A REPARATIVE READING OF THE EUCHARISTIC ECCLESIOLOGY OF JOHN ZIZIOULAS AND ITS RECEPTION AS SOCIAL TRINITARIANISM

BY

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ABSTRACT

Since the publication of Zizioulas' seminal text, Being as Communion (1985), successive theologians have turned to his work to postulate a Social Trinity. The past decade has witnessed a significant repudiation of Social Trinitarianism, but such criticism has an implicit tendency to argue that Zizioulas posits a social doctrine of the Trinity. This thesis shall consider Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology in relation to its reception by Social Trinitarianism and ask whether both his Social Trinitarian advocates (such as Volf, Gunton and LaCugna), and their critics (such as Tanner, Ayres, Turcescu, Holmes) do justice to the problems considered by Zizioulas. Whilst acknowledging that there are significant similarities in their initial engagement, and recognising the limitations of Zizioulas' project, this thesis shall maintain that Zizioulas does not argue for a social doctrine of the Trinity because his Social Trinitarian advocates are posing different questions to the relationship between the Trinity and the Church than those posed by Zizioulas. Although the Social Trinitarians draw from Zizioulas' work they do so to answer their own questions, which they resolve by projecting a revised Trinitarian schesis, rooted in perichoresis, onto ecclesial and social structures. By attending to the nature of Zizioulas' ecclesiological questions, I shall make the case that Zizioulas exhibits a nexus of question and answer that belongs to the neopatristic synthesis which emerged in Orthodox theology in the twentieth century, especially among Lossky and Florovsky. This thesis offers a reparative reading of Zizioulas eucharistic ecclesiology by examining how Zizioulas relates the Trinity to the Church on the basis of theôsis as Christification. In this thesis I use the lens of Zizioulas' Christology to consider whether (1) Zizioulas projects a philosophical personalism onto the Trinity. This thesis reframes the discussion in terms of a Christianised Hellenism and that Zizioulas understands theôsis as Christification through participation in the filial relation between Son and Father. (2) That the Trinity forms a paradigm for the communion of the Church. This thesis argues that he does not because he identifies the Church with the hypostasis of the Christ as the pneumatological body of Christ. (3) This thesis considers whether Zizioulas maintains a social doctrine of the Trinity. It argues that the tension which exists between Zizioulas and his interlocutors on the monarchy of the Father suggests that Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians operate within a different nexus of question and answer.

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PART 1: THE RECEPTION OF ZIZIOULAS' ECCLESIOLOGY BY SOCIAL TRINITARIANISM

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The question at the heart of this thesis is how does Zizioulas address the question; 'What is the Church?' Zizioulas answers this question by arguing that the Church is more than an institution; it is the spiritual body of Christ. The Church for Zizioulas is Christ's pneumatological body; in whom there is an eschatological participation in the hypostasis of Christ who is identified with the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. Building on the work of Afanasiev, Zizioulas argues that 'the Church constitutes the Eucharist whilst being constituted by it'[1]. Indeed, Zizioulas, building on the eucharistic ecclesiology of de Lubac, Afanasiev, Lossky and Florovsky, postulated this answer as a patristic retrieval to the 'mind and practice of the Church fathers'[2] against an over institutionalised conception of the Church, which was allegedly evident in neo-scholastic conceptions of the Church[3]. Zizioulas sees in a patristic retrieval a conception of the Church which is more than a historical, political, and social institution, or a society of believers united by a common faith.

For Catholic and Orthodox theologians, a ressourcement was a readjusting of 'the leading idea in the nineteenth century Catholic ecclesiology [that] the Church was a perfect society, *societas perfecta*, not in a moral sense but in the sense of structural completeness… Christ was seen essentially as the founder of the society rather than as its actual foundation'[4]. In a similar vein, Rowan Williams wrote that Zizioulas' ecclesiology is 'a sobering warning to the managerial

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[1] John Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 61–74 (p. 68).
[2] Michael Plekon, 'Introduction', in *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, by Nicholas Afanasiev, trans. by Vitaly Permiakov (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2012), pp. ix–xx (p. xiv).
[3] See chapter 8 'Principle Questions posed by Zizioulas'
[4] Paul McPartlan, 'Ressourcement, Vatican II, and Eucharistic Ecclesiology', in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 392–404 (p. 399).

pragmatism that can so easily dominate ecclesiology these days'[5]. This question on the identity of the Church has preoccupied different significant theologians both in an ecumenical context[6], in Orthodox theology and in recent Trinitarian scholarship for whom the Trinity held the key to reconceptualising the nature of the Church.

The Russian émigré theologians, such as Florovsky and Afanasiev, were influential on Zizioulas' conception of the Church. They considered the question of the identity of the Church by arguing that the answer lies with due consideration to the Church as the Church of God; and through a patristic ressourcement they defined the identity of the Church of God in terms of the Eucharist. Afanasiev, a leading proponent of this move, coined the term 'Eucharistic ecclesiology'[7] to describe this identification of the Church with the Eucharist. The Eucharist provides a focus for locating the Church's institutions and its ministries as the Church of God. Zizioulas developed the work of Afanasiev and Florovsky to argue that 'wherever the Eucharist is celebrated there is the Church' and that such an approach was 'an authentically Orthodox theological principle'[8].

Zizioulas does not seek to establish a purely Orthodox ecclesiology; instead, his ecclesiology is an ecumenical endeavour capable of proposing an ecclesiology for one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church he writes 'these studies are intended to offer their contribution to a "neopatristic synthesis" capable of leading West and East nearer to their common roots, in the context of the existential quest of modern man'[9]. Zizioulas associates closely the nature of the

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[5] Rowan Williams, 'Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church. By John D. Zizioulas. New York, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press and London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1985. Pp.268. £9.95', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 42.1 (1989), 101–5 (p. 105).

[6] Cf. Hugh Wybrew, Constantine Scouteris, Ian Harvey, and others, 'The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Statement Agreed by the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue' (The International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue, 2006) <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103818/The-Church-of-the-Triune-God.pdf> [accessed 25 January 2017]; Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue, 'Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue', 2007 <https://iarccum.org/doc/?d=32> [accessed 25 January 2017].

[7] Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 5.

[8] John Zizioulas, "'Ortodossia'", in *Enciclopedia Del Novecento* (Rome: Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1980), V, 1–18 (p. 2).

[9] John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), p. 26.

Church with the realisation of humanity as the image and likeness of God; and proposes the Church as the risen, pneumatological, hypostasis of Christ in whom people are deified. Zizioulas moves the discussion of the Church from an institutional and organisational problem towards ontology[10].

1.2 The problem addressed by the thesis

This thesis seeks to distinguish Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology from Social Trinitarianism. This is because Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology and the proposals for ecclesiology postulated by Social Trinitarian theologians argue for different conceptions of the Church; and to confuse Zizioulas' ecclesiology with that of Social Trinitarianism fails to do justice to the nature, the history, and the task of the ecclesiology that Zizioulas undertakes in his work.

Zizioulas shifts the focus of the discussion on ecclesiology and ecumenism away from institutional and organisational problems towards ontology; but this has caused some confusion and concern about the nature of his project. Zizioulas writes that his ecclesiology is built on the premise that

> the mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God, in virtue of this bond, so characteristic of patristic thought, ecclesiology assumes a marked importance, not only for all aspects of theology, but also for the existential needs of man in every age[11].

In the context of Orthodox eucharistic ecclesiology, this claim would be understood for what it claims to say. Namely that Zizioulas identifies the Church as a synthesis between the Spirit

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[10] See chapter 8 & 9 for a discussion on how Zizioulas shifts the ground in ecclesiology.
[11] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.

and Christ that enables participation in the filial relationship of the Son with the Father. Zizioulas develops this understanding of ecclesiology to claim that this participation in this Trinitarian mode of being has ontological implications for human nature and is the foundation for a renewed approach to ecclesiology. In Orthodox eucharistic ecclesiology, Zizioulas, along with Lossky[12], foreground discussions on the concepts of personhood and communion, and the doctrine of deification, in relation to the Church. But they also bring a rich focus on God as persons in communion and an understanding of Christology as the means by which human persons are called to an unfallen and redeemed state. By doing this Zizioulas argues that he is engaged in a 'neopatristic synthesis'[13], that is a return to a Catholic consciousness present in the Church Fathers centred on the eucharist and in which deification is a *sine qua non* of theological reasoning. Zizioulas connects human existence closely with the Trinitarian doctrine of God; and claims that the hypostatic and ecstatic freedom of triune being is foundational for human ontology as irreducible, free, and unique[14].

However, this close connection between the Trinity, humanity and the Church has generated confusion about the nature of his theological project. This has occurred amongst his Orthodox contemporaries who object to the dominance of the neopatristic synthesis in Orthodox theology in the twentieth and twenty first centuries and for those who advocate and criticise Social Trinitarianism.

Some contemporary Orthodox theologians, such as Behr, believe that 'modern Orthodox systematics [are] engaging in metaphysical speculation at the expense of the Christ of the Scriptures'[15]. In particular, Zizioulas is criticised 'for being unduly influenced by modern,

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[12] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1957).
[13] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26.
[14] The reason why relates to the ontology of freedom and personhood which we recount in chapter 6 'On the Person (1): A consideration of the charge that Zizioulas projects a philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian theology'
[15] Alexis Torrance, *Human Perfection in Byzantine Theology: Attaining the Fullness of Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 10.

existential, philosophical, and of giving an inadequate reading of the Fathers'[16]. This has led to a scepticism in Orthodox theology that the neopatristic synthesis was not a true patristic ressourcement. Agouridis believes that Zizioulas attempts to pass off existential philosophy as an Orthodox Trinitarian theology that allows the three divine hypostases to become the foundation of God's existence as freedom, love and ekstasis[17]. Turcescu goes as far to claim that Zizioulas projects philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian and in that move seeks to postulate a relational conception of personhood. Loudovikos also claims that Zizioulas is indebted to existentialism because he prioritises existence over essence in such a way that Zizioulas identifies nature with the fall[18]. These criticisms have been influential amongst Zizioulas' western critics and thus shall be addressed in this thesis. But amongst Orthodox theologians, there are reservations about eucharistic ecclesiology rather than its negation as Ware notes 'despite these reservations, I am convinced that the eucharistic 'model' still retains full validity in Orthodox ecclesiology. No other 'model' has emerged in the last fifty years that is able to replace it'[19].

However, a particular criticism against Zizioulas' ecclesiology has questioned the very nature of Zizioulas' ecclesiology. Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology has been criticised for establishing the Church as a parallel communion which mirrors that of the Trinity[20]. This criticism has coincided with the criticisms made against Social Trinitarian ecclesiologies in which the nature of the Church's identity has been at the centre of contemporary Trinitarian debate which has taken a critical view of Social Trinitarianism; and it continues to colour any reception of Zizioulas' ecclesiology because it confuses eucharistic ecclesiology with Social Trinitarianism.

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[16] John Behr, 'Reading the Fathers Today', in *A Celebration of Living Theology: A Festschrift in Honour of Andrew Louth*, ed. by J.A Mihoc and L Alsea (London: T&T Clark, 2014), p. 10.
[17] Savvas Agouridis, 'Can the persons of the Holy Trinity provide the Basis for Personalistic Views of Man', *Synaxis*, 33 (1990), 67–79 (p. 67).
[18] This question shall be addressed in chapter 6 'On the Person (1)'
[19] Kallistos Ware, 'Sobornost and Eucharistic Ecclesiology: Aleksei Khomiakov and His Successors', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 11.2–3 (2011), 216–35 (p. 232).
[20] John Behr, 'The Trinitarian Being of the Church', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 48.1 (2003), 67–88.

During the 1980s and 1990s it was common for successive systematic theologians to postulate a social conception of the Trinity, and to use the Trinitarian schesis to conceive of a perichoretic vision for the Church as part of a 'renaissance of Trinitarian theology'[21] founded upon constructing a social doctrine of the Trinity. Moltmann set the precedent for subsequent Social Trinitarians in that he regards the Church is more than an institution[22]. They attempted to retrieve the doctrine of the Trinity from its supposed neglect in Western theology to make the argument that a Social Trinity provided the key for postulating a more egalitarian and relational Church structure against what they saw to be monarchical concepts of monotheism and resulting authoritarian ecclesiologies[23]. A social doctrine of the Trinity 'allowed their understanding of the Trinity to inform what they said about everything else, with their accounts of creation, atonement and ecclesiology, and the like being shaped by their vision of the triune God'[24] and this vision was based on a renewed Trinitarian theology in which 'the biblical God is eternally constituted through a dynamic event of perichoretic mutuality, in which the communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit makes God what it is to be God'[25].

The problem is that in accounts of this Trinitarian renaissance, Zizioulas has been associated with a Social Trinitarian ecclesiology. Zizioulas' work is perceived by Social Trinitarianism and its critics as being in sympathy with this project. Since the publication of Zizioulas' best-known work, *Being as Communion* (1985), many Social Trinitarian theologians, such McCall, Volf, LaCugna, Hasker, and Gunton have drawn from Zizioulas' exposition of a Greek patristic Trinitarian theology to support a social doctrine of the trinity that had direct pastoral

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[21] Christoph Schwöbel, 'The Renaissance of Trinitarian Theology: Reasons, Problems and Tasks', in *Trinitarian Theology Today*, ed. by Christoph Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), pp. 1–30 (p. 1).
[22] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, ed. by Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1981), p. 131.
[23] See chapter 2 'The Church as Image of the Trinity' for a discussion on social analogies as generative for ecclesiology, and chapter 5 'On the Difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1)' for a discussion on how a social doctrine of the Trinity was constructed against monarchical conceptions of God.
[24] Lincoln Harvey, *Essays on the Trinity*, ed. by Lincoln Harvey (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), p. 2.
[25] Harvey, p. 2.

implications for the Church[26]. Zizioulas' work enabled a revisionist reading of patristic sources to justify a relational understanding of the Trinity, as Coakley wrote

> Western writers took up the cudgels *against* the Trinitarianism of their own tradition (Augustine and Aquinas *par excellence*) under the explicit influence of an Eastern prelate and theologian- John Zizioulas[27].

His ecclesiology has provided the conceptual tools for Social Trinitarians to retrieve a supposed Cappadocian social understanding of the Trinity; and as a result, his Trinitarian theology has been vehemently refuted by the critics of the Social Trinitarians.

Over the past decade a counter reaction to Social Trinitarianism has emerged, which is sceptical of the bold claims made of the utility of Trinitarian doctrine, and the revised conceptions of the immanent Trinity used to support such claims. An antithetical critical voice has since arisen in Trinitarian scholarship which believes that the use of Trinitarian analogies for the Church is misjudged both on a historical and theological basis. So vociferous has been their criticism that any attempt 'to use the doctrine of the Trinity to shed light on created reality … would make you a "Social Trinitarian" a term that is fast becoming derogatory in certain circles'[28]. The initial excitement over the use of Patristic terms, such as *hypostasis* and *perichoresis*, has given way to discussions over divine simplicity and where the concept of divine oneness has been prioritised. Sonderegger's volumes on *Systematic Theology* is a direct reversal of Rahner's objection to

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[26] Thomas McCall, *Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism? Philosophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2010). Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Michigan, Cambridge: William Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1998).Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (SanFrancisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991). William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[27] Sarah Coakley, 'Afterword: "Relational Ontology," Trinity And Science.', in *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, ed. by John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdsmans Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 184–200 (p. 190).

[28] Lincoln Harvey, *Essays on the Trinity*, ed. by Lincoln Harvey (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), p. 4.

considering the *One God* before considering the Trinity[29]. Moreover, historical patristic studies have questioned the underlying metanarratives posed by Social Trinitarianism; both in their reading of Cappadocian theologians and their use of Augustine[30].

Therefore, in the repudiation of Social Trinitarianism by its critics Zizioulas' work is being misrepresented and dismissed along with Social Trinitarian projects. Zizioulas himself does caution against using the Trinitarian schesis as a paradigm for the Church as communion, when he writes 'the Church is not a sort of platonic image of the Trinity, she is communion in the sense of being the people of God, Israel, and the Body of Christ'[31]. Zizioulas is sceptical of such a projective conception of the Church's communion with the Trinity and writes that

> man can approach God only through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiology which uses the notion of the image of God cannot be founded simply on triadology. The fact that man in the Church is in the image of God is due to the economy of the Holy Trinity, that is, the work of Christ and the Spirit in history. This economy is the basis of ecclesiology, without being the goal of it[32].

Despite Zizioulas' cautions against a direct representational treatment of Trinitarian doctrine, in the criticism of Social Trinitarianism, Zizioulas' Eucharistic ecclesiology has been regarded as a species of Social Trinitarianism. Holmes is a prominent example; and he believes that it is because 'Zizioulas' ecclesiology is presented as a natural outworking of his Trinitarian

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[29] Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology: Volume 1, The Doctrine of God* (Augsberg: Fortress Press, 2015), I; Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology: Volume 2, The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020), II; Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. by Joseph Donceel (New York: A Herder and Herder Book, 1997).

[30] Cf. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[31] Zizioulas, 2010, *Church as Communion,* p.8

[32] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 19.

theology'[33] that Zizioulas' work 'is clearly a species of Social Trinitarianism'[34]. Zizioulas' work has also been associated with postulating a Social Trinity by Behr in his criticism of Eucharistic ecclesiology[35]. Much of the criticism of Zizioulas proceeds on the premise that Zizioulas juxtaposes the Trinity *and* the Church with the result that:

> the Church is separated from God, as a distinct entity reflecting the divine being. Another way of putting this, using terms which are themselves problematic, would be to say that communion ecclesiology sees the Church as parallel to the "immanent Trinity": it is the three Persons in communion, the one God as a relational being, that the Church is said to "reflect". This results in a horizontal notion of communion, or perhaps better parallel "communions", without being clear about how the two intersect[36].

The criticisms brought against Zizioulas' ecclesiology for juxtaposing the Trinity and the Church and treating the Trinity as a paradigm for the communion of the Church, are common to both Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology and Social Trinitarianism. If it is alleged that Zizioulas presents the Church as a parallel communion to the Trinity, there are questions to be raised not only about Zizioulas' ecclesiology but about the way that Zizioulas handles Trinitarian doctrine and theological anthropology. Thus, work needs to be done to distinguish Zizioulas from a Social Trinitarian methodology because Zizioulas' ecclesiology is caught in the middle of this debate between the Social Trinitarians and their critics. Zizioulas' aims have been confused with those of the Social Trinitarians; in that it is widely held that Zizioulas answers Social Trinitarian questions.

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[33] Stephen Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 3 (2009), 77–89 (p. 80).
[34] Stephen Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 3 (2009), 77–89 (p. 80).
[35] John Behr, *The Nicene Faith.* (Crestwood, New York: St.Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 2 PART 2, p. 425. See also, Behr, p. 67.
[36] Behr, p. 68.

1.2 Zizioulas has been identified with a Social Trinitarian ecclesial methodology

There is a commonly held assumption amongst Zizioulas' advocates, and critics, that Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism share the same method in establishing a relationship between the Trinity, human personhood, and the Church. Zizioulas' aims are currently being confused with those of Social Trinitarians. For example, Stephen Holmes writes that Zizioulas' book *Being as Communion* (1985) like Moltmann's *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1981) 'seems to be regarded as foundational [for Social Trinitarianism] by most who came afterwards'[37]. It is argued that Zizioulas is perceived as constructing a Trinitarian doctrine which supplants divine substance in favour of reifying communion in itself; and this is seen to accord with Social Trinitarian theologians who present a social doctrine of the Trinity. This social doctrine of the Trinity is alleged to be generative for anthropology and ecclesiology. Zizioulas is perceived in disparate sources to be at the forefront of this methodology, one theologian in sympathy with Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian project comments that

> their renewal of a perichoretic understanding of the triune God places Gunton and Zizioulas amongst the pivotal contemporary figures of a revolution in theological anthropology. Just as the persons of the Trinity are each particular and yet revealed through their interrelations, they suggest, so are human persons[38].

For Social Trinity's critics this methodology is problematic and Zizioulas is seen to share that methodology as Holmes writes 'despite appearances, ecclesiological programs cannot in fact be

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[37] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 79.
[38] Leon Turner, *Theology, Psychology and the Plural Self* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2008), p. 25.

derived from Trinitarian dogma; there is a methodological flaw shared by both Zizioulas and Volf[39].

This thesis does not seek to critique the Social Trinitarian theologians, nor to absolve Zizioulas from criticism, but to identify the aims, and method, of Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian advocates and their critics and to establish what Zizioulas' aims are and the method he develops to achieve those aims.

The critics of the Social Trinitarians seek to demonstrate that the use of social analogies for the Trinity are 'deeply problematic'[40] as such analogies are projections of human notions of social relation onto the triune Godhead, as Kilby retorts:

> one can form the impression that much of the detail [in social theories of the Trinity] is derived from either the individual author's or the larger society's latest ideals of how human beings should live in community…[41].

I have sympathy with the critics of Social Trinitarianism who are sceptical of utilising analogy between the Trinity and the Church to construct a corresponding relational ecclesiology. The problem with such a method is that such attempts to use the Trinity as a model for society forget that 'God alone is God … we as creatures cannot copy God in all respects'[42]. God simply is *non aliud,* not merely another object which maximally embodies created ideals. God is transcendent and beyond human comprehension in divine nature so that human linguistic categories for discussing divine reality, such as personhood, are themselves analogous and yet those analogies

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[39] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.
[40] Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', *New Blackfriars*, 81 (2000), 432–45 (p. 433).
[41] Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', p. 441.
[42] Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in the Divine Life* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), p. 186.

will inevitably encounter limitations since ultimately the triune mystery is antinomic: God is both one and many unlike anything else in creation[43].

At the same time, it is important to question whether Holmes' and Kilby's assessment offer an accurate depiction of the Social Trinitarian methodology, which Zizioulas supposedly shares. To some extent Kilby is accurate in her assessment of Social Trinitarian aims, in that they seek to establish that how the Church conceptualises the relations of the Triune persons corresponds with suggestions for ecclesial structures. The method for establishing a correspondence between the Trinity and the Church is illustrated by this passage from Gunton:

> a movement, carefully controlled by an apophatic doctrine of the immanent Trinity, can be made between a doctrine of God and a doctrine of the church. The relation between the latter and the former has already been described as an 'echoing': the being of the church should echo the dynamic of the relations between the three persons who together constitute the deity. The church is called to be the kind of reality at a finite level that God is in eternity[44].

In the use of such analogy the critics are concerned that the 'Social Trinitarians today use the doctrine of the Trinity to answer questions which the Fathers answered by means of Christology'[45]. At the root of this charge is the claim that the Church has not traditionally juxtaposed its identity with the nature of triune communion, and therefore argue that such a correspondence is a recent innovation[46]. It is an argument reminiscent of Tertullian's principle that in theology *prima est veritas*

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[43] See chapter 'On the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1): Monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis' for a discussion on the limitations of the Social Trinitarian method.
[44] Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), p. 166.
[45] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 77.
[46] Cf. Behr, p. 67.

(that which is first is true) and consequently that which is innovative is anathema, or in this case a misinterpretation of the Fathers.

The Social Trinitarians do not see this correspondence as an innovation on their part, for two reasons. First, Miroslav Volf[47] echoes many Social Trinitarian theologians when he claims that theologians must maintain analogies between God in creation and human beings in virtue of humans being the *imago dei,* and that Christ commanded in the sermon on the mount, 'be perfect … as your heavenly Father is perfect'[48]. Second, they operate under the assumption that historically the way the Church conceives of God becomes a paradigm for the conception of human political and ecclesial relationships. This debate on Social Trinitarianism is not really about Patristics, it is a concern with the Social Trinitarians utilising Trinitarian doctrine to construct egalitarian visions for the Church against a perceived historical legacy which has emphasised monarchical conceptions of God.

The Social Trinitarians aim to change the way that God is conceptualised by emphasising God's relationality. Volf[49] and Gunton[50] in their respective works argue that whilst corresponding the Trinity to the Church is 'alien to the Free Church tradition'[51] it was commonplace to do so in Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Volf's aim is to demonstrate that those 'assembled in the name of Christ … can be an *εἰκων* (icon) of the Trinity'[52]. The problem addressed by the Social Trinitarians is that the history of Trinitarian doctrine is characterised by a tension between unity and multiplicity, hegemony, and plurality. The way forward for the Church is to emphasise the plurality implicit to Trinitarian faith. Moltmann believed that this would challenge a monotheistic

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[47] Miroslav Volf, '"'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', *Modern Theology*, 14.3 (1998), 403–23 (p. 404).
[48] Volf, '"'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', p. 404.
[49] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Michigan, Cambridge: William Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1998), p. 193.
[50] Colin Gunton, *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 16.
[51] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 196.
[52] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 197.

monarchical concept of God which has characterised Trinitarian theology in the West so that unity is achieved in a balance with multiplicity[53]. Such an emphasis on 'pluralization'[54] lends itself to the aims of liberation and feminist theologians because it conveys an egalitarian understanding of divinity, a vision which Volf supports[55].

Gunton is more explicit in drawing analogies between on the one hand an 'Augustinian' conception of the Church, which is a hierarchical Church, 'the clergy as the *real* Church'[56] and continues the presumption of monotheism; and the other it is supposed that the revival of a perichoretic notion of the Trinity translates into a non-hierarchical and perichoretic understanding of the Church[57].

