sake of analytical purposes, I mention the remaining marks separately in order to illustrate how each theologian's trinitarian synthesis influenced or constrained his ecclesiological synthesis.

In terms of unity, Florovsky's principle that ecclesiology is a chapter of christology led him to explain that unity is based on the image of the Trinity, but in the Church, this unity is possible only in the whole Christ. Christ as the "one who is also the many"

envelopes the many as part of his identity. What unites and is made one is the Body of Christ. One can not be a Christian alone, but only as a member of this Body.

Lossky elucidated this unity in terms of nature. Christ, by first uniting himself to human nature, restored it by redeeming it. Persons in the Church are thus united in Christ initially because of the redemption of human nature. This unity is realized in the here and now, but since the Spirit still diversifies and divinizes each person, the fulfilment of unity awaits the Church in the eschaton. So, not far from the christological aspect of unity is the pneumatological aspect of diversity. Again, Lossky rejected any notions of Christ being a "super-person" who unites all into his one Person (christological aspect) in order to safeguard the freedom (diversity) of each person (pneumatological aspect). He did, however, speak qualifiedly in terms of Christ's poly-hypostasy. Christ unites by being like a "corporate person" who "is with" other persons. Christ is the "one" who is with the diversified "many." Here again is his positing of a simultaneity between christology and pneumatology.

Nissiotis departed from Lossky's position (that only the Spirit diversifies) by stating that the Spirit both unites and diversifies. This activity of uniting and diversifying was referred to as making each person a personal-corporate reality. It is the Spirit who brings persons into communion, and hence unites all into the Church. Because of his pneumatological leanings, this unity was spoken of concretely more in charismatic than in institutional terms.

Zizioulas would accept Lossky's schema, that Christ unites and the Spirit diversifies,

but he goes further by stating that the Spirit both unites and diversifies, and what is made one is a communion of persons in the corporate Christ. Christ is able to unite because the Spirit fashions him into a unity of diversity, which is a position akin to Nissiotis's. This reveals the simultaneity of christology and pneumatology in Zizioulas's synthesis. Unity is in the whole Christ who is made a corporate person by the Spirit. His conception of unity is not simply based on a christological premise that holds Christ is one in his Body and therefore the Church is one, because part of the identity of Christ is not just christological—it is also pneumatological. The Son is not the Christ save from being One who relates to the many through the communion of the Spirit. The unity in the Church, which is both pneumatological and christological, is based on his theology of communion.

Apostolicity and Ministry

Unity is also related to the concept of the apostolicity of the Church, and again, each theologian's explanation of this mark emerges from his own peculiar trinitarian synthesis. For Florovsky's understanding of apostolicity, one needs to recall his comments on the notion of presence and his remark that in the apostolic succession, Pentecost becomes eternal. Pentecost is continued in historical time by the Spirit's abiding in history. He added that apostolicity is not primarily a juridical concept, but principally a charismatic concept. He spoke of ministry as being primarily of a charismatic nature, hence pneumatological, but in the christological aspect, bishop and priest act as ministers of Christ in the apostolic succession. Bishops are guarantors of apostolicity in their successions because Christ

"instituted" this ministry. By virtue of Christ's presence in the Church, through his ministers, he continually performs his eternal and priestly mission. This apostolicity, with its corresponding grounding in the past, was viewed by Florovsky as a living image of eternity in time. In this ecclesiological synthesis, bishops have the additional role to play in building Church unity through their ability to ordain other bishops and priests. The bishop is the chief organ of apostolicity, along with the presbyters.

Lossky's notion of apostolicity was rooted in his notion of the two Pentecosts. The ministerial aspect of the Church is rooted in christology and pneumatology where in the first "pentecost" at the last Supper, Christ endowed his apostles with the Spirit for the charisms of ministry. This is the "functional" aspect of the Spirit according to Lossky. The ministerial aspect is not rooted in the "second pentecost," or Pentecost proper, because this was the personal dispensation of the Spirit individually to persons. The first pentecost was a dispensation to the Church considered corporately, to apostles and priests. Here again is the notion that Christ "institutes" the Church. The second dispensation of the Spirit "constitutes" the personal ministry of all in the Church. Again, as Christ "institutes" the Church, the Spirit "constitutes" the Church. This language of "institute-constitute" is Zizioulas's, but it can be usefully applied also to Lossky's theology.