The argument that the Church did not consider the implication of Trinitarian doctrine and therefore became hierarchical is historically nonsensical. As Tanner argues that just as the Church was debating Trinitarian doctrine more intensely in the fourth century it simultaneously pledged its allegiance to the unity between Church and Emperor[58]. Still, such a criticism does not quite grasp the Social Trinitarian argument; and Gunton[59] and Volf[60] concede this historical point. They argue that the implications of Trinitarian doctrine were not fully appreciated by the Church which became increasingly hierarchical after its support from Constantine. In reaction to such an argument, Tanner's concern is not with history for its own sake, but that 'Trinitarianism can be every bit as socially and politically dangerous as monotheism' as 'everything depends on how that

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[53] This was the case with Moltmann, whose general sentiments with some substantial differences Volf follows, cf. Moltmann, p. 129.
[54] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 194.
[55] Volf, '"'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', p. 407.
[56] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 61.
[57] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 82.
[58] Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 209.
[59] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 61.
[60] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 194.

Trinitarianism (or monotheism) is understood and applied'[61]. As Kilby points out the nature of the Trinitarian doctrine depends on how a Social Trinitarian theologian wishes to use the doctrine.

However, there is an inherent risk in misrepresenting the Social Trinitarians, who seem to be aware of the limitations in drawing a social analogy with the Church. Volf is certainly aware that the use of analogy comes with limitations. Human reality is marred by sin, which prevents humanity from ever embodying a corresponding existence to the triune God[62]. He also maintains that human notions of the triune God do not correspond exactly to the Trinity and therefore in turn 'Trinitarian concepts such as "person", "relation" or *"perichoresis"* can be applied to human community in an analogous rather than a univocal sense'[63]. Indeed, Volf eschews the term Social Trinitarian for this very reason; favouring instead a social analogy of the Trinity with the emphasis on analogy rather than correspondence.

Volf is a subtle representative of those who purport a social analogy of the Trinity since his method distinguishes a strong analogy from a weak analogy. Volf argues that such analogies of the Trinity are about consistency in thought and action with God's actions in history, and whilst realising that human persons cannot correspond their existence upon Trinitarian relationships he instead makes the case for a weak analogy. Volf does not believe that such analogies should attempt to project Trinitarian reality above onto creaturely reality below, but that such analogies can be inhabited within the confines of creaturely reality grounded not upon the similarities between God and humanity but upon their differences[64]. Volf's analogical method is based upon God's economic expression within history in which humanity can live consistently. In short humanity is called to live in communion, as Volf writes:

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[61] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, p. 216. An argument repeated by Holmes' concerns with Zizioulas' argument for the episcopacy.
[62] Volf, '"'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', p. 405.
[63] Volf, '"'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', p. 405.
[64] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019), p. 323.

> Jesus' prayer is that his disciples be as Jesus and the Father are one. It indicates, by way of analogy' that the disciples' unity ought to correspond to the kind of unity Jesus and the Father enacted in the story of their interactions as portrayed in the Gospel[65].

Nonetheless, it is apparent that the onus is on analogy which is, rather tautologically, the basis of social analogies of the Trinity rather than direct univocity. But one wonders about the viability of Trinitarian analogies for determining human relationships. Volf's analogy carries the innate problem of applicability of Trinitarian relations to human relationships: Christ's subordination to the Father which should not be embodied between human persons. Tanner raises this point:

> no one has adequately addressed how the heavy load that perfectly reciprocal perichoresis carries in these theologies is compatible with their equally strong emphasis on the biblical economy, in which Jesus seems to be acting in a non-mutual relation of subordination to the Father[66].

I ask whether it is necessary to invoke a social analogy of the Trinity when theôsis articulates the *imago dei* by means of Christology? After all, Paul wrote of Christ 'He is the image of the invisible God'[67] so this implies that it is through a developed Christology that human realisation of the *imago dei* is to be found. Indeed, to ameliorate the errors of Social Trinitarianism, its critics[68] instead claim that the Church Fathers postulated a theological anthropology and ecclesiology by

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[65] Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, p. 325.
[66] Kathryn Tanner, 'Social Trinitarianism and Its Critics', in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, ed. by Giulio Maspero and Robert J. Wozniak (London: T&T Clark, 2012), pp. 368–87 (p. 376).
[67] 1 Colossians 1:15 (NRSV).
[68] Stephen Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 3 (2009), 77–89 (p. 88).

means of Christology rather than an appeal to the Trinity. I agree with them that ecclesiology cannot be derived from a representational understanding of the Trinity and that Christology serves as the foundation for the Church.

However, there is a risk amongst the critics of the Social Trinitarians of consigning the Trinity to a background role in the Church; indeed Kilby maintains this is the rightful place of the Trinitarian doctrine[69]. We have much more sympathy with the argument that the Church is 'caught up in the Trinity'[70] because in essence Zizioulas maintains that the Church exists in reference to the Trinity because it participates in the Trinity through Christ and the Spirit.

1.3 The need for a reappraisal of Zizioulas' ecclesiology

The critics may be correct in their analysis of the Social Trinitarians, but Zizioulas' work seems to be incorrectly associated with Social Trinitarian projects and their respective received criticism. Zizioulas is used by Social Trinitarian theologians to justify defining the Church as a communion which is analogous to the Trinitarian communion. But it is used in a way which distorts Zizioulas' own argument. A good example can be found in Gunton who writes of Zizioulas:

> What, then, is it for the church to reflect, as part of creation, the being of God? The answer, as John Zizioulas has shown, lies in the word *koinônia,* perhaps best translated as community (or perhaps sociality, and compare the Russian *sobornost*). One implication of the threefold community of energies, or perichoretic interaction[71].

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[69] Karen Kilby, 'Trinity and Politics: An Apophatic Approach', in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. by Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), pp. 75–94 (p. 86).
[70] Kilby, 'Trinity and Politics: An Apophatic Approach', p. 84.
[71] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 73.

Sobornost is best translated as counciliarity and relates to the *catholicity* of the Church, rather than as an equivalent for community. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Gunton has not grasped the distinction Zizioulas has made between *koinônia* and Khomiakov's *sobornost* and is quick to associate Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology with his own proposal for a Trinitarian theology based on perichoretic interaction. For Zizioulas, the Church is a sacramental participation in Christ[72]. However, the problem is that interpretations of Zizioulas' work which do not comprehend the nature of *koinônia* leave him open to charges of projection.

Tanner dislikes the use of such projection and analogy, and she identifies Zizioulas with the Social Trinitarians on the basis that Zizioulas utilises analogy between the Trinity and the Church. Whilst she believes it is not illegitimate to create analogy per se it is illegitimate to rely on Trinitarian doctrine for reconceiving ecclesial relationships by means of a projected analogy. The problem she sees is that the Trinity bears too much weight through analogy, and that the use of such analogy is unnecessary as the Fathers conveyed the realisation of the *imago dei* through Christology rather than Trinitarian analogy. As she claims:

> rather than Christology, a theology of the Trinity is enlisted to support particular kinds of human community … what the Trinity is like is thought to establish how human societies should be organized; the Trinity is taken to be the best indicator of the proper relationship between individual and community; and so on. Jürgen Moltmann, John Zizioulas, Miroslav Volf, Leonardo Boff, and Catherine LaCugna are all important names in this regard[73].

Although those who advocate a social analogy of the Trinity question the direct applicability of a strong analogy between the Trinity and the Church in favour of a qualified weak analogy,

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[72] See our chapter 'Koinonia as participation in totus Christus' in particular at 'Eucharist makes the Church'
[73] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, p. 207.

nonetheless it is still an analogous interpretation of *perichoresis* which does the heavy-lifting. The underlying method is an analogy, albeit mediated by creaturely reality.

However, critics of Social Trinitarianism need to consider that Zizioulas differs from the Social Trinitarians because Zizioulas articulates humanity as the image and likeness of God through the language of deification rather than analogy.

1.4 Theôsis as Christification: A reparative reading of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology

The emphasis in the debate on Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism has been placed on Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology and how, it is alleged, the Trinitarian mode of existence is transposed into anthropological dimensions, and it is alleged that Zizioulas treats his reading of Cappadocian Trinitarian theology as a paradigm for the communion of the Church. However, this thesis shall demonstrate that in this reading of Zizioulas his Christology has been neglected. This thesis offers a reparative reading of Zizioulas' ecclesiology by considering the role that Christology plays in Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology. Zizioulas articulates his conception of theôsis by drawing on the established Orthodox tradition of theôsis; but articulates theôsis in terms of adoption into Christ in the Spirit.

I argue that the role of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology in his eucharistic ecclesiology cannot be considered apart from participation in Christ; Zizioulas underlines the centrality of Christology to theôsis when he writes that

> The cross of Christ, and especially the idea of his descent into Hades, are the only way to communion with God. Only in utter incapacity can human capacity be realized. Christology as a pattern for anthropology rules out entirely as titanic and demonic, any human capacity that does not deny itself in incapacity. It is no wonder, therefore, that the

Church from the beginning required the sacramental death of each man in baptism before any communion with God could be established in Christ[74].

Zizioulas identifies the Eucharist with Christ and with the Church so that the Church may be described as the spiritual body of Christ. Zizioulas' ecclesiology is founded on the Church as the body of Christ; and that this is possible because he argues for a synthesis between pneumatology and Christology. Through participation in the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist humanity comes to participate in the body of Christ; in whom humanity is divinised through participating in the filial relationship between Christ and the Father. The participation in the life of the Trinity through the Spirit and in Christ, in which humanity *becomes Christ*[75], is the foundation of Zizioulas' conception of human ontology. This perception of the Eucharist ameliorates concerns that Zizioulas projects an idealised relational personalist philosophy onto the Trinity, or transposes from Trinitarian doctrine to construct a relational analogy between the Trinity, the Church and human personhood.

Thus, this shall conclude that Zizioulas' ecclesiology does not postulate the Trinity as a paradigm for the Church's communion; but is instead derived from the centrality of the Eucharist to the Church. Zizioulas uses the Eucharist as the basis for his neopatristic synthesis because he maintains that the Eucharist was at the heart of the Patristic *phronema*, the Patristic mind was characterised by a eucharistic consciousness. Zizioulas uses the eucharist to answer the question, 'what is the Church?'. The importance of this question for Zizioulas is motivated by his ecumenical context but his neopatristic synthesis has deeper resonances with contemporary concerns about the nature of personhood and freedom. The nature of these ontological questions concerning personhood are addressed through his ecclesiology.

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[74] John Zizioulas, 'The Being of God and the Being of Man', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 17–38 (p. 31).
[75] John Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 206–48 (p. 245).

Instead of proposing a Social Trinitarian ecclesiology, Zizioulas' ecclesiology represents a different way for conveying the relevance of Trinitarian doctrine for the nature of the Church. It does so because the doctrine of deification (theôsis) is structural for his ecclesiology as implicit to his aim to convey a Eucharistic ecclesiology; and not because it presents yet another analogy between the Trinity and the Church and therefore Zizioulas does not seek to construct a social doctrine of the Trinity.

This thesis seeks to distinguish Zizioulas' understanding of theôsis inherent in his ecclesiology from the methodology utilised by Social Trinitarian theologians to shape their own vision for the Church. This Social Trinitarian methodology operates through establishing an analogy between the Trinity and the Church. In this analogical method, the Church is perceived to be a parallel image of the Trinitarian communion.

Therefore, this thesis shall challenge the claim that Zizioulas shares this methodological flaw with the Social Trinitarians. The Social Trinitarian theologians do not share their aims, and thus their resulting method, with Zizioulas. Rather, assessments of Zizioulas are wrapped up with the concerns which the critics have with Social Trinitarianism.

I shall make the case that Zizioulas does not seek to establish a correspondence between the Trinity and the Church on the basis of analogy or a particular category, such as perichoresis or communion per se. Instead, by seeking to engage in a patient historical analysis I shall argue that Zizioulas seeks to articulate a eucharistic ecclesiology which builds on the work of his predecessors Florovsky, and Afanasiev, in communicating an ecclesiology whose structure relies upon participation in the life of the Trinity through Christ and the Spirit.

The Church is Trinitarian in its dimensions not because it conveys a horizontal communion which is analogous to the Trinity, but because Zizioulas' ecclesiology is an articulation of the doctrine of deification. The Church is rooted in a vertical divine-human communion in which the Trinitarian persons of the Son and the Spirit operate to establish communion with the Father. The Church therefore is an incorporation into the life of the Trinity rather than its mirror image.

Zizioulas' ecclesiology is structured by theôsis as participation in the hypostasis of Christ. Christ exists in the Spirit as a corporate personality so that the being of the Church is fully identified with Christ; and through participation in Christ, through the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, human persons are realised as personal in communion with the Father. In being constituted by the Spirit the Church subsists as the mystical body of Christ. Through this participation in Christ humanity comes to participate in the Son's filial relationship with the Father; through which 'man's destiny as the image of God in creation' is realised which Zizioulas defines as 'the fulfilment of man's full communion with God; what the Greek Fathers have called *theosis*'[76].

In summary, this thesis is a reparative reading of the eucharistic ecclesiology of John Zizioulas. The reparative reading in this thesis suggests that theologians should hesitate before ascribing a particular theological position to a theologian without considering that theologian's questions and how they seek to address those questions. In this guise, the association of Zizioulas' work with Social Trinitarianism is premature because in Trinitarian scholarship Zizioulas' work has been encountered through Social Trinitarianism without pausing to consider the questions that Zizioulas addresses. This thesis attempts to discern the nexus of questions and answers which underlies Zizioulas' ecclesiology. This is an attempt do justice to the precise argument which Zizioulas postulates on the relationship between the Trinity and Church. When it comes to the relationship between the Trinity and the Church, it is important to recognise that Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians are simply asking different questions

[76] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 237. Lossky articulates this further in terms of image and likeness. Orthodox theology differentiates between 'image' and 'likeness'. In which, theotic 'likeness' is a potentiality that is attained by synergism of divine grace and human will and is a task which the Spirit fulfils in the human person. This occurs in the Church, which is untied with Christ's hypostasis, in which 'our nature is united with Christ in the Church which is His body, and this union is fulfilled in the sacramental life, but it is necessary that every person of this one nature should become conformed to Christ'. For Lossky, the image pertained to general human nature deified in Christ, whilst likeness is realised by the Spirit in individual persons. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 184.

1.5 Research Questions and a Synopsis of the thesis:

In the light of the reception of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology as Social Trinitarianism, the aim of this thesis is to offer a reparative reading of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology. Which means that before ascribing a theological position to Zizioulas more consideration needs to be given to the questions that Zizioulas addresses in his work; and indeed, more consideration needs to be given to the questions that Social Trinitarian theologians address in their work. Collingwood, made a salient point that is relevant to our diagnosis of the problem about Zizioulas' reception by Social Trinitarianism; in which 'a logic in which a thinker's answers are attended to and their questions neglected is a false logic'[77]. It is common to focus on one half of that logic; namely the answers that a theologian presents, and to presume that a resemblance in concepts means necessarily that a theologian upholds a certain theological position. But if a concept addresses a different question then it is not the same answer. If Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians seek to address the same questions and construct the same answers to those questions then logically it is possible to conclude that Zizioulas may be considered a Social Trinitarian theologian. However, Zizioulas not only addresses different questions to the Social Trinitarians but constructs a different method to address those questions; and although there may at time be a surface level of resemblance in their concepts Zizioulas differs to the Social Trinitarians precisely because Zizioulas considers different questions and constructs a different method to address them.

This situation is compounded because in the act of interpreting Zizioulas' work Social Trinitarian theologians believe that Zizioulas answers their questions. Zizioulas offers a reading of Cappadocian Trinitarian theology which places a value on communion; moreover, he offers an ecclesiology which also values communion. Some Social Trinitarian theologians, such as LaCugna and Gunton, build on Zizioulas' work because he supplies them with the tools necessary to

[77] Robin George Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 31.

construct a social doctrine of the Trinity; and to some extent, due to the fact that Zizioulas appeals to Patristic sources and is rooted in an Orthodox tradition Zizioulas adds some legitimacy for Social Trinitarians who wish to appeal to a Greek patristic approach as an alternative to a Western approach to the Trinity. The problem is that the questions and methods developed by Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians are different from one another, and this has not been recognised in recent Trinitarian scholarship.

Therefore, this thesis is interested distinguishing Zizioulas from Social Trinitarianism and is motivated by discerning the questions considered by both Zizioulas and Social Trinitarians, and how they answer those questions. Thus, this thesis has a series of chief research questions:

1) What is Zizioulas trying to do in his eucharistic ecclesiology?
2) Does the reception of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology by Social Trinitarianism and its critics do justice to Zizioulas' project?
    a. Does Zizioulas postulate the Trinity as a paradigm for the Church's communion?
    b. Does Zizioulas argue for a social doctrine of the Trinity?
    c. What is the work expected from a social doctrine of the Trinity? What is a social doctrine of the Trinity?
    d. Does Zizioulas project a philosophical relational personalism onto Greek Patristic Trinitarian personhood? If not, then how does Zizioulas treat the subject of the person?

In part 1, this thesis considers the reception of Zizioulas' ecclesiology as Social Trinitarianism. This section of the thesis considers the question whether Zizioulas postulates the Trinity as a paradigm for the Church's communion, a consideration of the question regarding the work expected from a social doctrine of the Trinity regarding ecclesiology, and whether this does justice to Zizioulas' project. A criticism posed to both Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism is that the

construction of a social doctrine of the Trinity is determined by the ideals that Trinity should reflect; and that in the process the doctrine is used to project those ideals onto creaturely realities[78].

In chapter 2, entitled 'The Church as Image of the Trinity: The Criticisms of projection brought against Zizioulas' ecclesiology', Zizioulas is charged with projecting a social doctrine of the Trinity onto ecclesiology. This chapter considers three areas of criticism: (1) that Zizioulas treats the Bishop as a projection of the monarchy of the Father, (2) that Zizioulas argues for a Social Trinity, and (3) that Zizioulas does not sufficiently integrate the communion of the Church with the Trinitarian koinônia because the Church exists as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity. In response to (1) it is argued that Zizioulas' critics have confused Zizioulas' ecclesiological method with that of the Social Trinitarians; and this chapter outlines the differences in that method between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. (2) Addresses the criticism that the Church is alleged to reflect God's being as communion, and this leads to confusions about the purpose of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology. This section addresses this question by arguing against the perception that Zizioulas reduces the Trinity to relationality, and that the Trinitarian doctrine is utilised to convey the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Church. (3) Builds on the insights of (2) by considering Behr's criticism that for Zizioulas divine *oikonomia* and *theologia* equates to the difference between Trinitarian *manifestation* and *procession*. I argue that Zizioulas does not do this, instead he maintains the immanent Trinity but argues that the Church is a synthesis between Christ and the Spirit so that in the liturgy Christ is encountered and revealed as Trinitarian Son. There is not therefore a parallel communion between the Trinity and the Church but that through participation in Christ, the Church participates in the filial relationship between Son and Father.

In chapter 3; entitled 'The Church as *totus Christus:* a reappraisal of Zizioulas' ecclesiological method as a response to his critics', I consider the research question whether 'the reception of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology by Social Trinitarianism and its critics do justice to Zizioulas'

[78] See chapter 2 'The Church as Image of the Trinity: The Criticisms of projection brought against Zizioulas' ecclesiology'

project'. This chapter argues that the reception of his work does not do justice to the questions and answers of Zizioulas' ecclesiology. This chapter argues that Zizioulas needs to be considered within the context of Eucharistic ecclesiology; and in Zizioulas' critical dialogue with Afanasiev, *sobornost*, and against Catholic bridal images of ecclesiology, Zizioulas ameliorates an ecclesiology which establishes the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity. Instead, Zizioulas maintains that the Church is a synthesis between Christology and pneumatology so that the Church exists as the spiritual body of Christ.

In Part 2, this thesis considers the reception of Zizioulas' doctrine of the Trinity as Social Trinitarianism. This thesis considers the charges that Zizioulas projects Trinitarian communion onto the Church and abrogates this charge through establishing that Zizioulas identifies the Church with the hypostasis of Christ. However, this task is not sufficient without considering the nature of Trinitarian doctrine at the heart of the discussion. Chapters 4 and 5 consider the question; 'Does Zizioulas construct a social doctrine of the Trinity to correspond with a relational Church and his conception of ecclesiology?

At the root of the issue is a difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians on the task that the doctrine of the Trinity is expected to fulfil; and this shapes the nature of the doctrine itself. This is a dispute on method. The critics of Social Trinitarianism believe that Zizioulas shares a methodology of correspondence with the Social Trinitarians; and they object because they do not believe that the Trinity should have any task. The Social Trinitarians are guilty of placing a heavy load on the doctrine of the Trinity to supply a representational doctrine capable of producing ecclesiologies, relational anthropologies or egalitarian politics.

There is a need for nuance. It is not the case that the difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians is that they derive different conclusions from different doctrines of the Trinity but expect the same work from the doctrine of the Trinity to supply a suitable corresponding

reality for creaturely realities[79]. Rather the treatment of the doctrine is altogether different. A particular problem is that there is no agreed definition on the nature of a social doctrine of the Trinity; and that Zizioulas is often used to indicate what is meant by a Social Trinity. This thesis proceeds by establishing what is meant by a social doctrine of the Trinity by establishing the nature of the questions that Social Trinitarian theologians consider; and how they construct their answers to address those questions. The benefit of this approach is that this task reveals inherent differences between what Zizioulas seeks to accomplish and what Social Trinitarian theologians seek to accomplish.

Therefore, in chapter 4, this thesis examines the work that is expected from a social doctrine of the Trinity, and it finds that a social doctrine of the Trinity was formulated to challenge a monarchical conception of God, and its manifestations in twentieth century Trinitarian theology. An adaptation of perichoresis, in which communion or relationality is reified, is used to ameliorate the problems implicit to an alleged Western and pro-Nicene approach to the Trinity. However, correlating the Social Trinitarian complex of question and answer against that of Zizioulas' treatment of Trinitarian doctrine reveals that there is a key area of conflict between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. This debate pertains to Zizioulas maintaining the monarchy of the Father whereas the Social Trinitarians maintain that divine unity is constituted in the implicit mutuality of the triune persons. It shall be argued that this debate is misplaced because as Lossky points out, in Orthodox theology the monarchy of the Father is understood as *'mone arche'* in the sense of a single source; thereby preserving Christianity's monotheism[80]. But the Social Trinitarians tend to attribute this monarchy to the communion of the persons itself to avoid subordinationism to the person of the Father.

Chapter 5, entitled 'on the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (2): Rahner's axiom', builds on the difference between Zizioulas' Trinitarian

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[79] Which Holmes claims of Zizioulas, see chapter 2.
[80] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 58.

theology and social doctrines of the Trinity. It considers the question 'What is the work expected from a social doctrine of the Trinity? What is a social doctrine of the Trinity?'. A question to be considered pertains to the method in which the Social Trinitarians relate the Trinity to creation. This chapter establishes that Zizioulas is associated with the Social Trinitarian project due to perceived alliance between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians on the neglect of the Trinity in the West. Both maintain that the problem is attributable to the alleged primacy of substance in defining the Trinity in the West. However, the difference is that Social Trinitarian theologians specifically formulated their doctrine of the Trinity against monarchical concepts of divinity promulgated in a Western context. The Social Trinitarians, following Moltmann, made use of Rahner's axiom to tie closely the doctrine of the Trinity *in se* as a perichoretic unity with the divine economy. This made the doctrine of the Trinity immediately relevant. Rahner's axiom also becomes the foundation for Social Trinitarians to establish an analogy between divine and creaturely realities.

However, Zizioulas cannot accept the Social Trinitarian use of Rahner's axiom because it compromises divine freedom, and such freedom is an axiom for his project. Zizioulas alleges that Rahner's axiom collapses the distinction between an immanent and economic Trinity to the extent that an economic Trinity determines divine being *in se* which is highly problematic for Zizioulas. Again, there is a difference in the task expected from Trinitarian doctrine because Zizioulas prioritises divine freedom.

Chapter 6 argues that it is important for Zizioulas to maintain *otherness* between divinity and creation because *otherness* is an axiom to Zizioulas' conception of divine-human communion, and in his view prevents such a communion leading to a reducibility to the same. Communion with God is able to become the foundation of freedom for humanity because God upholds humanity in its created *otherness* eternally. Through communion humanity in its *otherness* participates in the triune *mode of existence* by existing as free, unique, and *irreducible persons*. The benefit of this recognition is that it provides an answer to the question whether Zizioulas projects 'a philosophical relational personalism onto Greek Patristic Trinitarian personhood? If not, then how does

Zizioulas treat the subject of the person?'. Turcescu, Loudovikos, Ayres, and other critics which charge Zizioulas with Social Trinitarianism, accuse Zizioulas of projecting philosophical personalism into his conception of Trinitarian theology and of using the Trinitarian language to correspond the Trinity to a relational conception of the person. This chapter establishes that Zizioulas' method does not depend upon a particular reading of Trinitarian terminology but upon theôsis; which Zizioulas understands to be divine-human communion. A participation in the filial relationship with the Father in the Spirit. This participation then corrects the problem that Loudovikos identifies in Zizioulas that he juxtaposes nature and person, and in the process denigrates nature. Loudovikos misunderstands Zizioulas' argument, because to be hypostatic means to exist in a synthesis between the person and substance rather than prioritising person over substance. We then examine Zizioulas' method in addressing philosophical questions, which is not a projection of philosophical personalism but a recourse to Florovsky's Christian Hellenism. Zizioulas believes that theôsis is at the heart of a Patristic consciousness that enables theology to engage with contemporary questions. But implicit to Christian Hellenism was the implicit freedom of God, which Zizioulas develops in two ontological leavenings, first creatio ex nihilo and second through maintaining the monarchy of the Father in which the person is *irreducible* to ontological necessity. This becomes an axiom for Zizioulas' ontology.

Chapter 7, entitled 'on the person (2): Zizioulas' interpretation of personhood in his critique of the West', considers another axiom of the Social Trinitarian complex of questions and answers. This concerns the historical narrative which are implicit to Social Trinitarian theologies; in particular that the West has prioritised substance and in the process denigrated the primacy of persons which was, allegedly, implicit to a Greek patristic approach to the Trinity. Again, this is a shared 'metanarrative'[81] between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians and for this reason Zizioulas is identified with Social Trinitarianism. However, this chapter demonstrates that

[81] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, p. 387.

such a juxtaposition between Greek and Latin theology is inherent to twentieth century Orthodox theologians, and was highlighted in particular by Lossky. Zizioulas continues in this thread. But he does formulate his ecclesiology and Trinitarian theology not to demonstrate the superiority of Orthodox theology but as an ecumenical endeavour for the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. Zizioulas is not anti-Western and on the filioque he does demonstrate some flexibility as long as the monarchy of the Father is upheld. However, this chapter does offer a constructive criticism by highlighting recent scholarship that suggests that Orthodox theology in the twentieth century is dependent on the patristic scholarship of Catholic ressourcement theologians, and that his ecumenical endeavour could be assisted if Zizioulas were to take a more nuanced approach to the place of the West in history.

In part 3, this thesis considers the question 'what is Zizioulas trying to do in his eucharistic ecclesiology?' and therefore this section of the thesis is dedicated to providing a reparative reading of Zizioulas' ecclesiology. Through this reparative reading, this thesis attempts to discern the questions and problems which drive the construction of Zizioulas' ecclesiology. It is built on the premise that Zizioulas attempts to answer the question: 'what is the Church?' and this question lies behind his involvement in ecumenical dialogue. In answering this question Zizioulas takes a unique approach by uniting the question on the identity of the Church with ontology of human person and Trinitarian theology. His answer is that the Church exists as a synthesis between the Spirit and Christ so that the Church exists as the body of Christ in order to bring human persons into communion with the Father, and through Christ and the Spirit this is possible because the Church participates in the filial relation that the Son has with the Father. Through this participation human ontology is realised as being free, unique, particular persons made in the image and likeness of God.

CHAPTER 2. THE CHURCH AS IMAGE OF THE TRINITY: THE CRITICISMS OF PROJECTION BROUGHT AGAINST ZIZIOULAS' ECCLESIOLOGY

The introduction to this thesis has analysed the claim, made by his interlocutors, that Zizioulas not only argues that a social doctrine of the Trinity has a practical relevance for the Church, but that such a relevance is construed on the basis of an analogy between the Trinity and the Church. The critics of Social Trinitarianism are sceptical of such an analogy because 'it has to be projectionist'[82]. Namely, that the use of a Social Trinity to inform ecclesiology relies upon the projection of idealised human relationship onto the Trinity. This is a criticism aimed at Social Trinitarian theologies by Karen Kilby who writes:

> Projection, then, is particularly problematic in at least some social theories of the Trinity because what is projected onto God is immediately reflected back onto the world, and this reverse projection is said to be what is important about the doctrine[83].

At the same time, such projects attempt to adapt the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity to adhere to the importance placed on relationality, communion or *perichoresis* to align itself in accordance with the need to postulate an egalitarian and relational ecclesiology[84].

The differences between Eucharistic ecclesiology and Social Trinitarianism are not appreciated by most of Zizioulas' interpreters. Zizioulas is charged with projection; namely that Zizioulas prioritises communion in the Trinity, and then projects that communion on what is seen to be important about ecclesiology. This chapter is dedicated to the task of delineating three main

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[82] Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', *New Blackfriars*, 81 (2000), 432–45 (p. 441).
[83] Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', p. 442.
[84] See chapter 4 'On the difference between a Social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian Theology (1): Perichoresis and Monarchy of the Father' for an elucidation of this point.

charges brought against Zizioulas' ecclesiology that is alleged to qualify his work as a Social Trinitarian project: namely that: (1) for Zizioulas the Bishop is a projection of the monarchy of the Father, (2) Zizioulas postulates a Social Trinity and that such a vision of Trinity is used to image the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity because Zizioulas does not sufficiently integrate the koinônia of the Church with the Trinity. By examining these charges, I shall argue that Zizioulas has been misunderstood.

Indeed, there is a significant second thread in our argument on Zizioulas. Which is that rather than postulating a Social Trinitarian conception of the Church based on analogy, Zizioulas' ecclesiology is founded upon the centrality of theôsis to the Church and that this difference is important. The Church participates in that eternal Trinitarian *koinônia* between Father, Son and Spirit precisely because it is identified with the hypostasis of Christ, as a synthesis between Christ and the Spirit, rather than existing as a parallel image of the Trinitarian *koinônia*[85].

This is an important argument because Zizioulas' ecclesiology provides an alternative to analogy for relating the Church to the Trinity, as well as establishing that the Trinity is of prime importance for the Church. Whilst the critics of Social Trinitarianism are duly concerned about deriving ecclesial, political and anthropological relationships from speculation on inner divine being, Zizioulas' ecclesiology accords with the critics' aims to articulate a transformative participation into communion with the Father through the Spirit and in Christ.

In accordance with this claim, in the next chapter, I aim to make it apparent that Zizioulas uses a different method to that of the Social Trinitarians in conceiving of the relationship between the Trinity and the Church. Zizioulas conceives this relationship not on the basis of analogy, but that the relationship between the Trinity and the Church is mediated through Christ, whose

[85] For a fuller exploration of Zizioulas conception of the Church as Christ, as well as 'adoption into Christ', see chapter 9 entitled 'Koinônia as participation in the *totus Christus*'. The Church is the communal body of Christ as a corporate personality. For Zizioulas, as for Orthodoxy generally, the Church points to the Spirit (as a living icon of the invisible Spirit). Whilst Zizioulas identifies the Church with Christ, this is only possible because of the Spirit. It is the Spirit which makes the Church the corporate personality of Christ. Zizioulas is no exception to Orthodoxy in proclaiming the Church as a continual Pentecost.

corporate personality is identified fully with the Church. The communion of the Church in Zizioulas' ecclesiology is not based on a horizontal imaging of Trinitarian *koinônia* but a vertical communion between the Trinity and the Church, which is identified with the second person of the Trinity, the Son. Therefore, the Church is Trinitarian in its dimensions because the persons of the Trinity work to incorporate the Church into the Trinitarian *koinônia* through the Spirit and in the Son in worship of the Father.

2.1 Charge (1): The Bishop is a projection of the Monarchy of the Father

Since Zizioulas is perceived by his critics to draw an analogy between the Trinity and Church his prominent critics have used his position on episcopacy to charge him with projecting the Trinity onto the Church. This becomes especially apparent in Holmes' criticism of Zizioulas, who writes that because Zizioulas emphasises the monarchy of the Father in the Trinity he projects this Trinitarian ontology onto the need for the primacy of the Bishop in the Church[86]. Zizioulas' adherence to the monarchy of the Father does not, in his critics' view, distinguish Zizioulas from the Social Trinitarians. Instead, the different emphases in Trinitarian theology is seen to translate into a different nuance on the nature of analogy.

Holmes' primary focus is against 'a belief in the ethical usefulness of Trinitarian dogma'[87]. Indeed, Volf holds the view that 'the thesis that ecclesial communion should correspond to Trinitarian communion enjoys the status of an almost self-evident proposition'[88]. Holmes' criticism of Zizioulas is secondary to his concerns on Social Trinitarianism. His primary focus is to counter the Social Trinitarian method and thus he uses Zizioulas' stance on Bishops to demonstrate what he sees to be a flaw in Social Trinitarian methodology. He assumes that Zizioulas and Volf share

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[86] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 85.
[87] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 78.
[88] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 191.

the same methodology in deriving ecclesiology from Trinitarian doctrine. Holmes' strategy is to consider how Volf's ecclesiology draws from Zizioulas to critique the claim that 'a social doctrine of the Trinity is generative for ecclesiology'[89] since the same doctrine gives rise to very different ecclesiologies. But as a result, Holmes ends up misjudging the character of Zizioulas' position on episcopacy.

It is apparent that Volf and Zizioulas have differing visions for the Church in terms of the relationship between the Eucharist and the Bishop shaping the nature of the Church according to their respective confessional loyalties.

Volf's analysis of Zizioulas seems to assume that, like himself and as Holmes assumes, Zizioulas seeks to establish correspondences between the Trinity and the Church. His concern is focussed on the place of hierarchy in the Church, so in his analysis 'Ratzinger and Zizioulas derive an understanding of the relationship between the one and the whole from a hierarchical doctrine of the Trinity in which the one is dominant'[90]. Volf considers that the perichoretic Trinitarian relationships between co-equal Trinitarian subjects should translate into an egalitarian vision for ecclesiology. As Volf writes on his ecclesiology:

> the structure of Trinitarian relations is characterised neither by a pyramidal dominance of the one (so Ratzinger) nor by a hierarchical bipolarity between the one and the many (so Zizioulas), but rather by a polycentric and symmetrical reciprocity of the many[91].

For Volf, this egalitarian vision of the Trinity translates through analogy into an egalitarian ecclesial structure where 'if one starts from the Trinitarian model I have suggested, then the structure of ecclesial unity cannot be conceived by the way of the one, be it the Pope, the patriarch,

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[89] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.
[90] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 247.
[91] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 217.

or the bishop'[92]. The reason Volf gives is that such a hierarchical notion of the Church would translate into a monistic vision of the Church which is incongruent with the implicit collegiality of the Trinity. Instead, a perichoretic conception of the Trinity involves a correspondence not focussed on episcopacy but with the essential unity of the whole Church, as Volf writes, 'the high priestly prayer of Jesus brings all who believe in him into correspondence with the unity of the triune God'[93]. It is upon this correspondence between the Trinity, Bishops and the Church that Holmes establishes his opposition to Social Trinitarianism.

Holmes exploits the differences regarding hierarchy between Volf and Zizioulas to suggest that if such wildly different conclusions can be drawn from the Trinity simply because they have different Trinitarian doctrines there is a significant methodological flaw in deriving an ecclesiology from the doctrine of the Trinity. Holmes uses Volf to demonstrate a disparity between ecclesiastical polities which are derived from diverging Trinitarian theologies. Holmes claims that because Zizioulas gives priority to the Father it follows that Zizioulas argues that 'the bishop is the source and *arche* of the church, just as the Father is of the Trinity'[94]. Zizioulas follows Ignatius of Antioch who writes that 'where the Bishop is to be seen, there let the people be, just as wherever Christ Jesus is present, there is the Catholic Church'[95]. Zizioulas maintains the Bishop is an *alter Christus*, and in this statement associates his position with Ignatius who himself alludes to Jesus' statement that 'for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Matt 18:20). But this position is misinterpreted by Holmes who argues that Zizioulas' trinitarian theology, which maintains the monarchy of the Father, is projected onto the Church and takes the form of the monarchy of the Bishop. Who is claimed by Holmes to exist as an image of the Father in Heaven. Holmes contrasts this position with Volf's Social Trinity. Holmes claims that Volf

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[92] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 217.
[93] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 218.
[94] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.
[95] Ignatius of Antioch, 'The Epistle to the Smyrnaeans', in *Early Christian Writings*, ed. by Andrew Louth, trans. by Maxwell Staniforth (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 99–107 (p. 103).

'attempts to differentiate between the relations of origin and the eternal relations of love in the Godhead … and so Volf can support the bottom up free-church ecclesiology that he is … committed to'[96].

Holmes is sceptical of the phrase used by Volf that 'the Trinity is our social program' as such a methodology implies that the difference between a hierarchical and non-hierarchical ecclesiology hangs on the minutiae of Trinitarian scholarly debate. Differing 'accounts of the ordering (*taxis* is the traditional Greek word) of the triune relations'[97] under this methodology may lead to different ecclesial polities or political structures. Volf may use a Social Trinity to argue for an egalitarian ecclesiology in a democratic age but this is a double-edged sword since if Zizioulas emphasises the monarchy of the Father then such a Trinitarian theology cannot 'support a liberal political agenda'[98]. Therefore, Holmes is rightly concerned that Trinitarian theology cannot be transposed to the political realm as it would lead to the absurd situation where 'the difference … between democracy and fascism (say) is determined by the most abstruse of theological differences'[99].

Zizioulas and Volf do indeed posit two different Trinitarian theologies, but this does not mean they share the same methodology. For Zizioulas the monarchy of the Father is vital to his reading of Cappadocian Trinitarian theology. Volf follows in the wake of Moltmann, and presents a perichoretic conception of the Trinity.

The charge that Zizioulas projects the monarchy of the Father onto the Bishop is a misreading of Zizioulas' episcopacy and his method. Zizioulas does not strictly correspond the Trinity with the Church by means of analogy in his treatment of the episcopacy. Zizioulas does not derive the structures of the Church from the Trinitarian schesis. Zizioulas' reasons for

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[96] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 83.
[97] Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2012), p. 26.
[98] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 85.
[99] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 84.

maintaining the primacy of the Bishop are historical and ultimately root episcopacy not in the monarchy of the Father but in the Bishop's role of representing both Christ and the congregation.

One important factor in Volf's criticism is not with differing conceptions of the Church per se but with an apparent juxtaposition between Protestant ecclesiology and Zizioulas' allegiance to Orthodox ecclesiology which are in turn tied to Volf's concern for the Church to be an inclusive community. Volf's social analogies of the Trinity are built on a preference for an egalitarian vision for a free church ecclesiology. This is a point which Zizioulas identifies between himself and Volf: 'Protestant ecclesiology would tend to be more 'congregationalist' and to give priority to the local community … (see, e.g. M.Volf *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 1998)'[100]. Zizioulas is correct that Volf believes in the independence of the local church because he argues that the local church is not part of the church 'but rather is the whole church'[101]. This is a similar position to Afanasiev who claimed that whenever the Eucharist is celebrated there the whole Church is present. But for Zizioulas, the Church's structure is constituted through the unity between the Bishop and the Eucharist; in which the bishop's presence is required for the Church's Catholicity. For Volf, the Church's hierarchy is necessary to maintain good order in the Church but they cannot be reified. He would agree with Zizioulas that ministry is pneumatological but would claim that such ministries are inhabited in the Spirit rather shaping the person ontologically because such ministries are provisional. In this way 'ordained office belongs not to the *esse*, but rather to the *bene esse* of the church'[102].

Although different denominational priorities are important for shaping their theological presuppositions, it is important to balance denominational differences compared to the specific questions which Volf asks of Zizioulas. This is apparent in the increased significance the Eucharist

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[100] John Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 13–98 (p. 38).
[101] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Michigan, Cambridge: William Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1998), p. 154.
[102] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 152.

has in Volf's ecclesiology. Due to Volf's allegiances to the independence of the local church, and the provisional nature of ordained ministry, Volf challenges the association between the Eucharist and the Episcopacy which Zizioulas holds to be indicative of the one Church, but to answer his own questions Volf appreciates the centrality of the Eucharist in Zizioulas' ecclesiology. Yet, Volf's understanding of the Eucharist is qualified by it constituting a relational event rather than as a participation in the body of Christ. At the time of writing *After Our Likeness*, Volf belonged to a Free Church tradition, specifically the Assemblies of God, which tends to regard the Eucharist as a matter for individual salvation and which advocates a congregational ecclesiology. In *After Our Likeness,* Volf seeks to challenge his tradition's tendency to emphasise the individual, and instead favour the community by maintaining that the sacraments are of the '*esse* of the Church'[103] and are definitive of being a Christian. The driving categories he uses to do so is not the Episcopacy but the Trinity and the action of the Spirit in unifying individuals, and local churches, as evidenced in the Church's celebration of communion.

Whilst denominational differences play an important role in the distinction between Volf and Zizioulas they do not constitute the substantial differences between Volf and Zizioulas; the key difference lies with their implicit methodologies. Volf in his own ecclesiology seeks to counter the tendency toward individualism in Protestant ecclesiology, and does so through claiming that indwelling of the Spirit in the individual unites the individual with the community. The community is definitive in the shape of the Church, and he uses the perichoretic Trinitarian theology of his tutor Moltmann to articulate the important balance between the individual person and the community. His work *After our Likeness*[104] was written as an ecumenical study in which he juxtaposes his ecclesiology with that of Ratzinger and Zizioulas. His concerns are ecumenical and this is why denomination plays an important role but this dialogue ultimately serves to articulate Volf's egalitarian vision for ecclesiology in which hierarchy plays a diminished role.

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[103] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, p. 152.
[104] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*.

In Holmes' analysis, Zizioulas serves to riposte Volf's claims that trinitarian doctrine necessarily generates an egalitarian ecclesiology. However, by doing so Holmes does not attend to Zizioulas' own distinct methodology. This is because Holmes' concern lies with ameliorating Social Trinitarianism, in which, in Holmes' regard, Zizioulas is another leading representative. Holmes' reading of Zizioulas is wrapped up with repudiating an approach to the Trinity he perceives in Volf. We have sympathy with many of the claims Holmes brings against Social Trinitarianism, namely that is questionable to convey an ecclesiology based upon the minutiae of Trinitarian doctrine. Yet we question whether in his concern to abrogate the implicit methodology of Social Trinitarianism Holmes has given due consideration to the distinct method inherent to Zizioulas' own ecclesiology.

A closer reading of Zizioulas' ecclesiology reveals that Zizioulas does not seek to correspond the Trinity with the Church. We can see this in Zizioulas' treatment of the episcopacy; Holmes holds that Zizioulas projects the primacy of the Bishop in ecclesiology onto the importance of the monarchy of the Father in the Trinity[105]. But this is a misunderstanding of Zizioulas' neopatristic method. Zizioulas does not derive the structures of the Church from the Trinitarian schesis. Zizioulas' reasons for maintaining the primacy of the Bishop are historical.

His doctoral work, now published as 'Eucharist, Bishop and Church' (2001)[106], is a recapitulation of a patristic ecclesiology which purports the centrality of the Eucharist and the Bishop for constituting the nature of the Church. He writes that such a patristic ressourcement was posited against post-seventeenth century appropriation of scholasticism in Orthodox theology, as Zizioulas describes them: 'the so called "Orthodox confessions" of Peter Mogila, Dositheos of Jerusalem …'.[107] His criticism is that the Bishop was not considered within

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[105] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 85.

[106] John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, trans. by Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

[107] John Zizioulas, 'The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 236–52 (p. 238).

ecclesiology since the Church was perceived as an institution and the Bishop merely as an administrator[108].

An important motif in Zizioulas' ecclesiology is that the Father does not exist without the Son and the Spirit, nor does Christ exist without the Church, and 'so also the bishop is inconceivable without his community'.[109] It is true that hypothetical argument was made by Ignatius of Antioch when he argues that, 'the bishop is the "type of God"'[110] but eventually the predominating image which prevailed was the Christological image where the Bishop is *persona Christi*[111], and it is this image which predominates in Zizioulas' ecclesiology. The Bishop represents the many, in the same way that Christ represents the many in himself, by presenting them in prayer to the Father. Instead of representing the Father, the Bishop represents the Church to the Father because the Bishops acts as '*alter Christus*'[112] and '*alter apostolus*'.[113] In short, Zizioulas' arguments on episcopacy are obscured by the perception that he postulates a Social Trinity.

2.2 ***Charge (2): Zizioulas postulates the Church as a parallel communion to God's being as communion***

The criticism Zizioulas has received for projecting the monarchy of the Father onto the primacy of the Bishop in the Church builds on a broader common charge brought against Zizioulas' Eucharistic Ecclesiology. It is based on a misunderstanding of Zizioulas' claim that 'the

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[108] Zizioulas, 'The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church', p. 238.
[109] John Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 61–74 (p. 71).
[110] *Magn.61* cited in Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 71, fn.35.
[111] Zizioulas, 'The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church', p. 243.
[112] Zizioulas, 'The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church', p. 242.
[113] Zizioulas, 'The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church', p. 246. For an exploration of alter Christus and alter apostolus see chapter 9, in particular 'The Eucharist Makes the Church and the Church Constitutes the Eucharist': An Eschatological understanding of the Church's catholicity and truth'.

Church as communion *reflects* God's being as communion'[114]. Behr is a prominent example since he identifies Zizioulas with the Social Trinitarians[115] in that the Trinity is reduced to a relational category. The repeated charges made against Zizioulas are rooted in the belief that he postulates a *perichoretic* understanding of the Trinity which is taken to shape Zizioulas' judgement on the nature of communion in the Church.

There is a cross usage of shared sources between Zizioulas' critics which confirm their view of Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian. Behr quotes from Kilby's objection to Social Trinitarianism to argue against Zizioulas' influence upon Social Trinitarian theologians that a particular communitarian quality is reified and then projected into Trinitarian being[116]. Kilby herself does not apply this directly to Zizioulas in her published work, her criticism of Social Trinitarianism in her essay *Trinity, Tradition and Politics* (2014)[117] acknowledges an indebtedness to Kathryn Tanner's essay *Social Trinitarianism and its critics* (2012)[118] who does direct her criticism at Zizioulas amongst other figures identified as Social Trinitarian. Behr applies, somewhat indirectly, these same criticisms from Kilby *mutatis mundatis* to Zizioulas by citing Kilby's criticism[119].

In his work *Nicene Faith* (2004)[120] Behr offers a corrective exegesis of Gregory of Nyssa's *Letter to Peter* to amend the errors he perceives to be repeated by Social Trinitarian theologians but it is an error which Behr attributes to Zizioulas. Namely, Behr argues the claim 'the one who has seen the Son has seen the Father also (Jn 14:9)'[121] means that a mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son implies that the Son has all the properties possessed by the Father (except for being unbegotten):

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[114] John Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 38.1 (1994), 3–16 (p. 8). Italics my own. Cited by Behr, p. 69.
[115] Behr, 2 PART 2.
[116] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425.
[117] Kilby, 'Trinity and Politics: An Apophatic Approach'.
[118] Tanner, 'Social Trinitarianism and Its Critics'.
[119] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425, fn.39.
[120] Behr, 2 PART 2.
[121] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 424.

> the *hypostasis* of the Son therefore becomes aware of the shape (μορφη) and countenance (προσωπον) of the knowledge of the Father, and the *hypostasis* of the Father is made known in the form (μορφη) of the Son, while their observed particular [properties] abide in each to serve as a clear differentiation of the *hypostasis*'[122].

Behr contrasts this mutual indwelling with the use of 'Trinitarian *perichoresis*'[123] common to 'modern theology'[124] evidenced in 'Catherine LaCugna'[125] who, according to Behr, develops the Trinitarian themes of Zizioulas.[126] In particular that:

> there is an emphasis on the "mutuality and interdependence" of the three persons in a "communion of love", so that each person is what they are by virtue of their relationship to the others, thereby revealing "what God is: ecstatic, relational, dynamic, vital" and, consequently, that "the divine unity" is located neither with the divine substance nor with the person of the Father but rather "in diversity, in a true *communion* of persons"[127].

As argued in the chapter on Trinitarian personhood[128], Zizioulas does not reify communion as an ontological category per se, instead the persons are conditioned by the *arche* of the person of the Father[129]. This distinguishes Zizioulas from a Social Trinity but it is not a point which Behr has seemed to have discerned.

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[122] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425.
[123] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425.
[124] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425.
[125] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425, fn.39.
[126] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425, fn.39.
[127] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 425.
[128] Cf. On the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1): Perichoresis and Monarchy of the Father
[129] See chapter 6 on Trinitarian personhood (1) where we have established that Zizioulas does not advocate a social-Trinity.

Behr also charges that Zizioulas establishes the Church as a reflection of immanent Trinitarian relationships. This is rather odd since upon examination Behr's suggestion for the Church is remarkably similar to Zizioulas' own position on 'the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ'.[130] He writes that God's actions are not divided yet are differentiated, through participation in the Church as the body of Christ indwelt by the spirit:

> the Church is conceived in terms of communion, but communion with God, as the body of his Son, anointed with his Spirit, and so calling upon God as Abba, Father[131].

One cannot avoid the conclusion that he has misinterpreted Zizioulas' ecclesiology. His primary concern is with the impact of 'communion ecclesiology' upon ecumenism, and that the error lies with a juxtaposition between the Trinity and the Church.

Although Behr's criticism of Zizioulas for juxtaposing the Church and the Trinity is similar to those who criticise the Social Trinitarians his objection to Zizioulas' ecclesiology is derived from different reasons. Whilst he holds that Zizioulas corresponds the Church's communion with that of the Trinity, the reason why the Church becomes a distinct parallel communion has to do with how Zizioulas construes the relationship between *oikonomia* and *theologia* rather than a shared methodology of analogy.

Unlike Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian critics, Behr does not believe Zizioulas derives Trinitarian *koinônia* from 'sociological experience'[132] that is a projection from a human experience of communion onto Trinitarian being. Rather Behr believes the converse, namely that Zizioulas projects Trinitarian *koinônia* onto the Church as a distinct entity rather than the Church

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[130] John Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 286–306 (p. 286).
[131] Behr, p. 70.
[132] Behr, p. 68.

participating in Trinitarian *koinônia*; as Behr writes 'we have the Trinity *and* the Church'[133]. Behr acknowledges that Zizioulas does offer a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in the Church yet this integration between Christ and the Spirit is not a participation in the 'immanent' Trinity and thus remains a realm apart.

It is worth considering Behr's criticism of Eucharistic ecclesiology alongside the criticisms brought against Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian. Since the one becomes confused with the other. This is particularly evident in the charges brought against Zizioulas that his conception of the Bishop is a projection of his theology of the Monarchy of the Father, and that Zizioulas uses a Social Trinity as a paradigm for the Church's communion.

2.3 Charge (3): Zizioulas does not sufficiently integrate the communion of the Church with the Trinity

In the chapter on Trinitarian personhood, it is argued that the ontological priority of the Father as the source and cause of Trinitarian being as Trinity means that God's actions in *oikonomia* must be distinguished from God's being in *theologia*[134]. Zizioulas' position on the difference between *theologia* and *oikonomia* distinguishes him from the Social Trinitarians because the Social Trinitarians build their knowledge of God on the essential unity between the immanent and economic Trinity. It is axiomatic for the Social Trinitarians that 'the "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity'[135].