With slightly different concerns, Nissiotis spoke of Pentecost in connection with ministry, affirming that Pentecost saw the founding of the Church. Pentecost was the fulfilment of the Christ-event. As such, with Nissiotis's pneumatological leanings, ministry is primarily charismatic. The institutional aspect of the Church is meant as a channel for this

charismatic life of the Church as an instrument of *diakonia*. With the emphasis on community over the institution, Nissiotis referred to ordained ministers, bishops and priests alike, as the guardians of a pre-existing community. Like Zizioulas, Nissiotis shared the view that apostolicity is located in the community. I referred to the theological notion of "reception" as reflecting this reality, where the community, as Christ's Body in the Spirit, preserves the apostolic Tradition. Nissiotis criticized ecclesiologies that stressed the Church as an institution in their reliance only upon christology, whereas too much stress on pneumatology ignored institutional dimensions.

Zizioulas also located the apostolicity of the Church in the whole worshipping community. This emerged partly from his comments on the Church as being an institution as well as an event. In terms of christology, the institutional aspects of the Church are identified with the ministry of Christ. This ministry existed simultaneously in the pneumatologically constituted charismatic community. Zizioulas's language is thus that the Son "institutes" the Church, while the Spirit "constitutes" the Church, both conditioning one another. The key is that ordination can only be done within a community. The christologically instituted ministry is thus conditioned by the pneumatological event of communion. Central in Zizioulas's thought is the ministry of the bishop, who guards the deposit of faith and is an icon of Christ, as the one who encompasses the many. And since Zizioulas insists that christology should be conditioned pneumatologically, he says that apostolicity is not merely a chain of hierarchical ordinations. It encompasses primarily the concrete Eucharistic communities in which these ordinations take place. Apostolicity is thus

a succession of communities in time and space, all in communion through the Spirit and in Christ. In Zizioulas, there is no dichotomy between Christ-ministry and Spirit-community because in Baptism and Chrismation (as an initiation into an *ordo* in the community), Christ and the Spirit are both active. Ordained hierarchical ministers are also vessels of communion in time and space only through the communion of the Spirit, and only as ministers within (or of) communities.

All four theologians, in varying degrees, avoided the dichotomy of seeing the Church as only an institution or only as an event, because for all of them the Church is both an institution and an event. This insight implies that the structures of the Church are not primarily juridical, but sacramental. Zizioulas made explicit this correlation of institution with event in stating that the key ministries (institution) are those that are involved in the liturgical celebration of the sacraments (event).

Institute, Constitute and Co-Institute

I have pointed out the many ways each theologian arrived at an understanding of how the Church was instituted. Generally, the act of "institution" is attributed to the activity of Christ. The act of institution is not enough for the Church to be Church, for there also requires, by virtue of the synthesis between the Spirit and Christ, an activity whereby the Spirit bestows charisms on the Church and brings about events of communion. The Church is consequently "constituted" by the Spirit. The notion of institute-constitute demarcates that the Spirit and Christ are two separate Persons who have their own distinctive, yet

integrated roles in the economy. Nevertheless, the language of institute-constitute could lead to a position whereby either pneumatology or christology is given a priority, or a position which tends to separate the intrinsically related roles of Christ and the Spirit. One can look at the symbiotic relationship between Christ and the Spirit in events such as Mary's virginal conception, the Baptism of Christ, and Pentecost, to see that these two Divine Persons are never separated, and that they function simultaneously in the same events. The pre-paschal mission of Christ and the post-Pentecost mission of the Spirit both form the ecclesiological synthesis. Thus, one could also supplement the language that equally affirms the roles of Christ-Spirit in institution-constitution by referring to these Persons as both "co-instituting" the Church. A weakness here might be that the Spirit's and Christ's roles are not clearly delineated, and thus their peculiarities in the economy could be blurred.

In relation to the language of "institute-constitute," I would like to indicate some of the ecumenical import of this working out of a trinitarian and ecclesiological synthesis. My reference here is to the Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar, whom I have cited throughout this study. All of the four Orthodox theologians read and critiqued Congar, and Congar likewise critiqued their theologies. Like Zizioulas, Congar's early theology leaned in

the direction of christology.¹ However, looking at Congar's later works,² one can see his working out of a trinitarian synthesis along similar lines as Zizioulas. In fact, I have already noted in the chapter on Zizioulas that the concept of Christ and the Spirit "co-instituting" the Church is from Congar. There are some startling similarities (especially in light of Congar's complimentary comments about Zizioulas), between Congar and Zizioulas, which could be the basis of another study like this one.