A central issue is that Christ can be known as Trinitarian son through the liturgy, and in this regard Behr and Zizioulas make the same claim[136] but this is obscured by Behr's criticism.

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[133] Behr, p. 70.
[134] Cf. On the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1): Perichoresis and Monarchy of the Father
[135] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. by Joseph Donceel (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns and Oates, 1986), p. 22. See our chapter on Rahner's axiom
[136] See Chapter 9 Koinonia as participation in the totus Christus: 'truth in relation to the Eucharist'

This is significant since Behr's reasoning for Zizioulas postulating the Church as a distinct communion is different to the Social Trinitarian charge of method by analogy. For Behr, the distinction which Zizioulas maintains between *theologia* and *oikonomia* results in Zizioulas positing the Church as a parallel communion to the Trinity, despite Zizioulas' unity between pneumatology and Christology 'the intra-Trinitarian communion becomes a realm apart, and the work of the Spirit becomes almost independent from that of Christ'[137]. Behr's concern is that it is inappropriate to project horizontal inner Trinitarian relations directly onto the Church. The Trinitarian relations should instead define the nature of the vertical relation between Church and God. Consequently, in Behr's view, Zizioulas does not provide a sufficient explanation for how the communion of the Church is integrated with the Trinitarian *koinônia*.

2.3.1 Oikonomia and theologia

Behr argues that, in Zizioulas, the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* equates to a division between the *manifestation* of the Trinitarian persons in the *oikonomia* and the *processions* in *theologia*. Zizioulas is at fault because he confines the *manifestation* of the Spirit through the Son solely to the

> temporal realm (where the Son, as human, is anointed with the Spirit, and so the Spirit can be said to be "of Christ"), so introducing a distinction between the "immanent" and "economic" Trinity[138].

This is quite a technical discussion so it needs unpacking. Behr argues that the Cappadocians maintained that God can only be known through God's actions in salvation history

[137] Behr, p. 77.
[138] Behr, p. 77.

'as he reveals himself, and what he reveals of himself is what he is'[139]. In the ontological order of the divine persons inherent to the immanent Trinity, the Father *begets* the Son, and the Spirit *proceeds* from the Father. Here the Father is the sole *arche* of the Son and the Spirit.

In the divine economy, the Spirit is bestowed, or *manifests*, itself on Christians by Christ. The Trinitarian order from the Father through the Son in the Spirit in divine economy finds a reciprocal movement in the communion of the Church back to the Father through the Son in the Spirit. The apostolic presentation of the Trinitarian persons in the Church's liturgy is the presentation of the Son in relation to the Father and the Spirit and this forms the basis for the Church's understanding of the Trinity, and the Church existing as communion. Behr articulates this movement in terms of the differentiation between the

> "procession" of the Holy Spirit from the Father, by which the Spirit derives his subsistence and existence, and the "manifestation" or "shining forth" of the Spirit through the Son, a relation which is not only temporal but eternal[140].

For Behr, *procession* describes ontological 'cause' (*aitia*) where the Father begets the Son and the Spirit proceeds from the Father. The existence of the Spirit is solely from the Father.

Manifestation is the movement and dynamism between the Trinitarian persons both within eternal relations in the Trinity itself, and in the movement of the persons in the divine economy. *Manifestation* occurs in the Trinity (*theologia*) eternally where the Spirit rests upon the Son. In the *oikonomia* the Spirit manifests itself in the temporal realm. Through the Spirit Christ is incarnate, and it is through the Spirit that the Son is revealed as the eternal Son of God. It is through the Spirit that Christ is resurrected and exists as a Spiritual body in the Church, and it is through the Spirit that Christians participate in Christ at baptism. There is a double movement in which the

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[139] Behr, p. 75.
[140] Behr, p. 76.

Spirit manifests Christ and then in the Spirit Christians are incorporated into a movement into communion with the Father.

It is key to understand that Behr does not equate *manifestation* solely with *oikonomia* since 'the spirit is *manifested* through the Son, not only in the temporal realm, but eternally'.[141] Therefore, the difference between *manifestation* and *procession* does not equate to the difference between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.

According to Behr, this is different from Zizioulas who is alleged to correspond the difference between *manifestation* and *procession* to the distinction between 'intra-Trinitarian *procession* and extra-Trinitarian *missions*.'[142] This is because Christ's relation to the Holy Spirit does not only constitute his being in *oikonomia*; which Behr claims is how Zizioulas articulates the inseparability between pneumatology and Christology. For Behr, the relationship between Christ and the Spirit also determines how the Church is able to speak of the relations between Father, Son and Spirit eternally. This is because the relationship of the Trinitarian persons working within *oikonomia* in the Church is a revelation of the relations between the Trinitarian persons in the eternal divine life 'the Spirit who proceeds from the Father, rests upon the Son, as a bond of love returned to the Father'[143]. It is by *adoption* into this relationship that the Church has its communion and how the Church may be described as the 'body of Christ and the temple of the Spirit'[144].

I think Zizioulas would agree with this view of communion. It is my contention that Behr does not consider Zizioulas' conception of the Church's communion in this way. As we have identified, Behr believes that the alleged distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* in Zizioulas' work accounts for Zizioulas positing the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity. Clearly, the distinction which Zizioulas makes between *oikonomia* and *theologia* needs to be accounted for in Zizioulas' work. It needs to be ascertained whether Behr is right that this

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[141] Behr, p. 76.
[142] Behr, p. 77.
[143] Behr, p. 77.
[144] Behr, p. 77.

distinction equates to the distinction between *procession* and *manifestation*, where *manifestation* is reserved solely, as Behr terms it, to the temporal realm. The implication for Zizioulas' ecclesiology, in Behr's view, of consigning the Church's communion as a realm apart means that the Church's communion is parallel to that of the Trinity rather than participation in the Trinitarian communion with the Father, in the Spirit into Christ.

Here we wish to argue that Zizioulas' position on the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* does not preclude that adoption, indeed this adoption is axiomatic to his Eucharistic ecclesiology.

Behr seems to think Zizioulas argues that the distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia* leads to a distinction between procession and manifestation. Rather it is the case that Zizioulas and Behr consider the relationship between *procession* and *manifestation* and *oikonomia* and *theologia* differently rather than in opposition to each other.

For Zizioulas it is an axiom that the Trinitarian persons, whilst eternal, have an ontological source. As we have established in the chapter on Monarchy of the Father in Zizioulas' Trinitarianism, this *source*[145] is not attributed to an impersonal substance but to a person. Thus, in addition to an ontological source, Zizioulas argues that the Cappadocians considered *source* in conjunction with '"cause' (*aitia*)'[146] to preserve the ascetic principle, that is complete divine sovereignty, this *cause* is the person of the Father and Zizioulas quotes from Gregory Nazianzus to demonstrate this point

> The errors of Eunomianism could not be combatted without the introduction of the notion of αἰτια. Without this notion, there is no guarantee that the one *οὐσια* of God cannot be misconceived as a substance producing or generating something by *necessity*. Behind this

[145] John Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', in *Communion and Otherness*, ed. by Paul McPartlan (T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 178–205 (p. 186).
[146] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 186.

> lies the distinction between *οὐσια* and *ὑποστασις,* as well as the ontological ultimacy of the person. For if it is the *οὐσια* that is ontologically ultimate, then the Father alone is the *οὐσια* of God[147].

The procession of the Trinitarian persons involves the Father as the source and cause of the Son and the Spirit, and thus the Son is not the source nor the cause of the Spirit. As we have seen, Behr agrees with this *procession*. It is important to Zizioulas that the monarchy of the Father is preserved since it supports his ontological claim that the person is the ultimate ontological category.

Zizioulas maintains a distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* because the *oikonomia* to Zizioulas is purely the Trinitarian event where the Son and the Spirit fulfil the work of the Father for the salvation of humanity and the recapitulation of creation. *Theologia* is the subsistence of the Father, Son and Spirit. *Theologia* and *oikonomia* cannot be equated with each other because it denies the co-equality of the Spirit with the Son and the Father, as Zizioulas writes

> If one looks at the Economy in order to arrive at *Theologia* one begins with the Holy Spirit, then passes through the Son and finally reaches the Father. The movement is reversed when we speak of God's coming to us; the initiative starts with the Father, passes through the Son and reaches us in the Holy Spirit[148].

Zizioulas' argument explains his position using Basil the Great's juxtaposition between two different liturgical doxologies. Namely that Basil denigrated the doxology 'glory be to the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit' and appraised the doxology 'Glory be to the Father with the

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[147] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or. Theol.* 3:15-16 cited by Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 187, fn.21.
[148] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 188.

Son, with the Holy Spirit'[149]. Zizioulas prefers the latter as it gives co-equal prominence to the Trinitarian persons. The first doxology conveys God's actions *ad extra*, but if God's immanent relationship is viewed through the lens of the economy (*oikonomia*) then the Spirit is third in order, since divine action in creation is always grounded, in Zizioulas' view, in the Spirit manifesting the Son thereby giving precedence to the Son. Zizioulas therefore opposes discerning the immanent Trinity from the economy because it would tie that relationship too closely with history. Behr's articulation of this principle to maintain God's transcendence is that the manifestation and procession distinction need not translate into the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia*. The order of *manifestation* in *theologia* and *oikonomia* is the same but this need not be identified with *procession*.

2.4 ***Conclusion: God is revealed as Trinity through the liturgy***

Zizioulas maintains that the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father as the sole cause, however this does not mean that Zizioulas reserves *manifestation* solely to *oikonomia* as Behr maintains. Behr links Zizioulas' understanding of the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* with Photius, who confined the manifestation of the Spirit through the Son solely to the temporal realm[150]. But as we have established, Zizioulas does not discuss the issue in terms of *manifestation* and *procession* as Behr alleges that he does. This becomes apparent in Zizioulas' discussion on the *filioque*.[151]

Zizioulas' position does not preclude that God can be known as Trinity through Christ's relationship with the Spirit in the temporal realm per se. Zizioulas does claim that the distinction between *energy* and *essence* by Palamas exists to safeguard God's immanency from God's actions in

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[149] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', pp. 187–88.
[150] John Behr, 'The Trinitarian Being of the Church', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 48.1 (2003), 67–88 (p. 77).
[151] See chapter 7, in particular at filioque.

history. God's energies are God's mediation in history which do not reveal God as Trinity, as he writes that God's energy 'is clearly addressed *ad extra,* and unlike the personal existence of God (the Trinity), it does not point to the 'immanent' relations (differentiations) in God'[152]. The distinction between how God is *in se* and how God operates in history is why Zizioulas opposes Rahner's axiom that 'the immanent Trinity is also the economic Trinity'[153].

But God can be known as Trinity through participation in Christ in the liturgy. Zizioulas does argue that the liturgy enables knowledge of how God is *in se* as Father, Son and Spirit precisely because the Church participates in that relationship in Christ.

Zizioulas is opposed to the Social Trinitarian preoccupation with history as the revelation of God as Trinity. However, he affirms liturgical participation as the realisation of theôsis. The Spirit constitutes Christ as the Church, the body of Christ in multiplicity. Papanikolaou conveys this well when he describes Zizioulas' understanding of the Eucharist:

> to be united in the Body of Christ is not simply to be in relation to the energies of God which are distinct from the non-being of God; it is a unity in the Person of Christ. Through this participation one is able to affirm that God is a Trinity of persons… salvation in the person of Christ is where *theologia* and *oikonomia,* the immanent and the economic Trinity unite[154].

Behr writes that Christ's relationship to the Holy Spirit is not only constitutive for his being in the economy but is precisely how the Church is able to discuss the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit in se[155]. Whilst Zizioulas would argue that God's immanent relationship

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[152] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 202.
[153] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 201. See our discussion of Rahner's 'axiom' in chapter 5 on Trinitarian Personhood (1): Rahner's Axiom.
[154] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2006), p. 100.
[155] Behr, p. 77.

cannot be discerned from God's actions in salvation history (*oikonomia*) Zizioulas would agree with Behr that how God subsists as Father, Son and Spirit can be known through participation in the liturgy precisely because it is a participation in Christ's hypostasis.

In conclusion, Behr and Zizioulas are merely different because they conceive of what constitutes *oikonomia* differently. The emphasis on the difference between *theologia* and *oikonomia* is upheld because Zizioulas argues for an apophatic distance between the two so that God's transcendence is not compromised by God's identification with *oikonomia*[156]. Where Behr includes the Eucharist and the liturgy in the *oikonomia*, Zizioulas perceives the Eucharist to be different to *oikonomia,* which he conceives as solely as God's actions in salvation history. This is because the liturgy for Zizioulas is not purely historical, it is eschatological; it is a vision of humanity's participation in the life of the Trinity. Both therefore maintain the Cappadocian position that 'we only know God from his activities, as he reveals himself, and what he reveals of himself is what he is'[157]. Zizioulas believes that God is known as Trinity in the liturgy because Zizioulas identifies the Church with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist with Christ.

However, this exercise has shown that it is not sufficient merely to establish that Christ mediates the relationship between the Trinity and the Church. The discussion this thesis has had with Behr and Holmes on the charge of projection has demonstrated that it is necessary to clarify the purpose and nature of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology. The question that needs to be considered is whether Zizioulas establishes his Trinitarian theology to supply a corresponding communion for the Church and human personhood. Therefore, the next section of the thesis shall consider the nexus of question and answer concerning Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology in relation to the questions that the Social Trinitarians and their critics put to Zizioulas.

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[156] See our discussion of Zizioulas' opposition to the identification of oikonomia and theologia in our chapter on Trinitarian personhood (1): Monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis.
[157] Behr, p. 75.

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACT OF THE CHURCH AS *TOTUS CHRISTUS* UPON A REAPPRAISAL OF ZIZIOULAS' ECCLESIOLOGICAL METHOD AS A RESPONSE TO CRITICS

The answer to the confusions about the nature of Zizioulas' ecclesiology, which have been outlined in the previous chapters, is to locate his theology as a work of Eucharistic ecclesiology which is in continuity with the Russian émigré theologians who shaped the problems Zizioulas addresses in his work; whilst also acknowledging how he created his own ecclesiology in critical dialogue with his predecessors. Zizioulas' ecclesiology is shaped by the problems facing Orthodox theology in the twentieth century and which he brought into ecumenical dialogue with the West. This means Zizioulas does not follow the Social Trinitarians' lead in offering a renewed vision for the Trinity based on a relational conception of the Trinity which he then applies to the Church.

By locating Zizioulas in this Orthodox complex of problems and solutions, this thesis demonstrates that the aims of Zizioulas' ecclesiology are different from those of the Social Trinitarians; and therefore the concepts constructed by Eucharistic ecclesiology to address those questions are different from those posited by Social Trinitarianism. But it also demonstrates that locating Zizioulas in this dynamic means that he does not posit the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity.

Zizioulas does not posit a Social Trinitarian proposal to amend the problems with a monarchical monotheism supposedly latent to Western Christendom through retrieving the centrality of Trinitarian theology for ecclesiology[158]. Instead, his ecclesiology was formed in critical dialogue with the Russian émigré theologians, such as Florovsky, Lossky and Afanasiev, and their collaboration with Catholic theologians, in particular Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar, in a shared

[158] See chapter 6 'On the Difference between a Social Doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian Theology (1): the monarchy of the Father and perichoresis' for an explication of the Social Trinitarian opposition to divine monarchy.

ecumenical project[159]. Their definition of the Church was based on a patristic ressourcement to understand the Church as the mystical body of Christ rather than as a distinct institution. Zizioulas identifies a problem dealt with by Eucharistic ecclesiology. An issue raised against Medieval scholastic theology by the ressourcement project was that the Church made the Eucharist, and not vice versa'[160]. Scholastic theology had resulted in the Church being separated from the Eucharist and was identified as the mystical body of Christ which has the '*potestas* to cause the Eucharist to exist'[161].

Instead, Zizioulas argues that the Eucharist constitutes the Church. But he does not argue that the Eucharist constitutes the Church as a mirror image of the Trinity. Zizioulas' project, and his admiration for Eucharistic ecclesiology, is to reintegrate the Church with the Eucharist, and he cites Afanasiev who he acclaims as achieving this aim 'wherever there is the Eucharist there is the Church'[162]. Thus, Zizioulas' own ecclesiology is built on three developments in Eucharistic ecclesiology.

First, Zizioulas embarks on a patristic ressourcement to define the Church in terms of a divine-human communion within the mystical body of Christ; and does so to mark the distinctiveness of Patristic theology against neo-scholasticism[163]. Papanikolaou writes of Zizioulas and Lossky that although they differed on the nature of theôsis, i.e. whether it was primarily mediated through the Eucharist or mystical apophaticism[164], communion between God and humanity through theôsis was 'used as a self-identification marker against 'Western' theologies,

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[159] See chapter 8 on Zizioulas' Principle Questions, in particular on the separation of the Church from the Eucharist. Cf. Andrew Louth, 'French Ressourcement Theology and Orthodoxy: A Living Mutual Relationship?', in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 495–508.
[160] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 70.
[161] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68. See chapter 'Zizioulas' Principle Questions' for a further exploration of Zizioulas' opposition to a scholastic conception of the Eucharist.
[162] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[163] In chapter 8 on 'Zizioulas' principle questions' we examine this issue in more depth.
[164] Cf. Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God', *Modern Theology*, 19.3 (2003), 357–85.

which they saw as excessively rationalistic and therefore a threat to the very heart of theological discourse defined in terms of the realism of divine-human communion'[165].

Second, Zizioulas moves away from a propositional approach to theological method by rooting theology in the liturgy. Placing the centrality of theôsis at the heart of the Church was perceived, in particular by Zizioulas' mentor Florovsky, to be the recovery of the Patristic 'phronema'[166], namely a Patristic consciousness. It was the recovery of a Patristic consciousness in dealing with contemporary questions facing the Church. Rather than drawing theological propositions from quotations from the Fathers; Zizioulas' method is based on the discernment of 'theological presuppositions'[167] implicit to the Fathers' approach to theological method.

The liturgy becomes axiomatic for Florovsky and Zizioulas because theological method is rooted in the Church's participation in the liturgy[168]. In particular, Zizioulas' primacy on the Eucharist for theological method is congruent with the sentiment amongst the Russian émigrés that 'true theology … can only spring out of a deep liturgical experience'[169]. Liturgy is the self-identification of Christ as the divine Son of the Father through the Church's participation in the Father-Son relationship. Participation in the liturgy is the acquisition of the Patristic mind, a consensus which reflects the very identity of the Church as a unity in Christ, hence Florovsky wrote 'Patristic teaching in the Orthodox Church is much more than a venerable tradition of the ages past. It is still alive, as it ever has been, in the liturgical practice of the Church'[170].

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[165] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 2. See also a good examination of Bulgakov's criticism of Aquinas wherein Bulgakov contrasts his divine Sophia with the excessive volutarianism of Aquinas in John Hughes, 'Creatio Ex Nihilo and the Divine Ideas in Aquinas: How Fair Is Bulgakov's Critique?', in *Graced Life: The Writings of John Hughes*, ed. by Matthew Bullimore (London: SCM Press, 2016), pp. 35–51.
[166] Kallistos Ware, 'Preface', in *The Patristic Witness of Geogres Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings (Kindle Edition)*, ed. by Brandon Gallaher and Paul Ladouceur (London: T&T Clark, 2019), p. Preface.
[167] Nikolaos Asproulis, '"Totus Christus" or "Corporate Personality"? Church Identity and Theological Methodology: Some Critical Comments Georges Florovsky and J. Zizioulas in Dialogue', 2018.
[168] There is a continuity with other Orthodox theologians who have likewise made the liturgy central to theological method, for instance cf.Alexander Schmemann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladmir's Seminary Press, 1987).
[169] Georges Florovsky, 'The Legacy and Task of Orthodox Theology', *Anglican Theological Review*, 31.2 (1949), 65–71 (p. 70).
[170] Florovsky, p. 67.

Third, Zizioulas affirms the Catholicity of the Church rooted in Christ without reifying communion itself, and for Zizioulas this requires a complete synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology. Zizioulas agrees with Florovsky that Catholicity in Christ is the basis of the Church; where communion is grounded in participation in the Trinity rather than reifying communion itself. This is an important point, since much of the criticism from Behr, Holmes and other critics[171], is based on the perception that Zizioulas reifies the experience of communion as the basis for truth and ecclesiology. Indeed, Molnar even goes as far to say that Zizioulas has a primacy of communion over revelation[172]. In his article on Florovsky, Zizioulas wrote that Florovsky was essential for his view that the liturgy is the basis for Patristic orthodoxy[173]. The Eucharist is pivotal for ecclesiology because the Church's truth is tied with Catholicity[174] and thus the identity of the Church.

3.1 <u>The Synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology</u>

It is possible that in this thesis' attempt to demonstrate the importance of Christology for Zizioulas that it emphasises Christ at the expense of the Trinity and the Spirit. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the Trinitarian dimensions of the Church is conveyed by Zizioulas through a complete synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology since Christ exists in the Holy Spirit as simultaneously one and the many as the Church.

Zizioulas agrees with Florovsky who wrote that 'the doctrine of the Church is a chapter of Christology'.[175] Although Zizioulas is closely identified with Florovsky he does differ from him in

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[171] Paul Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 445.
[172] Molnar, p. 445. A response to Molnar can be found in the chapter 'koinônia as participation in the Eucharist'
[173] John Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', *Theologia*, 4 (2010), 31–48 (p. 41).
[174] See our chapter 9 'koinônia as participation in the totus Christus'
[175] Florovsky, 1948, *"Le corps du Christ vivant"* cited by John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), p. 124.

arguing that the Church cannot be solely Christological nor solely pneumatological, there must be a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in order to convey the Church as the 'corporate personality of Christ'[176].

The Church according to Zizioulas cannot be solely Christological since Christ does not exist 'first as an individual' and then as 'many',[177] as though Christ came first and then Spirit follows which makes Christ plural as the spiritual body. Zizioulas articulates this point in reference to Lossky. Zizioulas claims that although Lossky is right to claim the reciprocity between pneumatology and Christology in ecclesiology he objects to the distinction Lossky makes between the economies of the Son and the Spirit.[178] Lossky relates the two economies in a problematic 'schematization'.[179] Christology is seen to belong to the objective Church, whilst the inward spiritual participation and sanctification of the individual belongs to the economy of the Spirit. This schematization between two economies results in a division between the Church as an institution existing as the body of Christ, and then individuals who are sanctified. For Zizioulas the Church is a spiritual body constituted by the Spirit.

3.1.1 On Sobornost

The Church is not solely pneumatological. This is an important point for our argument in distinguishing Zizioulas' work from Social Trinitarianism, since his opposition to *sobornost* demonstrates that Zizioulas does not reify communion. Although communion is at the heart of Zizioulas' ecclesiology, Zizioulas distances himself from *sobornost* as it has the tendency to reify the Eucharistic body of the Church in itself. Florovsky drew from the long-established Slavonic Russian nationalistic concept of *Sobornost* to define Catholicity as the organism of the Church

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[176] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 130.
[177] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 69.
[178] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.
[179] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.

> the idea of an organism must be supplemented by the idea of a symphony of personalities, in which the mystery of the Holy Trinity is reflected and this is the core conception of 'catholicity' (*sobornost*)[180].

But for Zizioulas this understanding of Catholicity is too pneumatologically focussed as a body on a horizontal plane. The Russian and Slavonic concept of *Sobornost* conveys the Church existing as pure communion. Promulgated by Khomiakov,[181] *Sobornost* is derived from a nineteenth century Romantic Slavonic vision for Russian nationalism based upon peasant communities (*mir),* but it was applied to the Church to describe a mystical unity. The ecumenical character of the Eucharistic ecclesiology is consistent with the aim to locate the identity of the Church in a reality which transcends contemporary historical and institutional limitations. Thus, the character of Eucharistic ecclesiology locates the unity of the Church in a mystical apprehension of the Church in Christ as the Church of God, and this drive influenced further ecumenical engagement between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

Although *sobornost* is a major Russian ecclesiological concept, Florovksy is sceptical about its applicability to ecclesiology as Khomiakov 'tends to reduce ecclesiology into a sort of "charismatic sociology"'.[182] Khomiakov's *sobornost* establishes a distinction between the spiritual essence of the Church and its institutional structures. Zizioulas agrees with Florovsky on being cautious about the use of *sobornost.* Zizioulas seeks a unity between the spiritual and the institutional dimensions of the Church. In his view, *Sobornost* merely repeats the same problem found in neo-scholasticism which places a difference between the institution of the Church and its existence as

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[180] Paul Ladouceur, *Modern Orthodox Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), p. 278.
[181] Ladouceur, p. 272.
[182] Florovsky, 1954, *"Christ and his Church: Suggestions and Comments,* p.164 cited by John Zizioulas, 'Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 214–20 (p. 216).

the mystical body of Christ[183]. Zizioulas advocates a complete synthesis between pneumatology and Christology in order to identify the Church with the Eucharist and both with Christ's hypostasis.

3.1.2 Impact upon intersection between Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism

The fundamental error which both Holmes and Behr make of Zizioulas is the belief that Zizioulas' methodology is founded upon establishing an analogy or correspondence between terms for personhood, such as the relationship between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, in the Trinity and in human reality. It is believed by his critics that Zizioulas projects the Trinitarian schesis onto the Church's communion based upon a correspondence between the relationality of the Trinity and the relationality of human existence.

It is interesting that both Holmes and Behr believe Zizioulas maintains the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity, but they do so for different reasons. Holmes, like other critics of the Social Trinitarians, associates Zizioulas closely with the Social Trinitarians. Behr is aware of the heritage of Eucharistic ecclesiology: but along with Holmes he seems to associate Zizioulas with the Social Trinitarians. Behr writes 'that the very being of God should be thought of in terms of the 'communion' of the "three persons" has become a repeated theme in modern theology'[184]. Behr argues that Zizioulas ties the Trinity to the Church closely because it reflects the nature of the Trinity. The Trinity is reducible to a relational category such as communion, and likewise the Church is reducible to a relational category, such as communion which mimics that of the Trinity[185].

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[183] John Zizioulas, 'Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 214–20 (p. 216).
[184] Behr, 2 PART 2, p. 310, fn.110.
[185] In chapter 6 on the monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis we make the argument that this is not the case.

The claim that Zizioulas reduces the Church to communion means Behr finds an alliance with the critics of Social Trinitarians. Yet in detail Behr's claim differs from Zizioulas' other critics, because unlike Zizioulas' other critics Behr's own criticism emerges from the 'manifestation' of the Spirit onto Christ which in his view is limited by Zizioulas to the temporal realm. The result is that the unity between Christology and pneumatology is a Trinitarian manifestation that can only parallel the immanent relations of the Trinity. Because of this he believes that Zizioulas holds the Church to be a parallel communion.

Therefore, Behr echoes Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian critics because he believes that Zizioulas' Eucharistic ecclesiology has an over realised eschatology because its communion in the Church is a realised embodiment of Trinitarian koinônia: he writes 'the Church realizes her true being, manifesting already, here and now, the Kingdom which is yet to come'[186]. He correctly maintains that the Eucharist can only be 'a foretaste of the Kingdom to come, not as its final realization'[187]. So, he questions whether the Church can be constituted by the Eucharist because it seems to already constitute a realised eschaton in Zizioulas' ecclesiology.

3.2 Identification of the Church with the hypostasis of Christ.

Zizioulas does not establish the Church as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity, instead Zizioulas identifies the Church with the hypostasis of Christ which means that the Church participates in the Trinitarian communion between Father and Son in the Spirit. Behr's criticism of Zizioulas is directed at his impact on 'communion ecclesiology'[188] which in his regard conveys the Trinity as a 'paradigm of the koinônia that constitutes the being of the ecclesial body, the

[186] Behr, p. 68.
[187] Behr, p. 82.
[188] Behr, p. 67.

Church'[189]. Here Behr's criticism of Zizioulas overlaps with the criticisms brought against the Social Trinitarians.

Yet Zizioulas' own Eucharistic theology is distinguished from Social Trinitarian ecclesiology because Zizioulas does not reify communion in itself. This is because Zizioulas writes that 'communion which does not come from a "hypostasis" that is, a concrete and free person, and which does not lead to "hypostases", that is concrete and free persons, is not an "image" of the being of God'[190]. This is attested to in his opposition to bridal imagery of the Church.

3.2.1 Against Bridal imagery in Ecclesiology in favour of the Church as the hypostasis of Christ.

Whilst Eucharistic Ecclesiology in Orthodox theology had a significant impact on Catholic conceptions of Catholicity Zizioulas' Eucharistic ecclesiology is opposed to 'bridal imagery' of the Church common to post-Vatican II articulations of communion ecclesiology precisely because it sets up a duality between Christ and the Church, where the communion of the Church is distinct from Christ's participation in his relation to the Father.

This means that Behr's criticism of communion ecclesiology cannot be treated without nuance as there is a significant different to Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology and eucharistic ecclesiology in post-Vatican II articulations of communion ecclesiology. *Lumen Gentium* conceived of the Church as a single sacrament: 'the documents of Vatican II speak of the Church as a sacrament of unity, the body of Christ, a bride, a flock, temple, and above all, the people of God'[191]. Zizioulas wrote that Roman Catholic ecclesiology, even before Vatican II, tends to identify the Church's catholicity with the universal Church, so that the universal Church can exist

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[189] Behr, p. 67.
[190] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 18.
[191] Scott MacDougall, *More than Communion: Imaging an Eschatological Ecclesiology* (London: T&T Clark, 2015), p. 15.

independently from the local Church[192]. Communion is conceived as communion between members of the churches, their Bishops and the See of Rome. Ratzinger's contribution to communion ecclesiology is to conceive of the universal nature of the Church as 'ontologically and temporally prior'[193] to the local Church. In this conception of the Church, the Eucharist does not constitute the Church alone, it is tied with the authority of the Church to consecrate the Eucharist. Accompanying this communion ecclesiology is a strong image of the Church as the bride of Christ. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* established the Church as both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ: 'the Church is his beloved bride who calls to her Lord, and through him offers worship to the eternal Father'[194]. Yves Congar suggests the problem in affirming the Church as the bride of Christ is that it 'supposes in her a certain quality of personhood *alter persona*'[195]. Although Behr is right that since Vatican II the Church has explored the connection between the Trinity and the Church in terms of communion ecclesiology, that notion of communion ecclesiology is by no means uniform.

Zizioulas disagrees with this bridal imagery because 'it posits a clear-cut distinction between Christ and the Church, would seem to be what makes it unacceptable to Zizioulas'[196]. Against bridal imagery in the Church Zizioulas insists that:

> the Church has no hypostasis of its own. This makes Christ's identity dependent on the existence of the Church, which is paradoxical, for though the Church has no hypostasis of its own, it is a factor which conditions Christ's identity: the one cannot exist without the

[192] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 25.
[193] MacDougall, p. 17.
[194] Paul McPartlan, 'Who Is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity?', *Ecclesiology*, 4 (2008), 271–88 (p. 272).
[195] Yves Congar, 'Le Personne <<Eglise>>', *Revue Thomiste*, 71 (1971), 613–40 (p. 625).
[196] McPartlan, 'Who Is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity?', p. 279.

many. Such a Christology, conditioned by pneumatology, explains the fact that the Mystery of Christ is in essence nothing other than the mystery of the Church[197].

Zizioulas' conception of the Church is based on expounding the image of the 'Chalcedonian Christ'[198] wherein there is a hypostatic union between humanity and divinity in the 'corporate personality'[199] of Christ. The Church is 'Christ's "I" … the eternal "I" that stems from his eternal filial relationship with the Father'[200]. Zizioulas sets up a dialectic (not trialectic) between Church-Christ-Father because he identifies the Church with Christ. Christ is not a mediator between Church and the Father but is fully identified with the Church as an 'intra-Trinitarian dialectic'[201].

A criticism we could put to Zizioulas is that his articulation of theôsis relies heavily on the full identification of the Church with Christ and the Spirit, and although Christ is depicted as a corporate personality there is a risk that this de-personalises humanity where the uniqueness of humanity is subsumed to a corporate Christ. Zizioulas needs to articulate how human persons remain distinct and unique in Christ without being 'consumed' by Christ. Zizioulas has a tendency to disregard mystical spiritual experience in prayer in favour of Eucharistic participation and does not seem to find a place for the relationship between individual prayer and Eucharistic participation which could be vital in articulating how human persons share in Christ's resurrection as well the journey of sanctification and glorification undertaken by human persons. Nonetheless, the unity between the Church and Christ does mean that humanity participates in the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son.

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[197] John Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 136–47 (p. 146).
[198] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 141.
[199] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 142.
[200] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 143.
[201] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 140.

Behr's criticism seems to be focussed on a particular reading of Zizioulas' article 'Church as Communion'[202] without seeming to acknowledge the remainder of his work, and this makes it hard to avoid the conclusion that Behr lacks an awareness of the nature of Christ as corporate personality. Zizioulas does not consider the Church's communion to be a realm apart from the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit, and Zizioulas is opposed to the notion of the Church as the bride of Christ because bridal imagery attributes a distinct personhood to the Church.

Zizioulas considers the Church as the mystical body of Christ through whom persons are brought into communion with the Father. Consequently, rather than deriving the ecclesiological structures of the Church from Trinitarian doctrine it is rather the doctrines of Christology and Pneumatology that form the foundation for Zizioulas' ecclesiology[203]. Zizioulas' ecclesiology is Trinitarian in the sense that the persons of the Trinity work to redeem humanity as the image of Christ through participation in his mystical body, and incorporation in the filial relation the Son has with the Father.

Zizioulas' Christological and pneumatological foundations for his ecclesiology undercuts Holmes' and Behr's main critique of the relationship between Trinity and Church. Upon examination of Holmes' critique, it seems that Holmes' objection is more applicable to Volf than it is to Zizioulas. A prima facie reading of Zizioulas' work may suggest that Zizioulas employs this Social Trinitarian methodology, but this is not the case as his ecclesiology is more nuanced in being centred on God's revelation as Trinity in Christ, and that the union between Christology and pneumatology is the basis for Zizioulas' ecclesiology rather than a projection of Trinitarian *taxis* onto the Church.

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[202] John Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 49–59.
[203] See Chapter 9, 'Trinity and the Church: The Spirit of Adoption in Christ'

3.3 Eschatological adoption into Christ

Salvation for Zizioulas is not a matter of corresponding Trinitarian and human being as a realised analogous communion in the present; for Zizioulas salvation is a matter of becoming through communion with the Father. Moreover, the emphasis of Zizioulas' anthropology is not located primarily in the identity of human personhood in the present, rather Zizioulas' emphasis is eschatological; this is because what Zizioulas means by personhood is what the Fathers described as participation as an eschatological vision for the Kingdom as witnessed to in the Eucharist. Zizioulas writes:

> if the word of God comes from the future and not from the past, its proper place is the Eucharistic context. It is there that prophetic utterance and prophetic vision are made into one reality[204]

Zizioulas articulates human personhood in communion with the Father through an eschatological vision revealed in the Eucharist as a foretaste of the eschaton rather than a realised reality in the present as Zizioulas writes, 'the truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future'[205]. Instead, Zizioulas' methodological paradigm for divine-human communion should be conceived in terms of deification and sanctification. Zizioulas' anthropology, which is realised by participation in the Church, is the outworking of the implications of Christology rather than a projection between the Trinity and the Church and the person. A human being 'in Christ' becomes a true person through entering into the same filial relationship that constitutes Christ's being. Norman Russell, a commentator on theôsis in

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[204] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 299.
[205] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 62.

contemporary Orthodox theology, wrote that 'personhood becomes with Zizioulas a way of re-expressing what the Fathers meant by 'participation"[206]. Zizioulas writes

> the eternal survival of the person as a unique, unrepeatable, and free 'hypostasis', as loving and being loved, constitutes the quintessence of salvation, the bringing of the Gospel to man. In the language of the Fathers this is called 'divinization' (theôsis), which means participation not in the nature or substance of God but in His personal existence[207].

It is true that Zizioulas writes that the person becomes *hypostatic*, that is becoming unique and particular in freedom, but this is achieved not by imaging Trinitarian communion but through participation in Christ and the Spirit.

3.4 Conclusion

Our response to the charge that Zizioulas projects a paradigm drawn from the Trinity onto the communion of the Church is that Zizioulas, in ecclesiological terms, makes no distinction between Christ and the Church, but fully identifies them together. The Church has Trinitarian dimensions in the economy of the Trinitarian persons working to incorporate humanity into the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. Christ being incarnated as a multiplicitous spiritual body in the Spirit, being baptised in the Spirit means that human persons are incorporated into the mystical body of Christ and thus the filial relationship which the Son has with the Father. The Eucharist is the participation in the person of Christ. This means that Zizioulas conceives of the Church as participating in the filial relationship that the divine Son has eternally with the Father

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[206] Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek-Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 318.
[207] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 49–50.

rather than mirroring that *koinônia* horizontally. The Church exists precisely to enable this adoption into that filial relationship:

> The "Mystery hidden before all ages" is that the will of the Father is nothing else but the incorporation of this other element, us, or the many, into the eternal filial relationship between the Father and the Son. The mystery amounts, therefore, to nothing but the Church[208].

It is a full adoption into Christ because of the work of the Spirit, and this means Zizioulas does not distinguish between participation in the communion of the Church and the communion which exists in the Trinity: it is rather that the Church participates in that eternal Trinitarian *koinônia* between Father, Son and Spirit precisely because it is fully identified with the hypostasis of Christ[209].

Therefore, we hold that there is not a convergence of method between the Social Trinitarians and Zizioulas in establishing an ecclesiology which corresponds to Trinitarian schesis[210]. Zizioulas' methodology is not to establish a correspondence between the Church and the Trinity. The human person is the image and likeness of God in Zizioulas' ecclesiology not through corresponding Trinitarian relationships in the Church but through participating in the filial relationship that the Son has with the Father in the Spirit.

However, the difference between Zizioulas' ecclesiology and Social Trinitarian ecclesiologies does not lie simply in a difference of method or emphasis. The difference lies in the historical conversation, in the terms of the questions and aims, in which Zizioulas' ecclesiology

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[208] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 143.
[209] For a fuller exploration of Zizioulas conception of the Church as Christ, as well as 'adoption into Christ', see chapter 9 entitled 'Koinônia as participation in the totus Christus'.
[210] We explore this further by exploring Zizioulas' method and answers in chapter 9.

arose. Zizioulas perceives his work to contribute to a 'neopatristic synthesis'.[211] In the terms of Zizioulas' work, this neopatristic synthesis takes the form of a patristic ressourcement to locate the identity of the Church in the liturgy and affirms the centrality of theôsis to the nature of the Church. The identity of the Church lies with its eschatological participation in Christ's union with the Father in order to deify humanity.

The aims of the Social Trinitarian theologians are different. In that they seek to establish human relationships in the Church as an analogy of the relational personhood they perceive in a perichoretic understanding of the Trinity. The difference lies predominantly with whether such an analogy is strong based on an equivocal conception of divine and human personhood or whether such an analogy is weak based on the recognition of the essential difference between divine and human personhood. It is a different conception of the Trinity, but it also places a heavy burden on analogy. This is Social Trinitarianism's flaw since such analogies can only be weak due to the sinfulness of human nature as currently experienced, but even in an ultimately perfected nature created nature will prevent the perfection of an analogous existence of triune communion[212]. It seems that Social Trinitarian projects seek to achieve through analogy what Zizioulas, as an Orthodox theologian, seeks to achieve through theôsis.

Zizioulas' conception of theôsis allows created otherness in his conception of communion; and rather than placing the emphasis on the grace of the Spirit to enable an analogous analogy of the Trinity Zizioulas places his emphasis on identifying the Church with Christ.

For Zizioulas, theôsis is not a matter of mirroring the divine but a matter of entering into communion with the Father. That is to participate in the same relationship that the Son has with the Father, and who through his incarnation Christ extends that relationship to humanity. The Church has Trinitarian dimensions through the economy of the Trinitarian persons working to

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[211] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26.

[212] See chapter 4 'On the difference between a Social Doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian Theology (1): Perichoresis and Monarchy of the Father' for a discussion on this point.

bring humanity into communion with the Father, rather than the Church corresponding to the immanent Trinity in its structure. In other words, the Church is Trinitarian because by adoption in Christ, human persons are incorporated into the relationships between the Trinitarian persons. The Church is not modelled on the intra-Trinitarian taxis but through the gift of the Spirit in Christ, and in participation in Christ, the Trinitarian persons work in history to incorporate humanity into their own communion with the Father. Thus, the relationship between ecclesiology and Trinity is not predicated in quite the same manner as Zizioulas' critics suppose.

PART 2. THE RECEPTION OF ZIZIOULAS' DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS SOCIAL TRINITARIANISM

CHAPTER 4. ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND ZIZIOULAS' TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY (1): MONARCHY OF THE FATHER AND PERICHORESIS

4.1 Introduction

The question to be considered in this chapter is whether Zizioulas postulates a Social doctrine of the Trinity. This chapter will argue that he does not. Instead, he seeks to argue for a Patristic conception of the Trinity as received by Orthodox tradition, and which Zizioulas sees to be applicable for human ontology. This is a neopatristic synthesis[213]. For Zizioulas, the Trinity is the foundation of freedom because God is personal. Not subject to the necessity of substance or the necessity of communion as self-subsistent.

The problem is that the critics of Social Trinitarianism identify him closely with Social Trinitarians who use 'de Régnon's paradigm' to argue for a Social Trinity[214]. De Régnon writes that 'Latin Philosophy first envisages the nature in itself and then proceeds to the expression; Greek philosophy envisages first the expression and then penetrates it to find the nature'[215]. In Social Trinitarian discourse the paradigm takes its lead from Lossky who popularised the de Régnon paradigm as definitive for the difference between Western Trinitarian sources and Greek patristic sources on the Trinity[216]. The importance of Zizioulas here is that his explication of a Cappadocian

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[213] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26.
[214] Kristin Hennessy, 'An Answer to de Régnon's Accusers: Why We Should Not Speak of "His" Paradigm', *Harvard Theological Review*, 100 (2007), 179–97 (p. 179).
[215] This quotation is a translation from Theodore de Régnon, *Études de Théologie Positive Sur La Sainte Trinité* (Paris: Victor Retaux, Libraire-Editeur, 1898), p. 309. Translation found in Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apohaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2006), p. 66.
[216] Cf. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 44.

Trinitarian theology is useful for those Social Trinitarian theologians who emphasise God's triune relationality to amend the problems they identify with an Augustinian-Thomist Trinitarian tradition implicit to their own Western heritage. A social analogy of the Trinity, derived from Cappadocian Trinitarian theology, becomes generative for constructing social ecclesial, political relations and theological anthropologies in the image of a Social Trinity.

In the chapter on the Church, it was demonstrated that Zizioulas does not rely upon an analogy between the Trinity and the communion of the Church to establish his ecclesiology. Instead, Zizioulas regards the Church as the spiritual body of Christ in whom humanity participates and who brings humanity into communion with the Father. But similar questions are raised by Zizioulas' critics on the doctrine of the Trinity. If it is presumed that the Trinity forms the basis for an analogy of relationality between the Trinity and the Church then, it is alleged, Zizioulas' doctrine of the Trinity forms the basis for such an analogy.

There is a fundamental question in play in the discussion between Social Trinitarianism and Zizioulas on the work expected from the doctrine of the Trinity. It is alleged by Zizioulas' critics that the work expected from the Trinity shapes the nature of the doctrine of the Trinity itself. It is claimed that the doctrine of the Trinity reflects the idealised conception for human ecclesial and social relationships. Instead, this chapter will argue that to read Zizioulas' doctrine of the Trinity as advocating a social doctrine of the Trinity is to mistake what Zizioulas is doing with the doctrine of the Trinity.

This chapter is not intended as a defence of social doctrines of the Trinity. Instead, this chapters argues, in Zizioulas' defence, that theologians, if they are concerned with truth, should hesitate before judging whether other theologians' claims are true and should be more reluctant to attribute theological 'positions' to each other.

In the need to abrogate the flaws they see in Social Trinitarian methodology, the critics of Social Trinitarianism have not attended to what Zizioulas seeks to achieve through his use of the doctrine of the Trinity instead they have identified the nature of Zizioulas' work by identifying the

problematic concepts which they believe Zizioulas shares with Social Trinitarian theologians. Their priority is not to engage with the particulars of Zizioulas' argument, but that Zizioulas represents for them, along with many others such as Volf and Moltmann, the errors of Social Trinitarianism as a general trend in Trinitarian theology. As Tanner writes 'this specific form of contemporary Social Trinitarianism, in which political and social judgements come to the fore, is the subject of my critique in what follows'[217]. Through such criticisms of Social Trinitarianism, Zizioulas' arguments become conflated with those who argue for a Social Trinity. Thus, Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology is judged before it is even read. In other words, the encounter with Zizioulas' work is framed by Social Trinitarianism.

The question is, by what criterion is a Social Trinity determined as a Social Trinity, specifically by what criterion does Zizioulas qualify as a Social Trinitarian? A problem in this discussion on Zizioulas is that there is not an agreed definition of what constitutes a social doctrine of the Trinity. Social doctrines of the Trinity are not promulgated by a particular school of thought; nor are they constitutive of a particular theological movement or identity. A particular problem in identifying Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian based upon propositional claims is that the identification of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology as advocating a Social Trinity is predominantly a retrospective act; Zizioulas was regarded as a Social Trinitarian after he had published his best known work, *Being as Communion*[218]. It should be remembered that when Zizioulas wrote his treatise *Being as Communion*[219], published in 1985, Social Trinitarianism was not in common parlance, at least in its contemporary form. The majority of *Being As Communion* is a translation from French of his earlier work *L'etre ecclesial*[220], and it seems that Zizioulas was unaware of the emerging popularity of a social doctrine of the Trinity. A Social Trinity had been argued for by some

[217] Kathryn Tanner, 'Social-Trinitarianism and Its Critics', in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, ed. by Giulio Maspero and Robert J. Wozniak (London: T&T Clark, 2012), pp. 368–87 (p. 370).
[218] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*.
[219] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*.
[220] John Zizioulas, *L'etre Ecclesial* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981).

theologians at the turn of the twentieth century (notably by J.R. Illingworth[221]) but it was not until Moltmann's *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*[222], published in 1981, that a Social Trinity was injected with new life with the publication of Social Trinitarian works, such as Volf's *After our Likeness*[223] and Boff's *Trinity and Society*[224]. Although published later, Zizioulas' *Being as Communion* is unrelated to Moltmann's work and rather than advocating a patristic ressourcement Moltmann creates something radically different in his Trinitarian work to Zizioulas' project. Thus, the identification of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology as advocating a Social Trinity is predominantly a retrospective act. Moltmann uses the phrase social doctrine of the Trinity, but it is only in later works, such as Tanner's *Christ the Key*[225], that Social Trinitarianism comes to be identified as a phenomenon. The denominator Social Trinitarianism is either bestowed upon a theologian or they are self-identified, as is the case with Hasker who identifies himself as a Social Trinitarian[226].

In most of the literature on social doctrines of the Trinity, the theologian in question, whether they are an advocate or a critic, have to define what is meant by a Social Trinity prior to discussing it. Kilby's *perichoresis and projection*[227] is invaluable not least because it shapes what is meant when the term social doctrine of the Trinity is used. As the title suggests, she argues that social theories of the Trinity are shaped by the use of *perichoresis* and a *projection* between the Trinity and idealised forms of personhood, ecclesiology or political structures. It is also important to note that Kilby does not mention Zizioulas, but Tanner and Holmes actually use Zizioulas to define what is meant by a Social Trinity along similar lines detailed by Kilby's definition of social doctrines of the Trinity.

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[221] J.R Illingworth, *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: MacMillan, 1907).
[222] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, ed. by Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1981).
[223] Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*.
[224] Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1988).
[225] Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[226] Hasker.
[227] Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', *New Blackfriars*, 81 (2000), 432–45.

Taken at face value, Zizioulas' work is often mistaken to be a work of Social Trinity because he is perceived to reify communion both in the Trinity and in the Church; and it is alleged that in drawing upon the de Régnon paradigm Zizioulas places a heavy burden upon Trinitarian communion (in particular a Cappadocian understanding of Trinitarian communion) for constructing an ecclesiology in its image[228]. Moreover, it is claimed that Zizioulas is a Social Trinitarian because his work emerges alongside other Trinitarian works that allegedly posits a renaissance in Trinitarian doctrine based upon a Social Trinity and that therefore Zizioulas must have embarked upon the same project as Social Trinitarian theologians.

However, I would like to argue that there is a problem in identifying the nature of someone's arguments solely based upon propositional claims. It is evident that to take these claims as isolated propositions is not sufficient to distinguish Zizioulas from Social Trinitarian theologians. It is usual to engage Zizioulas with Social Trinitarianism on the basis of propositional claims but the way forward for a reparative reading of Zizioulas' work requires a different approach. Rather than attributing a theological position to Zizioulas on the basis of a perceived similarity in concepts Zizioulas should instead be considered through his complex of questions and answers. Zizioulas posits his Trinitarian theology as an answer to a specific question. Likewise Social Trinitarian theologians make claims to address their own set of questions.

In the criticism of Social Trinitarianism, Zizioulas has been associated with Social Trinitarianism because his critics and Social Trinitarian advocates have focussed on his answers, or concepts, and have seen a certain similitude with Social Trinitarian claims and have consequently been quick to identify Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian theologian. Thus, the solution to the confusions made of Zizioulas' theology is to attend to the relationship between his questions and his answers. Namely, that claims are made as an answer to a question. To attend to the relationship

[228] Coakley, p. 189. See also Lewis Ayres, '(Mis)Adventures in Trinitarian Ontology', in *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdsmans Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 130–46 (p. 132).

between his questions and answers means that to understand Zizioulas' work requires the work to discern the question to which his claims are intended as an answer. Rather than identifying qualities that make up Zizioulas' position on the Trinity we should analyse the relationship between those concepts to which Zizioulas posed them as an answer to a question. By so doing we can examine the function of the doctrine and how that expected work from the Trinity shapes their respective Trinitarian concepts.

Using an approach based on discerning Zizioulas' nexus of question and answer I shall argue that Zizioulas does not argue for a social doctrine of the Trinity, instead he builds on the insights of his Orthodox predecessors, such as Florovsky and Lossky, who argue for a neopatristic synthesis. When it comes to an engagement between Zizioulas and social doctrines of the Trinity I hold there is a tension between *perichoresis* and *communion* on the one hand in Social Trinitarianism, and on the other hand the monarchy of the Father in Zizioulas. This tension exists not because they have a shared methodology or shared concepts but because the doctrine of the Trinity performs differently according to their respective questions. Zizioulas is not arguing for a Social Trinity. Instead, he merely uses the doctrine of the Trinity to emphasise divine freedom. This supports a neopatristic synthesis that emerges from his engagement with Orthodox theology that is intrinsic to his ecclesiology and theological anthropology. This is not because it supplies an ideal analogical model for either the Church or human personhood, but because both participate in the life of God and that participation allows a transfiguration of human ontology. Namely, the participation in the filial relationship between the Son and the Father in the Spirit enables human persons to be realised as the image and likeness of God. A position which Zizioulas calls theôsis[229].