The Mysteries of the Church in the Ecclesiological Synthesis

So far I have managed to speak of Orthodox ecclesiology without mentioning the sacraments. I was attempting to avoid stereotypes of Orthodox ecclesiology as simply being an unsophisticated "eucharistic ecclesiology." Chronologically, I again turn first to Florovsky.

Baptism in Florovsky was related to the Eucharist in their essence as the two "social sacraments" of the Church. He called them "social sacraments" to underline the important point that one can not be a Christian alone, but only within a community. This was based on

¹ For a synopsis of Congar's ecclesiology, consult: Joseph Famerée, *L'ecclésiologie d'Yves Congar avant Vatican II: Histoire et Eglise* (Louvain: Peeters, 1992); Dennis Doyle, "Journet, Congar, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," 461-479; and Aidan Nichols, *Yves Congar* (Wilton, Conn.: Mourhouse-Barlow, 1989), esp. 61.

² I am referring principally to: *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, and *The Word and the Spirit*.

his notion of the whole Christ, who needs the Church and its people in order to be the Body. In Baptism, Christians are in-corporated into the Church, and through the Eucharist, as a "sacrament of participation," members of the Church become one body in each other. The Eucharist thus makes the Church what it ought to be. Christ as a communal person stands in the Eucharistic offering as the one who offers the gifts with and on behalf of the community. One will also recall that Florovsky spoke of each Eucharist as being a continuation of the Last Supper itself, hence its christological and historical rootedness.

Lossky also referred to an incorporation into the Church by means of Baptism, where our natures are united to Christ and mark the beginnings of our resurrection. I demonstrated Lossky's linking of the notion of redeemed nature with the christological aspect in ecclesiology. Lossky also said that Baptism is not enough, and that we need to be also marked by the sign of the Spirit, of that personal diversity bestowed on each member of the Church. The redeeming work of Christ is simultaneously related to the deifying work of the Spirit. Lossky singled out the Eucharist as the mystery in which this union and divinization is most perfectly expressed and provisionally realized. What the Church still awaits is the perfect fulfilment of our union in Christ and its corresponding divinization in diversity of the Spirit.

In referring to the sacraments, Nissiotis used language reminiscent of some of the language found in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church, namely, that of Baptism incorporating all persons into the royal priesthood of believers. His pneumatological leanings tended to emphasize the charismatic nature of ministry, and its universal extension

to all members of the Church. In the Eucharist and Baptism, the communion with God accomplished in Christ is most perfectly symbolized. Baptism and the Eucharist, centred upon the *epiklēsis*, are elements which root us in the Body of Christ. Nissiotis's pneumatological tendencies are evident from this discussion about the Eucharist and the *epiklēsis*, because he spoke of Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist as not depending upon Christ's words of institution (christology), but on the descent of the Spirit (pneumatology). The Church thus recapitulates through the *epiklēsis* the whole of the divine economy, tasting the eschatological Kingdom really, but in anticipation.

Zizioulas too noted the epicletic nature of the Church in relationship to the Eucharist. In the simultaneity of christology and pneumatology in his trinitarian synthesis, he spoke of the Eucharist as being constituted by Christ (christological dimension). However, this institution by Christ in history is not a sufficient ground for the manifestation of a new eschatological reality brought about through him. In this schema, a new event of communion with the eschaton is always needed, and this is realized through the Spirit in the *epiklēsis* (pneumatological dimension). This is consonant with his position that Christ became history, and that the Spirit works "on" history. The Church in the Eucharist, paraphrasing his words, "becomes again and again" what it "will be" in the Kingdom. Baptism in his system is an incorporation into a community, a giving of Christ to persons, while Chrismation is the giving of the Spirit. Via Baptism, like in Nissiotis, each person in the Church is "ordained" into a community, performing their ministries according to their personal charisms. But Baptism and Chrismation are given in view of the Eucharist,

awaiting their preeminent fulfilment in it. And since the Spirit both brings about the eschaton and is the principle of communion, each community really experiences the communion of the eschatological Kingdom. In the Eucharist one finds the eschatological community *par excellence*. There is an interplay between the sacraments being "instituted" by Christ (christology), while they are brought to fulfilment by the Spirit (pneumatology). The Eucharist also manifests Christ's corporate personality, as it is a sign where all become one though they are constituted as the many. This one/many-ness is the work of the Spirit in constituting the corporate Christ, and thus it is both Christ and the Spirit that are dynamically active in the Church.