[229] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 50.

4.2 Encounters with Zizioulas' work are framed by Social Trinitarianism

4.2.1 The Trinity is alleged to be a paradigm for a relational ontology.

First, it is evident that Zizioulas' place in Trinitarian scholarship is framed by his alleged association with Social Trinitarianism. For his Social Trinitarian interlocutors, Zizioulas' approach to the history of the development of Trinitarian doctrine is a useful tool for postulating a social doctrine of the Trinity. However, it is interpreted in a way that Zizioulas does not intend.

Zizioulas argues that 'the being of God is identified with person'[230] and this is indicative of the position of the Greek Fathers. What he means by this is that the significance of the Greek Patristic approach to the Trinity is that:

> No substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, *but* the ontological "principle" or "cause" of being- i.e. that which makes a thing to exist- is not the substance or nature but the *person* or hypostasis. Therefore, being is traced back not to substance but to person[231]

For Zizioulas, this ontological leavening by the Greek Fathers broke what he saw as the closed ontological system implicit to Ancient Greek philosophy. Meaning that the cause of existence in creation is attributed to freedom because God's own existence is completely free[232]. This forms the foundation of the importance of the monarchy of the Father for Zizioulas in that the Father is the *aitia* for the Trinitarian mode of existence. By *cause* Zizioulas does not refer to a temporal cause but in a logical or ontological sense[233]. Attributing the cause of the Trinity to the Father has two consequences for divine freedom, first Zizioulas claims that 'His "substance", His

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[230] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.
[231] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 42, fn.37.
[232] See chapter 6 Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology for an in-depth discussion on Zizioulas' argument
[233] This shall be discussed in chapter 6 on the monarchy of the Father.

being, does not constrain Him (God does not exist because He cannot but exist). Second, 'that communion is not a constraining structure for His existence (God is not in communion, does not love, because He cannot but be in communion and love)'[234]. The significance of attributing Trinitarian being to the *person of the Father* means that divine being is not coerced by necessity 'as would have been the case had the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit has taken place at the level of substance'[235] but arises from the 'freedom and love'[236] of the Father. In posing a specific answer, the Father is the *arche* of the Trinity, to the specific question, 'how is God free from ontological necessity?', Zizioulas believes that he addresses a general question about the relationship between *freedom* and *ontology* that appears in his leavening against Ancient Greek ontology[237]. Namely, that against ontological monism inherent to Greek philosophy the Greek Patristic Fathers attributed being to the *hypostasis* of the Father, with the result that being owes itself not to ontological necessity but to the *freedom* that is implicit to divine personhood.

The reason why Zizioulas makes this argument, namely why divine freedom is important for Zizioulas, is the subject of the chapter on Christian Hellenism. However, what seems to be important for Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian interlocutors is that this position, which is indicative of the significance of the Greek Fathers for Zizioulas, is juxtaposed with a Western Trinitarian position, and that this juxtaposition is generative for relational philosophies of personhood. But this was not the purpose of Zizioulas' argument for the monarchy of the Father. Zizioulas did not intend his theology to act as a model for relational personalist philosophies.

This juxtaposition between the Greek Fathers and the West is an accompanying argument for Zizioulas rather than the substance of his argument on the significance of the Trinity. He maintains it in order to clarify the importance of the monarchy of the Father rather than suggesting

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[234] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 18.
[235] John Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 113–54 (p. 119).
[236] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 119.
[237]Cf 'Personhood and Being' in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 27–65.

that a recapitulation of a Greek Patristic theology amends problems in Western theology. Furthermore, Orthodox theologians have a tendency to denigrate the West in favour of a perceived Patristic witness in Orthodox theology as a matter of course. Zizioulas is somewhat more restrained in his criticisms of the West than other Orthodox theologians. He communicates his theology as an ecumenical endeavour by celebrating the importance of Greek Patristic Trinitarian theology rather than offering it as an alternative to Western classical Trinitarianism. Nonetheless, Zizioulas argues that Western theology has not appreciated the ontological leavening undertaken by the Greek Fathers. Western theology repeats the problems Zizioulas identifies in Ancient Greek ontology:

> God first *is* God (His substance or nature, His being), and then exists as Trinity, that is, as persons. This interpretation in fact prevailed in Western theology and unfortunately entered into modern Orthodox dogmatics with the arrangement in the dogmatic handbooks of the headings "On the One God" followed by "On the Trinity". The significance of this interpretation lies in the assumption that the ontological "principle" of God is not found in the person but in the substance, that is, in the "being" itself of God. Indeed the idea took in Western theology that which constitutes the unity of God is the one divine substance, the one divinity; this is, as it were, the ontological "principle" of God. But this interpretation represents a misinterpretation of the Patristic theology of the Trinity[238].

There are significant historical issues with this account which need to be evaluated[239], but for the purposes of this chapter a discussion on the problems with the East and West juxtaposition on the Trinity needs to be suspended for the moment. Instead, the importance of this juxtaposition

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[238] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 40.
[239] These shall be discussed in the chapter on Zizioulas' critique of the West in chapter 7.

for Zizioulas is to illustrate the importance of the monarchy of the Father for maintaining divine freedom:

> Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological "principle" or "cause" of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis*, that is, *the person of the Father*. The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the "cause" both of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit'. Consequently, the ontological "principle" of God is traced back once again, to the person. Thus when we say that God "is", we do not bind the personal freedom of God- the being of God is not an ontological "necessity" or a simple "reality" for God- but we ascribe the being of God to His personal freedom[240].

But for his Social Trinitarian interlocutors the importance of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology lies with communion, i.e. they focus on the relational dynamics between Father, Son and Spirit and argue that these relational dynamics become the source for an account of idealised relational personhood. It is important to note that Zizioulas does not believe that communion is

> a relationship understood for its own sake, an existential structure which supplants "nature" or "substance" in its primordial ontological role- something reminiscent of the structure of existence met in the thought of Martin Buber. Just like "substance," "communion" does not exist by itself: it is the Father who is the "cause" of it[241].

Yet despite Zizioulas' own pleas it is alleged that Zizioulas reifies communion, or an ontology of relationality. And it is alleged that such a reification is constitutive of his argument for

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[240] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 40–41.
[241] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.

a supposed Cappadocian approach to the Trinity in contra-distinction to an alleged Augustinian, or 'psychological'[242] analogy of the Trinity. In his book on Trinitarian ontology, Micallef is right in his assessment of the reception of Zizioulas work that

> when it comes to the research on Zizioulas, it seems that researchers tend to focus on the level of relation and particularity which is contrasted with the individualist understanding of personhood. Because the ontology of relationality begins to prevail in modern theology, researchers often appreciate Zizioulas' view of being as communion, and confuse Zizioulas' ontology of personhood with ontology of relationality[243].

Moreover, the fact that Zizioulas juxtaposes a Greek Patristic account with an Augustinian-Thomist account of the Trinity is a useful tool for Social Trinitarian theologians who wish to ameliorate the problems they perceive to be latent within Western theology, and thus they draw what they see as an ontology of relationality from Zizioulas. A good example of this lies with Colin Gunton because he draws from Zizioulas as a key inspiration in his work but who argues for a Social Trinity.

Gunton draws from Zizioulas but he takes Zizioulas' insights on the Trinity in a different direction. Gunton is concerned with the Trinity in order to provide a suitable analogy for both the Church and human personhood. Gunton seeks to use the Trinity to argue for a congregationalist ecclesiology against a monistic and hierarchical ecclesiology, and he uses the juxtaposition between 'Cappadocian and Augustinian conceptions of the Trinity'[244] to illustrate his argument. He argues that the Church is called to reflect the being of God in an analogical sense. Drawing from Zizioulas, Gunton argues that the development of the doctrine of the Trinity led to the creation of a

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[242] Tanner, 'Social-Trinitarianism and Its Critics', p. 368.
[243] Jesmond Micallef, *Trinitarian Ontology: The Concept of the Person for John D. Zizioulas.* (Toulouse: Domuni-Press, 2020), p. 35.
[244] Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), p. 74.

'distinctively Christian ontology'[245]. However, he argues that the potential insights of Trinitarian theology for ecclesiology were never integrated into the Church. The Church in the West came to be understood in a predominantly legal and political sense focussed on hierarchies. To amend this error Gunton argues that the personal dynamics of the Trinity can provide a suitable analogy between God and the Church, the Trinity and Community. But it has to be the right sort of analogy as 'different theologies of the Trinity generate correspondingly different ecclesiologies'[246]. Gunton draws out the difference between Cappadocian and Augustinian approaches to the Trinity quite strongly. An Augustinian conception of the Trinity is allegedly modalist in the 'sense that the three persons of the Trinity tend to be conceived as posterior to an underlying *deitas*'[247]. An Augustinian conception of the Trinity results in an ecclesiology where the Church is understood as 'anterior to the concrete historical relationships of the visible community'[248]. Gunton claims that with such an accompanying ontology, the Church is associated not with the community but as ontologically prior in the form of the invisible church. Moreover, the Church comes to be associated with Church order and ecclesiastical structures before they come to be associated with concrete historical communities of living persons. Instead, Gunton appeals to a visible community of persons who live in community 'according to the mind of Christ'[249]. According to Gunton this ecclesiology is an echo of the Trinity in that 'the being of the church consists in the relations of persons to each other'[250]. In particular, a Cappadocian conception of the Trinity is perceived to be especially generative because such a conception places an emphasis on the triune persons as communion.

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[245] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 62.
[246] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 74.
[247] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 74.
[248] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 75.
[249] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 75.
[250] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 76.

To this end, Gunton emphasises the perichoretic nature of the Trinity over the priority of the Father, and indeed he criticises Zizioulas for maintaining the monarchy because it does not fit his vision for the suitability of the Trinity for the Church. He writes

> As we have seen, to have his being in relation means that God is personal as a communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whence does this communion derive? According to Zizioulas, it derives from the Father, who is to be conceived as the cause of communion in the Trinity. While such a claim preserves the priority of the Father in the Godhead, I do not believe that it allows for an adequate theology of mutual constitution of Father, Son and Spirit[251].

Thus, instead of emphasising the priority of the Father for constituting the personal distinctiveness and relation of the triune persons; Gunton instead emphases the relations between the persons in themselves as constituting triune being, he writes 'whatever the priority of the Father, it should not detract from the fact that all three persons are together the cause of the communion in which they exist in relations of mutual and reciprocal constitution'[252]. Whilst being aware of the dangers of introducing tritheism, which he regards as a danger of emphasising communion in 'social analogy of the Trinity'[253], he nonetheless argues for a perichoretic conception of the Trinity. He stresses 'the importance of the doctrine of perichoresis, the interanimation in relation, of Father, Son and Spirit that is such that all that is done is indeed the act of all three'[254]. The importance of perichoresis for Gunton is precisely to avoid emphasising the monarchy of the Father, and Gunton maintains that Zizioulas argues for the primacy of the Bishop precisely because he argues for the monarchy of the Father, he writes

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[251] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 165.
[252] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 165.
[253] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 167.
[254] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 167.

> the way we think about God affects the way we think of that which he creates and redeems. It will be evident, for example, that the theology of the church essayed here will be more congregational in its structure than Zizioulas' strongly episcopal ecclesiology that tends to see the bishop as representing the Father[255].

There is a significant argument to be made about the work expected from the Trinity, and the tension between monarchy of the Father and perichoresis; which distinguishes Zizioulas from theologians who argue for a social doctrine of the Trinity. However, at this point it is important to identify that those who receive Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology adapt it to suit their own purposes. But the problem is that this difference is not always apparent to those who criticise social doctrines of the Trinity.

Third, the reception of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology results in his work becoming confused with Social Trinitarian projects wherein Zizioulas is accused of substituting substance with perichoretic relations even though they disagree with Zizioulas on the monarchy of the Father. In the reception of Zizioulas by Social Trinitarianism, the discussion on social doctrines frames most encounters with Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology; especially outside Orthodox circles. Such encounters result in confusion about what Zizioulas seeks to achieve through his Trinitarian theology. In particular, Zizioulas is seen to be an ally to, if not a proponent of, a Social Trinity in part on the basis of an ontology of relationality. Thus, despite Zizioulas denying that communion acts ontologically, nonetheless his Social Trinitarian critics, and indeed his Social Trinitarian advocates, maintain that communion is constitutive of divine being ontologically.

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[255] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 166.

It is claimed that Zizioulas, along with Social Trinitarian theologians, such as Moltmann and Volf, supplant divine ousia with an ontology of relationality for conveying triune unity, for instance:

> Moltmann and Volf argue that the persons of the Trinity are not simply constituted by their relations without remainder. Following Moltmann, politically progressive Trinitarian theologians, such as Leonardo Boff, downplay the irreversible orders among the Trinitarian persons in favor of the perfectly reciprocal perichoretic relations- relations of indwelling- among them: the Father is in the Son just as the Son is in the Father, and so on. It is these perichoretic relations that do the heavy lifting. The reversibility of these relations rather than identity of substance, is what accounts for the equality of the persons[256].

This is a particularly astute summary of the work expected from a social doctrine of the Trinity; namely that it is claimed that an emphasis on relationality and perichoresis creates an egalitarian understanding of the Trinity as opposed to an alleged monarchical conception. The problem is that Tanner equates Boff with Zizioulas as examples of those who are embarked on postulating a Social Trinity and who substitute substance with relation, she writes:

> And they come to replace politically problematic alternatives, such as identity of substance, as the basis for the Trinity's unity: "Their unity, rather than a unity of substance or origin (the Father), would be a unity of Persons, by reason of their reciprocal communion between them" "Instead of speaking of the unity of God in terms of His one nature, [it is better] to speak of it in terms of the *communion of persons*"[257].

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[256] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, p. 218.
[257] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, p. 218. Citing Boff, p. 84. And Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 134.

For those scholars who are more familiar with Zizioulas' work such confusions are surprising. Papanikolaou maintains the view of 'Zizioulas as promoting Social Trinitarianism …'[258] as a misinterpretation. Douglas Knight maintains that there is a distinction between a 'social doctrine of the Trinity'[259] and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology on the basis of contrasting positions on communion and monarchy of the Father. A social doctrine of the Trinity, Knight writes, 'misrepresents the persons as three independent consciousnesses ('gods') in order to promote communion (which is itself an abstraction) over them'[260]. This reification of communion is in contrast to Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology because social doctrines of the Trinity 'ignore the way the persons freely order themselves to the Father…The Father is the single source from whom the persons of God come, and consequently he is the single source of all that is'[261]. Knight is correct in identifying this difference, but since Holmes is aware of this difference between monarchy of the Father and reifying communion it is questionable whether maintaining that distinction is sufficient to distinguish Zizioulas from Social Trinitarianism. This is because there is a widely held assumption that Zizioulas uses the Trinity as a representation of a relational personhood, and the communion of the Church, in the same manner as Social Trinitarian theologians.

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[258] John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).
[259] Douglas Knight, 'Introduction', in *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, by John Zizioulas (London: T&T Clark, 2008), pp. xi–xxiii (p. xii).
[260] Knight, p. xii.
[261] Knight, p. xiii.

4.3 Dispute on Monarchy of the Father: Why does Zizioulas not drop the monarchy of the Father in favour of communion?

This leads to the second claim which in many ways contradicts the claim that Zizioulas reduces the Trinity to its relationality. Holmes maintains, correctly, that Zizioulas is distinguished from most Social Trinitarians because he argues for the monarchy of the Father; whereas by contrast most Social Trinitarians attribute the divine *monarchia* to the constitution of the Trinity itself, most frequently as *perichoresis*. Holmes correctly identifies that Zizioulas does not reify communion because he maintains the monarchy of the Father.

However, whilst Holmes is correct in his assessment of the purpose of a Social Trinity he is incorrect on why Zizioulas argues for the monarchy of the Father. Holmes maintains a conceptual difference between Zizioulas and in his view other Social Trinitarian theologians but he believes that they share the same methodology. It is apparent therefore that to distinguish Zizioulas from Social Trinitarian theology requires more than simply identifying conceptual differences. Instead, it is necessary to question how each theologian works with the doctrine of the Trinity and how that affects the shape of the doctrine they posit. This is a step which Holmes, and many others (such as Tanner) fail to do because they assume that Zizioulas is simply another instance of Social Trinitarian theology. Thus, although we have already examined the methodology implicit to Zizioulas' and Social Trinitarian ecclesiologies, further attention needs to be paid to the nature of the doctrine of the Trinity itself posited by Zizioulas.

This is because Holmes claims that Zizioulas attempts 'to derive a functional ecclesiology from his Trinitarian doctrine and suggested that many who follow him want to adopt a similar method, although they also want to arrive at rather different results'[262]. Holmes makes the mistake that Zizioulas' ecclesiology is based on a particular reading of Trinitarian theology. He claims that

[262] Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2012), p. 25.

Zizioulas uses the Trinity to supply a suitable analogy for an episco-centric ecclesiology based on the fact Zizioulas argues for the monarchy of the Father. An ecclesiology which is at odds with the ecclesiology advocated by his Social Trinitarian interlocutors who would rather stress, especially in Volf's case, 'a classically congregationalist church polity' where 'ministry arises from within the gathered congregation'[263] and who consequently argues for a *perichoretic* Trinity. Holmes writes that the implications of Zizioulas' ecclesiology 'has been largely ignored by Zizioulas' followers'[264]. Instead, Holmes maintains that for Zizioulas

> the bishop is the source and *arche* of the church, just as the Father is of the Trinity; the Eucharist is the heart of the life of the church. The ecclesiology is strongly hierarchical, reinforcing sacerdotalism, structure, and authority. For Zizioulas, as a Greek Orthodox bishop, the priesthood remains solely male, and so his ecclesiology leads to gender inequalities that would be found troubling by most Western societies[265].

In many ways, this is an unfair representation of Zizioulas' position. Nowhere in Zizioulas' works does he refer to the necessity of a male clergy. Holmes infers this from the fact that Zizioulas is a Greek Orthodox bishop, but it has nothing to do with his work as a theologian. It may be true that the Orthodox Church has a solely male priesthood but this does not derive from Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology. It has to do with Greek Orthodox tradition, of which Zizioulas has no authority to change.

Crucially, Holmes makes a fundamental error in the relationship between Zizioulas' ecclesiology and Trinitarian theology. It has already been argued in the chapter on the Church in this thesis that Zizioulas' ecclesiology relies not upon analogy between the Church and the Trinity,

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[263] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.
[264] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 12.
[265] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.

but upon the operations of the triune persons to allow human persons to participate in the mystical body of Christ and thus the filial relation between the Father and the Son. The language to be used in reference to Zizioulas' ecclesiology is that of participation, theôsis and the doctrine of adoption not projection.

Holmes echoes many other critics in assuming that Zizioulas uses the doctrine of the Trinity to supply an ideal vision for the Church. But Holmes goes further than many in attributing the difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians, in particular Volf, to the fact that Zizioulas argues for the *monarchy of the Father* whilst still using the same method as Social Trinitarian theologians. Holmes maintains that by contrast Social Trinitarian theologians tend to emphasise perichoresis as generative for their preferred ecclesiology, and thus they make a 'significant alteration to the received ecumenical doctrine of the Trinity'[266] through this use of *perichoresis*. He does so in order to criticise the fact that 'despite appearances, ecclesiological programs cannot in fact be derived from Trinitarian dogma; there is a methodological flaw shared by both Zizioulas and Volf'[267].

This is a valid criticism of the Social Trinitarian method; but it is an invalid criticism of Zizioulas since Zizioulas does not argue for the monarchy of the Father in order to justify the Bishop. This will become apparent in later in this chapter on Zizioulas' nexus of question and answer on the Trinity. However, it is also worth noticing that Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian interlocutors are also under the impression that Zizioulas maintains a Trinitarian theology in order to supply a justification for an ecclesiology centred on communion. This close association probably accounts for the confusions Zizioulas' critics exhibit.

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[266] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 12.
[267] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 82.

4.4 Social Trinitarian theologians and Zizioulas are working on different problems.

There is a key and noticeable conflict of interest between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians which the critics of Social Trinitarianism seem to have missed. Amongst Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian advocates there is the widely held view that Zizioulas' adherence to the monarchy of the Father is a hinderance to founding ecclesiology on communion. It is noticeable that when a Social Trinitarian theologian draws from Zizioulas to answer their own question on the Trinity they find that Zizioulas' emphasis on the *arche of the Father* to be a difficult issue; and they adapt Zizioulas' communion to fit with their own emphasis on the *relationality* and *mutuality* between divine persons in communion.

This emphasis on intra-divine *mutuality* leads AJ Torrance to argue that by maintaining the *arche* of the Father in intra-divine communion Zizioulas 'fails to take proper cognisance of the ontological significance of the union integral to the divine communion and involves projecting a causal ordering in the Godhead'[268]. Herein lies the key difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians. For instance, AJ Torrance argues that the ontological significance of intra-divine communion is the *mutuality* between the divine persons, 'the communion of the Trinity as such constitutes the *arche* and *telos* of all that is'[269].

Torrance, questions whether Zizioulas is consistent in proposing 'being' as 'communion' with the Father as the cause (*aitia*) and principle (*arche*) of intra-divine communion. In Torrance's view, a doctrine of the immanent Trinity in which God is conceived purely as communion supports an inherent integrity to divine-human communion as 'God is towards us in Christ and in the Spirit he is inherently and eternally in himself in the one being of the consubstantial Trinity'[270]. In light

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[268] Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with Special Reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 289.
[269] Alan Torrance, p. 258.
[270] Alan Torrance, p. 294.

of this, Torrance holds that given communion refers not to 'some contingent existence'[271] Zizioulas does not offer a 'sufficiently compelling argument'[272] to reject, 'intra-divine communion of the Trinity as the ground of all that is, that is, as sufficient in itself and as indeed "capable" of existing by itself'[273].

4.5 The axiomatic question: Why does not Zizioulas attribute divine monarchia to communion?

Social Trinitarian theologians, such as AJ Torrance, pose Zizioulas the question:

> Why single out the person of the Father and not make the Son and the Spirit equally causative of divine being? And (b) following this to its conceptual consequences, why not make communion as such, that is, the *perichoresis* and ontological interdependence of the three persons, the ultimate reality in God's being, and thus a cause?[274].

This is an interesting question. It is interesting because it indicates that Zizioulas and Social Trinitarian theologians may not be engaging in the same debate. That is, they may not be working on the same problem, using the same tools to address that problem and that, they come up with different conclusions not because they share the same methodology, as Holmes suggests, but because they are working different problems altogether. The problem as we see it is that there is a univocity in the use of communion by Zizioulas' Social Trinitarian interlocutors that reveals a very different set of priorities in their adaptation of Zizioulas' *koinōnia* to emphasise the *mutuality* and *relationality* of the divine persons to an extent beyond Zizioulas. Although Zizioulas and certain

[271] Alan Torrance, p. 293.
[272] Alan Torrance, p. 293.
[273] Alan Torrance, p. 293.
[274] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 127.

Social Trinitarians use the term *koinōnia*, the term refers to a different concept in the respective works. This difference in emphasis enables us to make the following two claims: (1): Zizioulas does not equate divinity or divine unity with communion. Communion is not ontologized as the supporting structure of Trinity. (2): Those who draw from Zizioulas find his priority of the person of the Father to be difficult and adapt the notion of communion to adhere to their own agenda. These two claims leads us to conclude that there are two different problematics at work between the Social Trinitarians and Zizioulas.

The Social Trinitarian theologians are opposed to Zizioulas' monarchy of the Father precisely because they posit a Social Trinity against a monarchical conception of God which they believe predominated in Western Trinitarian theology. A Social Trinity is posed as an alternative to a classic Nicene Trinitarian position. In contrast to Zizioulas,

> Moltmann takes it as a methodological principle that the monarchy of God (or indeed of the Father, in Zizioulan terms) is an unacceptable doctrine. Instead, in *The Kingdom of God*[275], Moltmann develops an avowedly 'social' doctrine of the Trinity: three persons, mutually interrelated, mutually constitutive, with no hierarchy. He draws much on the ancient doctrine of *perichoresis* (interpenetration) in this, although he radically reinterprets the doctrine in so doing[276].

Likewise Volf, a student of Moltmann, regards that maintaining hierarchy amongst the divine persons is an anachronism in a democratic age. He writes:

> hierarchical constructions of the Trinitarian relations appear from this perspective as projections of the fascination with earthly hierarchies onto the heavenly community. They

[275] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God.*
[276] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 21.

> seem to be less inspired by a vision of the Triune God than either by a nostalgia for a "world on the wane" or by fears of chaos that may invade human communities if hierarchies are levelled…[277].

To ameliorate such concerns Social Trinitarian theologians turn to a supposed Cappadocian conception of the Trinity to retrieve a perichoretic conception of the Trinity. It is claimed that such a retrieval is a retrieval of a *perichoretic* conception of the Trinity based on the mutual co-inherence of triune persons. A concept which allows for the Trinity to be in constant communion with creation whilst articulating the Trinitarian communion in non-hierarchal manner.

A common criticism posed to Social Trinitarianism is that these social doctrines of the Trinity do not constitute a Trinitarian revival informed by a patristic sources, and instead the Social Trinitarians develop something new under the guise of a patristic retrieval. This point has been made quite articulately by Kilby:

> is this *really* a revival, a retrieval and development of a key dimension of the tradition, or is it something else- something more like a foreign growth, the flowering of a slightly different plant?[278].

Social Trinitarians, such as LaCugna and Moltmann, turn to what they see as a Cappadocian Trinitarian tradition and retrieve from it the notion of *perichoresis*. However, it is questionable whether this is a patristic retrieval since they focus on a particular notion, such as *perichoresis*, which supports their understanding of a relational conception of divine personhood.

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[277] Miroslav Volf, ""The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', *Modern Theology*, 14.3 (1998), 403–23 (pp. 407–8).

[278] Karen Kilby, 'Trinity and Politics: An Apophatic Approach', in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. by Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), pp. 75–94 (p. 73).

Zizioulas questions whether the retrieval of perichoresis is a patristic ressourcement he writes 'according to this view, there is in Trinitarian existence a constant movement of self-denial, of each person's 'emptying' itself in order to 'make room' for the other persons to 'co-inhere' (*perichoresis*)'[279] and he distances himself from the application of *perichoresis* to Trinity as a true reading of Cappadocian theology, after all the idea of *kenosis* and *perichoresis* was 'borrowed from Christology' and 'attractive as it [*perichoresis*] may appear on first sight' and although *kenosis* is basic to Christology 'it becomes problematic when it is transferred to the immanent Trinity'.[280]

I do not believe that this argument is based on historical accuracy or exegesis per se but rather focuses on the function expected from the doctrine of the Trinity. Therefore, merely restating a historical reading of say Gregory of Nyssa on the Trinity will not address the problems that are to be found in social trinities as they are consciously adapting the Nicene tradition to fit in with modern concerns.

4.6 The *Social Trinitarian task expected from perichoresis*

The retrieval of Trinitarian theology by Social Trinitarian theologians is a blending between certain patristic Trinitarian concepts with modern notions of personhood to uphold a relational conception of divine subjectivity in reaction to the primacy of absolute substance and subjectivity; Moltmann conveys that

> the concept of God's unity cannot in the Trinitarian sense be fitted into the homogeneity of the one divine substance, or into the identity of the absolute subject either; and least of

[279] John Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitatian Theology*, ed. by Giulio Maspero and Robert Wozniak (London: T&T Clark, 2012), pp. 193–209 (p. 198).
[280] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 198.

> all into one of the three Persons of the Trinity. It must be perceived in the perichoresis of the divine Persons[281].

Moltmann does not convey the unity between the triune persons through *ousia* and instead construes triune unity through the *perichoretic* relations between the divine persons in the unfolding divine economy. *Ousia* is indicative of the problems with pro-Nicene theology; namely speculation on *theologia* removed from God's relation to creation in the divine economy. Whereas a *perichoretic* notion of Trinity binds God's being closely with creation. The divine persons are distinct individuals who are brought into unity through history, 'the unity of the Father, Son and the Spirit is then the eschatological question about the consummation of the Trinitarian history of God'[282]. The divine unity based on *perichoresis* is a safeguard against the absolute subject inherent to Nicene orthodoxy thus unity 'must be perceived in the *perichoresis* of the divine Persons. If the unity of God is not perceived in the at-oneness of the triune God, and therefore as a *perichoretic* unity, then Arianism and Sabellianism remain inescapable threats to the Christian theology'[283]. Building on the insights of Moltmann, LaCugna indicates a Social Trinitarian understanding of perichoresis which means

> being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion … while there is no blurring of the individuality of each person, there is also no separation. There is only the communion of love in which each person comes to be (in the sense of hyparxeos) what he/she is, entirely with reference to the other. Each person expresses both what he/she is (and, by implication, what the other two are), and at the same time expresses what God is: ecstatic,

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[281] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 150.
[282] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 149.
[283] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 150.

> dynamic, vital. Perichoresis provides a dynamic model of persons in communion based on mutuality and interdependence[284].

Divine unity is constituted through the mutual indwelling of three distinct persons rather than by *ousia*. This *perichoresis* becomes the basis for modelling idealised human social interactions. *Perichoresis* facilitates an 'open Trinity'[285] that invites human beings to participate in this life of mutual indwelling with the Trinity and to model those relationships in their life in society.

For Moltmann, challenging classical Trinitarianism and replacing it with a 'social doctrine of the Trinity'[286] enables the Church to place the doctrine of the Trinity at the heart of its mission and provides a vision for the Kingdom of God[287]. A social doctrine of the Trinity is directed against the monarchy of the Father because such a conception presents an implicit hierarchy within triune being; which for them is the basis of equal relations and the abrogation of any hierarchical ontology in a creaturely reality that images the divine. This is particularly evident in Volf who voices the position of many Social Trinitarian theologians when he claims that

> Recently, voices have emerged contesting hierarchical construction of the doctrine of the Trinity and advocating Trinitarian egalitarianism (citing Moltmann). Joining this growing group of theologians, I have suggested elsewhere that hierarchy is not necessary to guard either the divine unity or the distinctions between divine persons, and here I want to add that in a communion of perfect love between persons who share all divine attributes a notion of hierarchy is unintelligible. Hierarchical constructions of the Trinitarian relations

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[284] LaCugna, p. 271.
[285] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 19.
[286] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 19.
[287] See the chapter 5 on Rahner's axiom for a further discussion on Moltmann and challenging the notion of God as absolute subject.

> appear from this perspective as projections of the fascination with earthly hierarchies onto the heavenly community[288].

It is noticeable here that although the metaphors for the Trinity differ between a Social Trinitarian non-hierarchical conception of the Trinity and that posited by a pro-Nicene Trinitarian tradition; Volf assumes that they share an underlying methodology in that a metaphor for God informs earthly hierarchies and vice versa. Thus, the work expected by Volf from Trinitarian doctrine is to create the right understanding of God. Therefore, it is important for social trinitarians to emphasise a social doctrine of the Trinity over any suggestion of a monarchical conception of God. Consequently, *perichoresis* became axiomatic in subsequent social-Trinitarian schemes, it is axiomatic for Moltmann, Boff, Pannenberg[289], LaCugna and Volf. For instance, Boff agrees with Moltmann that Trinitarian theology must begin with the three divine persons and then proceed to demonstrate their unity on the basis of *perichoresis*[290]. *Perichoresis* becomes the mode through which social-Trinitarians describe the Trinity as the social relations between three persons which distances themselves from what Holmes calls the classical Trinitarian tradition

> the practice of speaking of three persons in this [contemporary] sense in the divine life, of asserting a social doctrine of the Trinity, a divine community or an "ontology of persons in relationship" can only ever be, as far as I can see, a simple departure from (what I have attempted to show) the unified witness of the entire theological tradition[291].

The retrieval of *perichoresis* from the perceived Cappadocian Trinitarian theology was a way for Social Trinitarians to overcome the problems that Barth identified that the modern conception

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[288] Volf, ""'The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement', p. 407.
[289] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. by Geoffrey Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), I, pp. 317–19.
[290] Boff, p. 134.
[291] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 195.

of person was too far removed from the Trinitarian tradition to articulate the divine hypostases; and in the Social Trinitarian narrative of Trinitarian doctrine a social is directed against a monarchical conception of God that they alleged to have been predominant in post-Nicene Trinitarians. *Perichoresis* allows the social-Trinitarians to 'find the current meaning of the term [person] an invitation to receive core Christian insights, too long forgotten in the theological tradition'[292].

Perichoresis allows the Social Trinitarians to 'find the current meaning of the term [person] an invitation to receive core Christian insights, too long forgotten in the theological tradition'[293]. But as Holmes has identified, Social Trinitarianism departs from the classical Trinitarian tradition, not least because such a Social Trinity is seen to be generative for renewed human egalitarian relationships.

Following Moltmann, Social Trinitarian theologians have seen the potential for political and ecclesial egalitarianism through challenging monarchical and monistic conceptions of God and supplanting them with a conception of God founded upon *perichoresis*. A particularly pertinent example may be found in Leonardo Boff, who turned to Moltmann's Social Trinity to supply a perichoretic understanding of the Trinity that supports an egalitarian ecclesiology, he writes:

> This understanding of the Trinity is extremely rich in suggestion in the context of oppression and desire for liberation. The oppressed struggle for participation at all levels of life, for a just and egalitarian sharing while respecting the differences between persons and groups; they seek communion with other cultures and other values, and with God as the ultimate meaning of history and of their own hearts … For those who have faith, the Trinitarian communion between the divine Three, the union between them in love and vital interpenetration, can serve as a source of inspiration, as a utopian goal that generates

[292] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 79.
[293] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 79.

> models of successively diminishing differences. This is one of the reasons why I am taking the concept of perichoresis as the structural axis of these thoughts. It speaks to the oppressed in their quest and struggle for integral liberation. The communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit becomes the prototype of the human community dreamed of by those who wish to improve society and build it in such a way to make it into the image and likeness of the Trinity[294].

Finally, this use of *perichoresis* by Moltmann is closely associated with his use of Rahner's axiom[295]. As Moltmann writes 'I found myself bound to surrender the traditional distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity, according to which the cross comes to stand only in the economy of salvation, but not within the immanent Trinity'[296]. Moltmann sacrifices divine freedom in favour of the expression of divine love, as Holmes writes 'freedom, he suggests, is not the first word to be spoken of God; love is. In love, God gives himself, binds himself, to the creation'[297]. The perichoresis which constitutes the Trinity *in se*, is extended to the economy of salvation so that through the mutually indwelling operations of the triune persons in creation; creation itself is incorporated into the perichoretic life of the Trinity.

Prima facie, this seems to be similar to Zizioulas' own argument for theôsis as participation into the Son in the Spirit. But as we have established in the chapter on Rahner's axiom, Zizioulas is opposed both to Rahner's axiom, and in particular Moltmann's use of Rahner's axiom, precisely because it compromises divine freedom[298]. The monarchy of the Father is essential for Zizioulas' understanding of divine freedom because it ensures that God's aseity is not compromised by anything that necessitates divine existence.

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[294] Boff, p. 7.
[295] Which shall be discussed in the next chapter.
[296] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 160.
[297] Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 22.
[298] See chapter 5 'On the difference between a Social Doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian Theology (2): On Rahner's Axiom.

4.6.1 The limitations in Social Trinitarian method of analogy

This account of the relationship between the Trinity and the Church raises some significant issues. First, in the appropriation of Zizioulas' reading of Cappadocian theology, the importance of divine freedom for Zizioulas is left to one side and the significance of Zizioulas for the Social Trinitarians is that his account of Cappadocian Trinitarian theology is seen to provide a fruitful foundation for a relational conception of personhood which challenges individualism and a monistic and hierarchical ecclesiology[299]. The questions which motivate Zizioulas are neglected in favour of that which Social Trinitarian theologians wish to draw from this juxtaposition between an Augustinian and Cappadocian account of the Trinity.

Second, as we identified in our chapter on the Church there is an inherent methodological problem of deriving ecclesial relations from the Trinity. However, before identifying those problems it is important to do justice to Social Trinitarian arguments in order to give a fair critique. Social Trinitarian theologians, in particular Gunton and McFayden, are aware of the implicit risks in simple conceptual transposition of divine relations to human relations. McFayden writes that it is importance to avoid 'the temptation of deriving our understanding of the human being directly from that of the divine being'[300]. He adds that 'if the Trinity functions only as a symbol, the relationship between God and humanity and creation becomes something entirely noetic'[301]; and this is limited by the finitude of human sinfulness.

Yet, whether such an analogy is posited on a strong or a weak basis, the Social Trinitarian exercise is a speculative and derivative method based upon the reflection deriving human relations from divine relation. The Social Trinitarians do not use a direct transposition because they argue for the incorporation of human relationships in the divine perichoresis within the economy of

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[299] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 86.
[300] Alistair McFadyen, 'The Trinity and Human Individuality. The Conditions for Relevance', *Theology*, 95.763 (1992), 10–18 (p. 11).
[301] McFadyen, p. 11.

salvation and so the method is not about a speculative derivation of human relationship from a contemplation of the divine[302]. *Perichoresis* is treated as the characterisation 'of all of God's triune external communications as well'[303] through which a relationship is built between God and humanity and this becomes the foundation for a Social Trinitarian epistemology. Gunton would call *perichoresis* an 'open transcendental'[304], a notion which leaves its mark upon creation that reveals truth about the relationship of creation with God and this 'enables us to understand something of the interconnectedness of both persons and things'[305].

However, one is left with the impression that Social Trinitarians treat triune schesis as generative for human relationships in that their method is rooted in an abstraction. The issue is that, if the Trinity becomes analogous for ideal human relations then human relations would be categorised by an implicit hierarchy by the virtue that Zizioulas' understanding of a Cappadocian Trinity is characterised by personal distinctiveness through the ordering of their relation to the Father. But this is a flawed endeavour in any case. By constructing ecclesial relationships based on an analogy of Trinitarian persons there is the ever-present danger of making the triune persons in the human image. The triune persons become like human persons and thus the Trinity becomes little more than an analogy for human society.

Moreover, human society or ecclesiology should not imitate triune relations. God is transcendent and completely other. So, the question arises how it is possible to identify what should be drawn from the Trinity and applied to human relations when God is utterly transcendent. The answer that Social Trinitarian theologians posit is that 'perichoresis, is used to name what is not understood, to name whatever it is that makes the three Persons one. Second,

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[302] See chapter 5 on Rahner's axiom.
[303] McFadyen, p. 12.
[304] Colin Gunton, *The One, The Three and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 153.
[305] Gunton, *The One, The Three and the Many*, p. 153.

the concept is filled out rather suggestively with notions borrowed from our own experience of relationships and relatedness'[306]. But if this projection is the case then why bother with the Trinity?

Even if theologians still appeal to the Trinity, this is problematic since the Trinity is not directly applicable to human relationships. Human sinfulness and finitude marks human existence as completely other to triune existence. If Social Trinitarian theologians mark out perichoresis as the summum bonum of a Trinitarian mode of being the mutual indwelling of that which is called as Father, Son and Spirit to constitute divine existence cannot even be applied to human existence. Human beings are individuals; even if they share the same essence or substance as another human being their mode of existence is marked by individuality. They exist prior to their relations. Moreover, such relationships are always marked by finitude. Friendships come and go, and romantic and familial relationships are often broken or at the very least marked by mortality. By contrast, triune relations are infinite and eternal. Triune persons are made distinctive by their processions and relations but operate with a unity impossible for human persons since all the acts of triune persons are the acts of each other.

Nonetheless, Social Trinitarian theologians argue that the Trinity should act as an analogy for human relationships and this leads to a third point. In order to appropriate a Cappadocian Trinity to suit the aim for an egalitarian fellowship in the Church, or a relational personhood, the received doctrine of the Trinity has to be significantly adapted to suit those aims.

4.7 Zizioulas' criticism of Social Trinitarian use of perichoresis

Zizioulas does not use the term Social Trinity when he critiques the attempt in contemporary Western Trinitarian theology to consider the Trinity in terms of relationality. However, in his essay, *'Father as Cause'* (2006) Zizioulas responds to the attempt to appropriate

[306] Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', p. 442.

Cappadocian theology by theologians who promulgate a social conception of the Trinity. In his regard, modern attempts by Western theologians to consider God as a social reality are rooted in the same errors as post-Augustinian and scholastic Trinitarian theology.

The essence of his critique is that in rejecting the *arche* of Trinitarian communion to reside with the Father a social conception of the Trinity merely supplants *substance* with *relationality* or *communion*. Wherein the ontological principle of the Trinity is not the person of the Father but *relationality*:

> The ultimate reality in God's being is, therefore, sought, in the final analysis, in *ousia,* be it in the static form of 'essence' or in the dynamic form of a communion constituting activity, that is, of a relational substance. In both cases, it is the *ousia* that is the ontological *arche* in God[307].

Zizioulas is opposed to any suggestion that Trinitarian being is *caused* by anything that is beyond the *person*. Zizioulas' conceptual framework for intra-Trinitarian communion is that God is implicitly communion, is comprised of the coincidence between *substance* and the *hypostases*, who exist in communion caused by the Father. The Trinitarian *tropos hyparxeos* is caused by the Father.

But this is possible only because being hypostatic means that there is complete coincidence between person and substance, not the priority of one or the other. Each *hypostasis* possesses the one substance, and are constituted as *one* through that common substance. Zizioulas' point is that in God *substance* cannot exist apart from *communion* since 'nothing in existence is conceivable in itself, as an individual, such as the τοδε τι of Aristotle, since even God exists thanks to an event of communion'[308].

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[307] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 126.
[308] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.

Yet communion does not have in itself an ontological content, it cannot exist without the personal will of the Father who differentiates the Trinitarian hypostases, each possessing all the same commonality of substance and qualities (such as ineffability, immutability, eternity), solely in terms of relation. The Trinitarian hypostases are defined in their uniqueness by their relation with each other, wherein the Father begets the Son, and spirates the Spirit. Zizioulas' position on communion is that it is attributable to a personal cause, that of the Father. Meaning that God's existence is not attributed to an impersonal substance, or communion.

Having already established that Zizioulas does not, to use his terms, consider communion as an ontological category, the conversation he has with Social Trinitarianism on the Trinity pertains to whether, (a) the intra-divine Trinitarian relations are determined by the personal will of the Father, or (b) cause is attributed to *relationality,* that is the co-inherence of the hypostases, 'turned relationality into the ultimate reality: the one God is not the Father; it is the *unity* of Father, Son, and Spirit in their co-inherence or inter-relatedness'[309]. (B) represents the position of those who postulate a Social Trinity, Zizioulas writes that Gunton is an example of this position:

> "all three persons … *together* the cause of communion in which they exist in *relations of* mutual and reciprocal *constitution*"[310]. It is evident that in rejecting the Father as cause of the Trinity we are inevitably led to the position that it is the *relations* that *constitute* the Trinity. Relationality is thus made into the ultimate ontologically (constitutive) reality.[311]

Zizioulas builds his case on a number of grounds to demonstrate that *relationality* itself cannot be regarded as an ontological category.

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[309] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 136.
[310] Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 196.
[311] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 136,fn.70.

4.7.1 Communion itself constrains divine freedom.

First, Zizioulas' priority is to maintain absolute divine freedom which he can only resolve through avoiding attributing being to anything that could 'constrain'[312] divine freedom. If communion is taken to be a constitutive ontological category then it would constrain divine freedom. This is because God is constrained by communion in much the same way that Zizioulas perceives substance to constrain divine freedom.

Zizioulas articulates the problem in relation to Martin Buber, whose aim was to demonstrate the 'equal primordiality'[313] of the *I* and the *thou*. The *I* is determined not by qualities possessing its nature or with an emphasis upon consciousness, but through its relationship with the *thou*. Zizioulas' criticism is that because the *I* is not determined by the *thou* but through the reified *relationship* with the *thou* it is that 'between' Zizioulas writes 'which seems to be the ultimate ontological category for him'[314]. Thus, the 'between' constitutes the notion of God in Buber's conception. If relationality itself constitutes divine being then it conflicts with Zizioulas' point 'there is no ἀρχη of any sort determining the divine persons'[315].

4.7.2 Against triune personhood as individuals in community

Second, Zizioulas argues that those who maintain Trinitarian being to be constituted by *relationality* assume two positions on personhood which are contrary to the conception of personhood and communion which he advocates. Zizioulas maintains that the *hypostasis* of the Father is particular (namely, *hypostatic*) which is *other* to the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit; to be hypostatic in the Trinity is to be *relational* and *particular*. Such a mode of existence (*tropos*

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[312] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 18.
[313] John Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 13–98 (p. 47).
[314] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 47.
[315] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.

hyparxeos) is not determined by an impersonal reality, such as *relationality* or *substance*. To be personal in relation to Trinitarian being is to exist as a hypostasis (the particular) in ekstasis (relation). A problematic view of Trinitarian personhood arises when there is an emphasis on *substance*, in which *persons* are ultimately defined as *relations,* 'as did Augustine'[316]. To equate persons with relation subjugates personal existence to that of essence/substance.

Equally, a similar problem occurs under a definition of God's 'tripersonality'[317] where the persons are determined by relationality and as *individual conscious subjects*. Zizioulas claims that successive contemporary theologians make triunity the 'ultimate ontological ground in God'[318], but his particular example is the Romanian theologian, Stanilaoe, who, according to Zizioulas argues that

> being does not exist really except in a hypostasis, or – in the case of spiritual being – in the *conscious subject* … we speak of the divine hypostases *as subjects* … *a conscious relation between subjects*[319].

Zizioulas counters the claim that Trinitarian persons are individual conscious subjects by claiming that it is contrary to the Cappadocian conception of divine personhood 'which in fact excludes an understanding of the person in terms of subjectivity, consciousness being something common and identical to all three of the divine persons'[320].

Thus, Zizioulas opposes the concept of *person* used in a contemporary sense but which exist in 'community'[321]. Zizioulas does not consider the Trinity as communitarian in this sense since Zizioulas' concept of *hypostasis* is not that of an individual living with other individuals united

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[316] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 137,fn.73. See chapter on the filioque for a discussion on this issue.
[317] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 134.
[318] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 134.
[319] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 135,fn.63.
[320] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 135,fn.63.
[321] Tanner, 'Social-Trinitarianism and Its Critics', p. 370.

by a casual/ordering principle (such as communion), 'the incommunicability of hypostatic properties does not mean that persons in the Trinity are to be understood as autonomous individuals'[322]. Although Zizioulas is opposed to *individual subjectivity* in reference to divine personhood, neither does Zizioulas collapse personhood into pure relations. Persons coincide with relations, but this does not make personhood purely relational.

4.7.3 Against perichoresis as a unifying principle

This leads to Zizioulas' final objection, that of the co-emergence of triune personhood or a *panoramic ontology*[323] in conceptions of the Trinity which place an emphasis upon *perichoresis* as a determining principle. Such a consideration of communion is one where the Trinitarian hypostases exist by co-inhering in another 'in this case, the three persons *co-emerge* and co-exist simultaneously and automatically'[324].

Communion for Zizioulas arises from divine freedom, otherwise divine being is subject to ontological necessity, be it of substance or from communion as an ontological category. In response to Alan Torrance, Zizioulas maintains that 'God is love' and exists in communion, but that communion is not self-determinative, it is caused by the person of the Father, and as Zizioulas writes, 'we do not conceive of the intra-divine communion of the Triunity as the ground of all that is'[325] for to do so makes *perichoresis* or communion itself into the divine monarchy. Zizioulas does insist that the persons exist in communion, and whilst he denies that divine being is reducible to substance, he simultaneously denies a *panoramic* ontology in the Trinity[326]. Zizioulas uses the term

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[322] John Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 155–77 (p. 160).
[323] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 45,fn.40.
[324] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 135.
[325] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 134.
[326] Zizioulas borrows the term *panoramic ontology* from Levinas' critique of Heidegger (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 45,fn.40.) It is not immediately clear to what extent either Levinas and Heidegger has influenced Zizioulas' thought, nor the extent to which Zizioulas has engaged with either philosopher. It is not our task to

panoramic ontology to criticise the view that the Trinity exists as 'a parallel co-existence of the three persons, a kind of multiple manifestation of the being of God'[327]. A horizon in which persons emerge is impossible for God who exists outside time, and whilst such a panoramic ontology is possible within creation, it cannot be for God. Ultimately, Zizioulas believes that such a conception of God is incompatible with what he claims to be the Patristic insistence on the monarchy of the Father.

4.8 Conclusion

The criticisms which are brought against Zizioulas work as a Social Trinitarian project are framed by their encounters with Zizioulas in the work of Social Trinitarianism. This chapter has demonstrated that there is a fundamental difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians if the work is done to locate Zizioulas within his own complex of question and answer, and after the work to establish what a social doctrine of the Trinity seeks to achieve. In this guise, there is a fundamental difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians based on their respective approach to the monarchy of the Father. Social Trinitarians object to the monarchy of the Father because it conflicts with their aim to abrogate hierarchy within divine being. Whereas Zizioulas objects attributing divine monarchia to communion in se because it compromises divine freedom. We therefore conclude that this difference on the monarchy of the Father arises because it is evident that they are engaged upon different theological projects.

do so here, however this issue shall be discussed in the chapter entitled 'On the Person (1): A consideration of the charge that Zizioulas projects Philosophical Personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian Theology'

[327] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 45,fn.40.

CHAPTER 5. ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND ZIZIOULAS' TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY (2): RAHNER'S AXIOM

5.1 *Introduction*

This chapter argues that the centrality of Rahner's axiom to Social Trinitarian theologians reveals the key differences between what Social Trinitarian projects seek to achieve and what Zizioulas seeks to achieve in his Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology.

Rahner maintained that there is an axiomatic unity between the immanent and the economic Trinity, he states: 'the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity'.[328] This has become widely known as Rahner's axiom[329].

A key identifying feature of a social doctrine of the Trinity is Rahner's axiom which was posed by Rahner as the solution to the alleged neglect of the doctrine of the Trinity in Western theology. Rahner is not a Social Trinitarian theologian[330]. However, Rahner's axiom later became ubiquitous in Trinitarian scholarship that advocated a social doctrine of the Trinity. Why is this the case? This chapter shall argue that Rahner's axiom is utilised to formulate a Social Trinity. A Social Trinity is postulated to address a specific problem they identify with what they saw to be a modalistic and monarchical conception of God they perceived to be latent within what they identify to be a Western Trinitarian tradition; and Rahner's axiom, along with perichoresis, gave Social Trinitarian theologians two core concepts implicit to a Social Trinity that sought to resolve those problems. Rahner's axiom is appropriated because Social Trinitarian theologians expect a specific task from the doctrine of the Trinity which an alleged Western conception of the Trinity

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[328] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 22.

[329] I use axiom rather than rule because Rahner describes this unity as an 'axiomatic unity' (Rahner, 1997, p.21).