Holiness-Already But Not Yet

Another area of comparison is each theologian's explanation of the holiness of the Church. Florovsky's comments on schism and disunity revealed his understanding of the paradoxical nature of the Church as both sinful yet holy. By virtue of the Spirit's abiding in the Church, the Church is holy in that it is an eschatological community, sharing in anticipation but really the eternal life. This holiness is pre-eminently manifested in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Church is still on its way to becoming perfect, although it is holy because it is the Body of Christ. The Church's holiness is also in part related to Pentecost, where for Florovsky, the Spirit is promised to abide in the Church as a "presence."

Lossky spoke of the redemption of human nature by Christ, and this is in part where

the Church's holiness is revealed. Holiness in the trinitarian synthesis thus has a christological element. One must also recall that the Church is still on its way to the Kingdom, and that its members still need to progress through divinization. This is nothing other than the pneumatological aspect of Lossky's synthesis, of the activity of the Spirit in diversifying and divinizing according to personhood.

Nissiotis did not develop his notion of the holiness of the Church as extensively as the others, although he held that holiness is a gift of the Spirit. Like all the theologians, he spoke of the holiness of the Church as being a present reality, although the Church still awaits this ultimate fulfilment in the Kingdom.

Zizioulas also stressed the "already, but not yet" character of the Church in relation to holiness. The Church's identity is not from what it was nor from what it presently is, but from what it will be in the future. Again, Maximus the Confessor's notion of the present time being an "icon" of the "truth" of eternity is a tool Zizioulas uses in explaining the Church's holiness. Through the celebration of the sacraments, this in-breaking of the future onto history in the celebration of the sacraments enacts this communion with the eschatological Kingdom. Here the Spirit brings upon history the eschatological era, which is the pneumatological dimension of holiness. Zizioulas's strong identification of the Kingdom with Eucharist also included the notion that there is also a sinful dimension of the Church, for the Church is also a Church of sinners, of those progressing through conversion and divinization. He utilized the notion of the Church as an event to explain that the Church is made up of sinners who need to be constantly judged and reconciled by events of

communion with the Spirit and Christ. However, since Zizioulas spoke of Christ being a corporate person, the christological dimension in ecclesiology affirms that the Church's holiness stems from Zizioulas's identification between the Church and the corporate Christ. Zizioulas used the illustration of this holiness of Christ standing in communion in the midst of the community, bringing the Church's offertory prayers to the Father. It is the Spirit's descent that allows the Church then to transcend itself and enter the eschaton.

Rejection and Acceptance

It should be clear by now that Florovsky was unhappy with his synthesis between pneumatology and christology, and that he felt that his work in this area was left undone. I subsequently noted his reaction to Lossky exactly on this question. His main premise for rejecting Lossky's nature-person distinction was in the context of the "two economies": of Christ redeeming/uniting in nature, and the Spirit as divinizing/diversifying personhood. Florovsky said that Lossky's position could lead to saying that only in the Spirit and not in Christ are human persons fully and ontologically established or fulfilled. Florovsky's christological leaning spoke of this relationship as being established in communion and relationship with Christ. Relationships are established in the Christ-Body, and not via a personal relationship with the person of the Spirit, who remains hidden and has no image in another divine Person. Lossky spoke of being in relation with Christ, but again the progression of his arguments led to the conclusion, as Lossky stated, that in eternity the Church and persons will be the image of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the personhood is

fulfilled ultimately in the Spirit, and not in Christ. Florovsky also criticized this as meaning that Christ is not dynamically present in the Church, but that only the Spirit is.

If Lossky's trinitarian synthesis leaned in the direction of affirming that only in the Spirit is human personhood freely established and fulfilled, then Florovsky would also have to reject Nissiotis's position. Nissiotis affirmed the decisiveness of the Spirit in the entire economy of salvation, before and after the Christ-event, going so far as to say that the Christ-event is only possible because the Spirit transubstantiates (incorporates) it. Nissiotis possibly echoed Lossky's nature-person distinction when he wrote of the Spirit divinizing those whom Christ had redeemed. In Nissiotis, one wonders what role Christ has if the Spirit diversifies persons (Lossky's position), while also uniting (Nissiotis's contribution to Lossky's schema). In fact, Nissiotis stated that one must not forget Christ and the Christ-event in this synthesis, but his theology was not sufficiently developed in integrating christology into his pneumatological leanings. This lack of integration of Christ into Nissiotis's trinitarian synthesis manifested itself as one of Florovsky's warnings that one does not enter into a personal relationship and communion with the person of the Spirit, but only with the person of Christ. Explicitly, Nissiotis clearly affirmed that communion with the Spirit is with the personal *hypostasis* of the Spirit, (and that Christ now becomes omnipresent Spirit). It is in this regard that I have placed Lossky closer to Nissiotis in the trinitarian spectrum, although Lossky still remains in the centre in his simultaneity between christology and pneumatology.

I repeat that Florovsky did not explicitly develop certain aspects of the trinitarian

synthesis, but he did rule out unacceptable solutions. He rejected Lossky's nature-person schema, and would find even more difficulty with Nissiotis. In this debate about whom one enters into personal relationship, either Christ or the Spirit, one can see the great debt that Zizioulas owes to Florovsky. Not only does Zizioulas use Florovsky's notion of the corporate nature of Christ, but he also utilizes Florovsky's notion that in this one-many schema, the divine Person that one enters into a personal relationship with is not the Spirit, but the corporate Christ. Zizioulas thus makes this explicit, not within the parameters of Lossky's synthesis, but by building on Florovsky's corporate Christ and adding his all-embracing notion of communion, as diversity and unity in the Spirit. What is diversified and united in the Spirit is constituted as the Body of Christ, so that the ontological fulfilment of the person is achieved in Christ by being in relation with him through the mysterious communion of the Spirit.

There is a simultaneity in Zizioulas's position between pneumatology and christology, but one can not but think that there might also be christological tendencies in his theology. This christological leaning occurs in what I have termed a "temporal priority" of christology, because there is a priority of personal fulfilment wrought by the Spirit only by being in relation to the corporate Christ. It is only Christ who had a history (was "temporal") and it is only through Christ that created ("temporal") humans enter into communion with God. This is why I located Zizioulas in the centre of the spectrum, but on the side of Florovsky.

Doxology and the Synthesis

In the section on the sacraments in the ecclesiological synthesis, I made a reference to the notion of "eucharistic ecclesiology." Throughout this study, nevertheless, I have not used this notion to characterize the ecclesiologies of any of the theologians. This was a deliberate omission. In neither of the theologians was the Eucharist their starting point nor their over-arching principle, but it is more importantly the ultimate manifestation of what their "trinitarian" syntheses implied in the realm of ecclesiology. As a whole, Florovsky did expound a type of "communion ecclesiology" centred on the Eucharist, or a type of "eucharistic ecclesiology," but such theological emphases are more pronounced in Zizioulas's writings. Although catholicity is stressed by Nissiotis and he referred to the notion of communion, his pneumatological tendencies can lead to his ecclesiology being called a "pneumatological ecclesiology." Since a stress on the catholicity of the Church occurred in Florovsky's and Lossky's ecclesiologies, one could label their approaches as "ecclesiologies of catholicity." Zizioulas's ecclesiology more succinctly related the local churches to the universal Church, not simply because of a sameness of identity in their being catholic, but also because each person and the Church can only exist because of communion and by being in communion. Zizioulas's ecclesiology, as a result, would most properly be called an "ecclesiology of communion." Nevertheless, all the theologians had elements of a notion of communion, from Florovsky's whole Christ, to Lossky's unity in Christ and diversity in the Spirit, to Nissiotis's unifying and diversifying Spirit, and to Zizioulas's corporate Christ. And in varying degrees of success, each of these theologians recognized

that a sound pneumatology is always related to a sound christology.

In the end, this study can be interpreted to echo St. Basil's innovation (despite its historical and doctrinal application) of his two doxologies. In the sense of affirming that persons enter into personal communion with the Son in the communion of the Spirit, the Church can praise the "the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit."³ However, in insisting on the simultaneity of pneumatology and christology in the trinitarian synthesis, the Church can equally glorify "the Father with the Son, together with the Holy Spirit."

³ These doxologies are found in St. Basil's, *De Spiritu sancto*, 1.3 (PG. 32.71).

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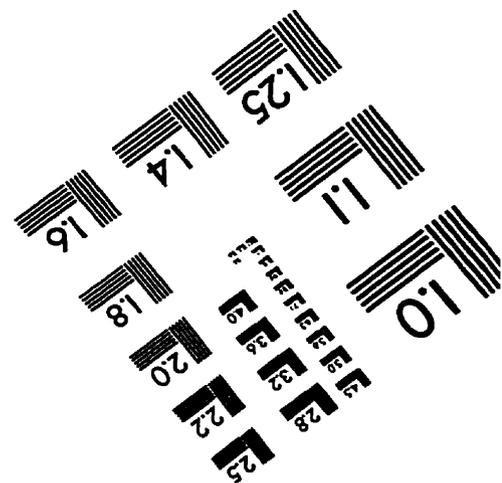
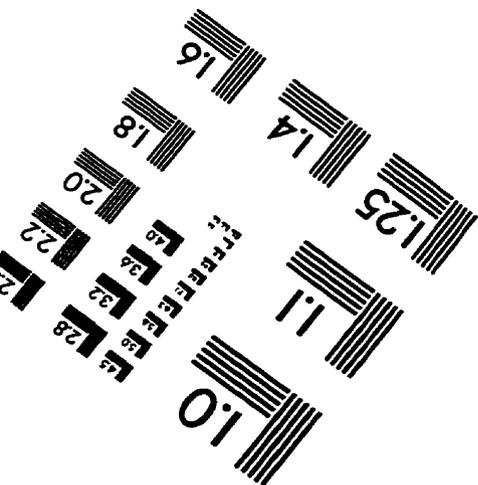
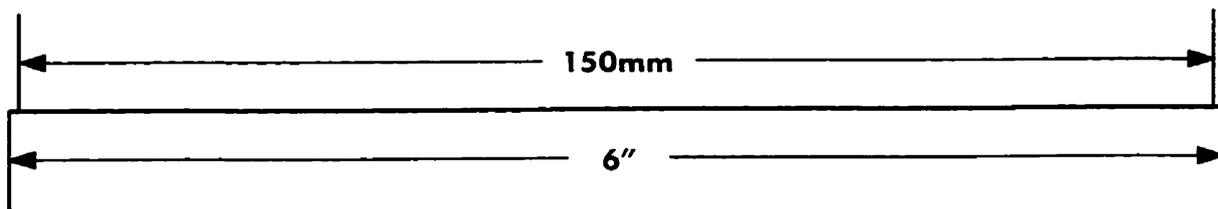
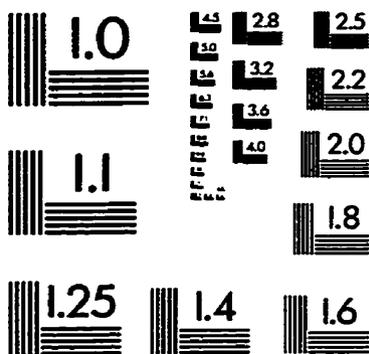
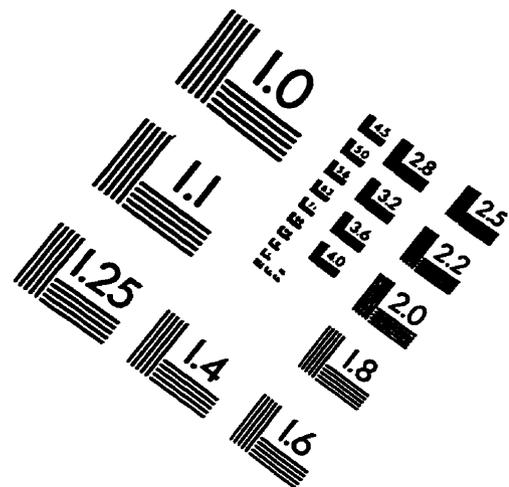
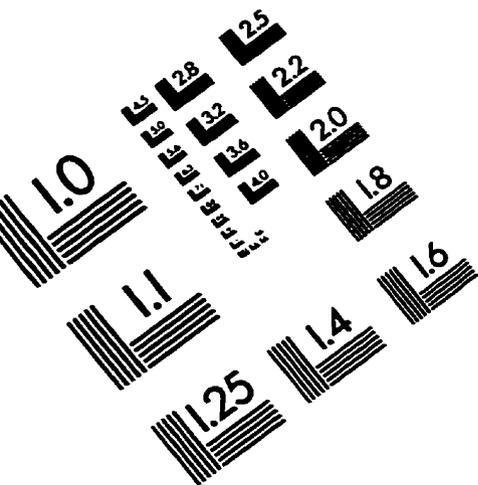
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