[330] See the section on Moltmann's objection to absolute subject below for the reason why Rahner is not considered as a Social Trinitarian.

is unable to fulfil. Thus, rather than considering the doctrine of the Trinity in itself, it is argued that the doctrine of the Trinity has relevance for the Church not because it is a speculative account of the inner life of God but because it articulates soteriology. In this emergent tendency in Trinitarian scholarship the 'Trinity becomes a type of Christology. In Rahner's words: Trinity is soteriology, the event of our saving encounter with God'[331].

The Social Trinitarian use of Rahner's axiom could be construed as a way in which Zizioulas' theology agrees with the Social Trinitarians; and this is because Zizioulas agrees with Rahner, and the Social Trinitarians, on the alleged neglect of Trinitarian doctrine by Western theology. But for Zizioulas the Social Trinitarian solution to this problem, vis-à-vis Rahner's axiom, is deeply problematic. Zizioulas argues against Rahner's axiom vehemently in a small number of his works[332]. Zizioulas opposes Rahner's axiom precisely because he believes it compromises the freedom of the immanent Trinity, a freedom which he perceives to be of central importance in the doctrine of the Trinity. Unlike his Social Trinitarian interlocutors, Zizioulas does not argue the notion that the processions of the Trinitarian persons in the economy equate to the processions of the triune persons in the immanent Trinity. Instead, for Zizioulas the constitution of the Trinitarian persons finds its *arche* in the person of the Father through the begetting of the Son and from whom the Spirit proceeds. There is a sharp distinction in Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology between the processions of God *in se* and the processions of God in the divine economy. This chapter argues that Zizioulas' criticism made against Rahner's axiom is a crucial difference between what the Social Trinitarians seek to achieve through a Social Trinity and what Zizioulas seeks to achieve in his Trinitarian theology because divine freedom is axiomatic to Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology and therefore Zizioulas has a different set of priorities to the Social Trinitarians.

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[331] Sonderegger, II, p. xvii.

[332] In particular in John Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 3–16. And in Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 204.

5.2 ***Molnar's criticism against Zizioulas: Communion supplants revelation because it compromises the immanent Trinity.***

Rahner's axiom is appropriated by Social Trinitarianism because Social Trinitarian theologians expect a specific task from the doctrine of the Trinity which an alleged Western conception of the Trinity is unable to fulfil. Thus, rather than considering the doctrine of the Trinity in itself, it is argued that the doctrine of the Trinity has relevance for the Church not because it is a speculative account of the inner life of God but because it articulates soteriology. In this emergent tendency in Trinitarian scholarship the Trinity becomes a type of Christology. The counter reaction to the supposed resistance to contemplating the inner life of God is to anchor the doctrine of the Trinity solely in salvation history, and this becomes the basis for a Trinitarian revival in the West. Sonderegger conveys this well:

> these theologians [Barth and Rahner] and their descendants do not shun altogether the inner Life of God or simply refuse to discuss – "speculate" about it. Rather, Barth and Rahner *identify* the Immanent Trinity with the Economic so that the God encountered in Holy Writ just *is* the Eternal, Holy, and Living God. The Triune Lord is the God of our salvation[333].

Unlike most systematic theologians on the Trinity in the late 20th century, Zizioulas does not use Rahner's axiom in his work. However, considering that Zizioulas places an emphasis on communion as the means of the revelation and participation in the life of the Trinity in Christ, the question arises whether Zizioulas' notion of communion compromises the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, in the same way as Rahner's axiom.

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[333] Sonderegger, II, p. xvii.

This is a claim made by Paul Molnar against Zizioulas. Molnar argues that Zizioulas' use of communion establishes the 'primacy of communion over revelation',[334] and that therefore Zizioulas compromises the freedom of grace where

> revelation is precisely our inclusion in the event of fellowship (communion) that is internal to God made possible by God's free action ad extra in the history of Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit[335].

For Molnar, the notion of communion displaces 'God's miraculous (and thus incomprehensible) action in the present as the *sole* support on which theology takes its stand'.[336] Indeed, Molnar goes as far to state that 'revelation itself is subordinated to communion'.[337] In chapter 9, 'Koinonia as participation in the totus Christus', I answer Molnar's claim made against Zizioulas' conception of communion on the grounds that communion is not a reality in itself instead it is rooted in Christ's gift of himself. Revelation is not therefore necessitated by communion, rather revelation is grounded in the free action of God in Christ and the Spirit.

But the problem evident here is that because Alan Torrance, LaCugna and others have drawn from Zizioulas, who have allowed communion to become a predicate of God's self revelation, critics like Molnar confuse Zizioulas' work with those who make liberal use of Rahner's axiom. So to examine the work expected from Rahner's axiom by Social Trinitarian theologians, requires an examination of Social Trinitarian concerns. Moltmann, Alan Torrance, etc make use of Rahner's axiom to challenge God as a single subject[338]. But Molnar questions the use of Rahner's axiom by LaCugna and Torrance and asks:

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[334] Paul Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 445.
[335] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 446.
[336] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 448.
[337] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 449.
[338] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 447.

> Where is the necessary distinction between the immanent self-expression of God in freedom and his free action ad extra here? Both are clearly blended together in the thought of LaCugna, so that the overflowing nature of God coalesces with creation, incarnation and redemption. The freedom of grace is lost … LaCugna's failure to distinguish the immanent and economic Trinity marks Torrance's belief that God's expressive nature *needs* to be completed in bringing humanity to participate in the life of God[339].

For Molnar, the identification of *theologia* and *oikonomia* leads to an inability, implicit to Social Trinitarian revivals, to distinguish God's life *in se* from 'our life with each other'.[340] LaCugna's claim of one *perichoretic* life in God with creation fails to distinguish 'God's eternal perichoretic relations from God's relation with us'[341].

The question to be considered is whether Rahner's axiom is compatible with Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology, and his conception of freedom. Indeed, there are questions to be raised as to whether his understanding of communion equates to Rahner's axiom, as Molnar suggests. It is the position of this thesis that Zizioulas raises similar objections to the use of Rahner's axiom in Social Trinitarianism that Molnar raises; and thus further examination will demonstrate that Zizioulas believes that Rahner's axiom compromises the freedom of the immanent Trinity.

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[339] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 108.
[340] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 10.
[341] Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 12.

5.3 ***Apparent agreement between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians on the problem of Trinitarian neglect***

An apparent agreement between Zizioulas and those who advocate a social doctrine of the Trinity on the problem of the neglect of the Trinity in the West does not entail an actual agreement on the nature of the problem. This is especially the case when Zizioulas' nexus of questions and answers are considered in relation to those who advocate a social doctrine of the Trinity. Karen Kilby argues that this narrative of neglect (and its solution) is an identifying feature for those who postulate social theories of the Trinity: it was a narrative especially popular during the emergence of social theories of the Trinity during the 1980s and 1990s

> the consensus is that the Trinity is at the heart of Christianity, and both theology and piety have gone astray if it is regarded as belonging to the specialists. A retrieval (it is believed) is needed: the Trinity must be understood once again (one reads) as a positive and central element in the Christian faith[342].

It would appear that those who argue for a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas agree since Zizioulas agrees with Rahner's diagnosis of the neglect of the doctrine of the Trinity in the West. In particular, Zizioulas repeats the long repeated claim made by Rahner that Trinitarian theology is decidedly absent from the devotional life of Christians[343]. As Rahner claims:

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[342] Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', p. 432.
[343] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 4.

> Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere "monotheists". We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged.[344]

Indeed, Zizioulas appears to agree on the resultant problem this had for scholastic theology. This problem is closely linked to the de Régnon paradigm, where it is claimed that the 'Augustinian-Western conception of the Trinity'[345] approaches the Trinity in terms of a unity of essence 'it begins with the one God, the one divine essence as a whole, and only *afterwards* does it see God as three in persons'.[346] By contrast Rahner claims that 'the Bible and the Greeks would have us start from the one unoriginate God, who is already *Father* even when nothing is known as yet about generation and spiration'.[347] We shall examine Zizioulas' use of the de Régnon paradigm, and historical challenges to this narrative, in another chapter[348].

The point made by Rahner is that for scholastic theology an Augustinian-Western Trinitarian theology created the conditions for considering a treatise on one God before considering a treatise on God as triune. That by the High Middle ages the treatises 'on the One God' could be considered distinctly from treatises 'On the Triune God'.[349] The treatise on the One God considers the unicity of the divine essence in a philosophical and abstract concept distinct from salvation history. The chief problem for Trinitarian theology was the continued tendency to

> treat the doctrine of the Trinity as a secondary aspect of the *one God*, whilst the unfortunate separation between academic theology and the ordinary liturgical and devotional life of the

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[344] Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 10–11.
[345] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 17.
[346] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 17.
[347] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 17.
[348] See Chapter 7: 'On the Person (2): Zizioulas' interpretation of personhood in his critique in the West'
[349] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 16. Interestingly, Rahner claims this distinction did not occur until St.Thomas Aquinas. Unlike Peter Lombard who subsumed the one God under the treatise of the Trinity.

> Church was making it impossible for Trinitarian theology to bear any relationship whatsoever to the ordinary life of the people, at least in a conscious way[350].

Thus, it is alleged that Christian monotheism could be considered without considering the doctrine of the Trinity. Rahner makes a bold historical claim, and it is not in the remit of this thesis to subject it to historical scrutiny. However, Rahner does maintain that this separation of treatises manifested itself in neo-scholastic theology, and thus his concerns were not historical per se, but pertained to theological concerns about contemporary Catholic theology. Likewise, Zizioulas claims that this problem replicated itself in the Orthodox Church's 'Babylonian captivity'[351] to a scholastic manualist style of theology present in Androutsos and Trembelas[352]. In our chapter on Zizioulas' principle questions, I identify that Zizioulas sought to ameliorate any influence of neo-scholastic theology upon Greek Orthodox education, and that the chief strategy he devised was to identify the centrality of the Trinity to Patristic and traditional Orthodox thought.

This could be seen to be a strong indication that Zizioulas argues for a Social Trinity. However, I argue that the agreement between the Social Trinitarian theologians and Zizioulas on the problem of Trinitarian neglect is only surface deep. Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology demonstrates the ontological importance of maintaining the monarchy of the Father for the Church's divine-human communion. In contrast to Zizioulas, Social Trinitarian theologies are generally directed against conceiving of God as a monarchical subject, whether this is primarily through a metaphysics of substance, an absolute subject, or maintaining the monarchy of the Father[353].

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[350] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 4.
[351] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.
[352] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 4. See chapter 8 on Zizioulas' principle questions
[353] However, LaCugna and Moltmann do acknowledge the monarchy of the Father but only as it agrees with a perichoretic conception of God. AJ Torrance, Volf and Gunton negate the monarchy of the Father and instead attribute monarchia to the intra-triune relations themselves. See chapter 4.

5.4 ***The problems addressed by Social Trinitarianism: Problems related to modalism and Monarchianism latent to God as Absolute Subject.***

Social Trinitarian theologians utilise Rahner's axiom to demonstrate the immediate relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is because through Rahner's axiom the economy of salvation is linked directly with the Trinity; and this is seen to challenge a monarchical concept of God presented by the immanent Trinity and which is postulated as a concept which stands apart from the economic Trinity. Rahner's axiom is seen to resolve the problem posed by a remote and sovereign God, and the neglect of Trinitarian doctrine in the West, through uniting that God intimately with the story of salvation in creation.

Upon examination of the historical emergence of social doctrines of the Trinity in the late 20th century, the use of Rahner's axiom by Social Trinitarian theologians emerges as a counter reaction to the affirmation of the immanent Trinity as central to the notion of God as *absolute subject* in Karl Barth which Social Trinitarians see as perpetuating modalism in contrast to a social approach inherent to a Greek Patristic approach. LaCugna summarises this position well:

> Barth equated the divine essence revealed in these three modes of being with God's sovereignty or Lordship. The result is a form of modalism; whether this modalism is Sabellian could be debated. In any case, Barth's view is a hybrid of the Latin theology of the Trinity in which one divine substance exists in three person, and the idea of God as Absolute Subject who exists under the aspects of self-differentiation and self-recollection. Despite his emphasis on the divine persons as modes of being, Barth's view is quite different from the way Greek theology understands the relationship between personhood and being. For Barth, the essence of God is uni-personal[354].

[354] LaCugna, p. 252.

Barth becomes a prime target for Social Trinitarians because he emphasises God as absolute subject. Barth uses the argument that the eternal differentiation in the Trinity is derived from the self-revelation of God; as Pannenberg describes 'God is *subject* as well as *object* of his self-revelation, and also the *act* of revelation itself'.[355] The purpose of this thesis is not to agree with this perception of Barth, or to assess the accuracy of claims made against Barth, as this is beyond the scope of this thesis, but rather to acknowledge that the criticism of Barth is a catalyst for the formulation of social doctrines of the Trinity, especially in Moltmann, LaCugna and Pannenberg[356]. The problem attributed to Barth, and thus in conceiving of God as an absolute subject is that it leads to modalism:

> first that is not based on any explicit pronouncement in the Scriptures, and secondly that this concept of God represents not so much a Trinitarian as a modalist monotheism, because the three modes of self-consciousness have no personal subsistence in their relations with each other[357].

The Social Trinitarians denigrate the notion of God which stands apart from creation and communicates itself as a singular absolute subject. Although, Barth and Rahner are credited by Social Trinitarians for reaffirming the centrality of the Trinity to theology. The Social Trinitarians criticised Barth and Rahner for conceiving God as an absolute subject; and it was a way of moving beyond the significant influence of Barth and Rahner on Trinitarian theology.

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[355] Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Divine Economy and Eternal Trinity', in *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), pp. 79–87 (p. 80).
[356] See chapter on monarchy of the Father and perichoresis for an expansion on this claim
[357] Pannenberg, p. 80.

Understanding this issue is important because Barth's and Rahner's objection to the use of *person,* and to regard the 'modes of being'[358] or 'manner of subsistence'[359] as absolute subject became a point of contention for Moltmann and subsequent Social Trinitarians, and thus an impetus for arguing for a Social Trinity. Social Trinitarians perceive that the subsuming of personhood to 'mode of being'[360] or 'distinct manners of subsisting'[361] is not a good way to translate *hypostasis*; instead they see it as vindicating their view that the doctrine of the Trinity in the West had become modalistic, and focussed on the concept of divine monarchy at the expense of Trinitarian relationality. As Moltmann writes

> Rahner's idealistic modalism leads back again from the doctrine of the Trinity to the Christian monotheism of "the one unique essence, the singularity of a one, single consciousness and of a single liberty of the God" who is present in the innermost centre of existence "of an individual person". Here, the absolute subjectivity of God becomes the archetypal image of the mystic subjectivity of the person who withdraws into himself and transcends himself, that "self-possessing, self-disposing centre of action which is separate from others[362].

This absolute subjectivity of God is identified as particularly problematic by Moltmann because it is alleged to 'obscure the history of the Father, Son and the Spirit to which the bible testifies, by making this the external illustration of that inner experience. Is there really any "greater danger" than this "modalism"?'[363] Moltmann challenges Barth's singular absolute subject, he writes

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[358] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God. I/1.*, ed. by G.W Bromiley and T.F Torrance, trans. by G.W Bromiley (London: T&T Clark, 1975), p. 359.
[359] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 117.
[360] Barth, p. 255.
[361] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. by Joseph Donceel (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns and Oates, 1986), p. 113.
[362] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 148.
[363] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 148.

'the reduction of the Trinity to a single identical subject (even if the subject is a threefold one) does not do justice to the Trinitarian history of God'[364]. The primary problem for Moltmann in the Western tradition was a perennial monarchical conception of God, and he alleges that this concept of God was perpetuated by Nicene Trinitarianism. For Moltmann, the issues at stake are not heresies such as Arianism or Sabellianism but two issues which he attributes to the Nicene Creed itself which are rooted in 'the concept of monarchy'[365] . These issues are first 'the monarchy of the Father within the Trinity'[366], and second 'the extra-Trinitarian divine monarchy over the world'[367].

The ultimate problem which Barth posed is related to the problem that a modern conception of personality poses to the Trinity. Barth writes that he avoids the term person because it is either an obscure Medieval and Patristic technicality irrelevant to a contemporary context, or that 'what is called personality in the conceptual vocabulary of the 19th century is distinguished from the patristic and medieval *persona* by the addition of the attribute of self-consciousness'[368]. Thus, for Barth the term person loses all meaning with regard to the Trinity.

But for Moltmann the problem lies with Barth's solution to the problem by identifying God as an absolute self-revealing subjectivity as modes of being. It is a distinctly modern conception of God using a philosophical concept which he claims was alien to the pre-Nicene tradition; and which is indicative of the historical Western Trinitarian tendency to conceive of God not as three persons but as a singular 'supreme substance'[369].

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[364] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 157.
[365] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 148.
[366] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 148.
[367] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 148.
[368] Barth, p. 357.
[369] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 10. See our chapter on Monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis for a discussion on how Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians regard Western theology as reducing God to substance. See also our chapter on Zizioulas' reading of Augustine.

5.5 ***The Social Trinitarian solution is to reunify theologia and oikonomia through a perichoretic conception of the Trinity***

A social doctrine of the Trinity was formulated to ameliorate both of the problems perceived in a Western conception of the Trinity. The problem regarding the monarchy of the Father is argued to be resolved through perichoresis, and the divine monarchy over the world is argued to be resolved through appropriating Rahner's axiom.

Rather than reifying divine substance or absolute subjectivity, Moltmann instead advocates the communal relationships between the divine persons, as distinct subjects, played out through salvation history. In so doing, he develops another key feature of later Social Trinitarianism, namely the identification of the Trinity with soteriological history, 'the history in which Jesus is manifested as "the Son" is not consummated and fulfilled by a single subject. The history of Christ is already related in Trinitarian terms in the New Testament itself'.[370]

LaCugna and Moltmann believe that a Social Trinity is a restoration to a Trinitarian theology that existed prior to the Nicene tradition. According to both LaCugna and Moltmann, the pre-Nicene Church did not speculate on the nature and essence of the immanent Trinity but gave form to the doctrine of the Trinity to articulate God's relation to creation. It is claimed that the pre-Nicene Church's 'central preoccupation of the Christian doctrine of God'[371] is not on the immanent Trinity but 'the encounter between divine and human persons in the economy of redemption'.[372]

It is alleged that the problem of neglect of the doctrine of the Trinity in the West was due to a concern with speculative Trinitarian metaphysics, and this led to an ontologically monistic conception of God. Moltmann believes that the solution is to challenge the notion of the Trinity as 'supreme substance'[373] and reunify the immanent and economic Trinity. Likewise, LaCugna's

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[370] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 64.
[371] LaCugna, p. 243.
[372] LaCugna, p. 243.
[373] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 2.

projects seeks to reintegrate the union between *theologia* and *oikonomia* by reconsidering the Trinity as persons in communion. In the introduction to chapter eight she outlines her project which is:

> to integrate the insights of Greek and Latin Trinitarian traditions with the categories of modern thought, this chapter develops an ontology of relation, a description of what it means to be a person and to exist as persons in communion[374].

LaCugna 'draws on the foregoing discussion of Macmurray's philosophy, Zizioulas' neopatristic Synthesis, feminist theology and Latin American Liberation theology'[375] to develop a notion of persons in communion which constitutes her Trinitarian theology. However, LaCugna does draw on Zizioulas for inspiration but this does not entail that Zizioulas maintains the same conception of Trinitarian nature.

The key difference between Zizioulas and LaCugna lies with communion not describing intra-Trinitarian personal communion but a singular communion between creation and the triune persons. For the Social Trinitarians, Trinitarian communion is transposed from God *in se* towards communion as it transpires in salvation history. Like Moltmann, LaCugna holds that the communion between God and creation brings the triune persons together in a perichoretic union, thus there is no distinction between God *in se* and *ad extra* as the two are identified with each other 'an immanent Trinitarian theology of God is nothing more than a theology of the economy of salvation'.[376] It is open to question whether LaCugna makes God's nature *in se* dependent on salvation history, but it is apparent that LaCugna believes that the Trinitarian doctrine is a summarizing concept for God's action *ad extra* in salvation history. Instead, LaCugna argues that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be considered unrelated to the world but is 'legitimate only when

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[374] LaCugna, p. 243.
[375] LaCugna, p. 288.
[376] LaCugna, p. 224.

the economic doctrine of the Trinity deals with God's history with [humanity], and the immanent doctrine of the Trinity is its summarizing concept'.[377] It is irrelevant to consider God's inner life because LaCugna maintains 'the Trinitarian life is also our life'.[378] God's expression *ad extra* is part of the one divine life into which Christians are incorporated. LaCugna identifies God's life with *perichoresis*, not the separation between God *in se* and God *ad extra*. Just as God is constituted by the mutual indwelling of the triune persons, human persons are incorporated into God's 'life of communion and indwelling, God in us, and we in God, all of us in each other'.[379] But crucially for LaCugna this *perichoresis* does not merely pertain to God *in se* but as the

> divine life as all creatures partake and literally exist in it … Everything comes from God, and everything returns to God, through Christ in the Spirit. The *exitus* and *reditus* is the choreography of the divine dance which takes place from all eternity and is manifest at every moment in creation. There are not two sets of communion- one among the divine persons, the other among human persons… the one *perichoresis*, the one mystery of communion includes God and humanity as beloved partners in the dance[380].

Moltmann makes a similar argument in not distinguishing the history of God *in se* from the history of God *ad extra*, in that the

> history of God's Trinitarian relationships of fellowship corresponds to the eternal perichoresis of the Father, Son and the Spirit. For this Trinitarian history is nothing other

[377] LaCugna, p. 224.
[378] LaCugna, p. 228.
[379] LaCugna, p. 228.
[380] LaCugna, p. 274.

> than the eternal perichoresis of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their dispensation of salvation[381].

Moltmann challenges Barth's singular absolute subject, he writes 'the reduction of the Trinity to a single identical subject (even if the subject is a threefold one) does not do justice to the Trinitarian history of God'[382]. He instead advocates the communal relationships between the divine persons, as distinct subjects, played out through salvation history. In so doing, he develops another key feature of later Social Trinitarianism, namely the identification of the Trinity with soteriological history, 'the history in which Jesus is manifested as "the Son" is not consummated and fulfilled by a single subject. The history of Christ is already related in Trinitarian terms in the New Testament itself'.[383] Moltmann views 'the doctrine of the Trinity less as a statement about the eternal nature of God apart from the world than as a retelling of the history of God viewed as the history of the communal relationships of the three divine persons'[384] a history which culminates in Christ's death upon the cross, 'in the cross, the Father and Son are most deeply separated in forsakenness and at the same time are most inwardly one in their surrender. What proceeds from this event between the Father and the Son is the Spirit'.[385] Moltmann argues that through the eschatological realisation of history the Trinity comes into unity. The New Testament is the foundation for Trinitarian doctrine revealed upon the cross

> in that case the doctrine of the Trinity is no longer an exorbitant and impractical speculation about God, but is nothing other than a shorter version of the passion narrative

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[381] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 157.
[382] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 157.
[383] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 64.
[384] Stanley Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), p. 75.
[385] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. by R.A Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 244.

of Christ in its significance for the eschatological freedom of faith and life of oppressed nature[386].

Moltmann was among the first to formulate a social doctrine of the Trinity, and for him there is an implicit union between the immanent and the economic Trinity, and in so doing believed that he was recovering the early church's teaching on God prior to the rise of speculative theology.

5.6 Zizioulas' objections to Rahner's axiom

It is significant that Zizioulas directs his criticism of Rahner's axiom not at Rahner but to the use of Rahner's axiom in a Trinitarian revival in 20th century Trinitarian theology, in particular by Moltmann and LaCugna. This is significant because Zizioulas rarely engages with what I have termed Social Trinitarian theology and when he does so it is critically. Zizioulas' engagement with Social Trinitarian theology focusses on two key areas. First, on the importance of the 'Father as Cause' in an essay of the same name[387]. In this essay, Zizioulas addresses the criticisms brought against his ontology by Alan Torrance and Colin Gunton, presuming, of course, whether Social Trinitarianism is suitable nomenclature for them either[388]. Zizioulas also contributes to working out an ontological vision of personhood in two polygraphs with Colin Gunton and Christoph Schwöbel.[389]

The second area focusses on Rahner's axiom. The essay, *Doctrine of God the Trinity Today* (1991)[390] was originally published for the British Council of Churches to discuss the WCC's faith

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[386] Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, p. 246.
[387] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause'. We have addressed the issue on Zizioulas on the monarchy of the Father in chapter 4.
[388] We address the dispute between Father as Cause and Perichoresis as cause in chapter 4
[389] John Zizioulas, 'On Being a Person. The Ontology of Personhood.', in *Persons, Divine and Human. King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology.*, ed. by Colin Gunton and Christoph Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), pp. 33–47.
[390] John Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study', in *The Forgotten Trinity: 3 A Selection of Papers Presented to the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today*, ed. by Alaisdair Heron (London: BCC Inter-Church House, 1991), pp. 19–33.

and order study, '*Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*' (1981). It was written at a time when advocating a Social Trinity was a prevalent approach to Trinitarian doctrine in ecumenical dialogue. Zizioulas uses the emergent approach to the Trinity in the Orthodox neopatristic synthesis to challenge the problematic tendencies he perceives to be at work in the *Social Trinitarian* approach to the Trinity, in particular he focuses on Rahner's axiom. Zizioulas offers a challenge to the use of Rahner's axiom, and Zizioulas identifies his targets as those theologians representative of Social Trinitarianism, listing in particular Moltmann and Pannenberg. Notably, he identifies two particular problematic axioms in Pannenberg, namely his claim that 'we must constantly link the Trinity in the eternal essence of God to his historical revelation'[391] and Moltmann's understanding of the economic Trinity as 'nothing other than the eternal perichoresis of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their dispensation of salvation'[392]. In a later text, *Trinitarian Freedom* (2012)[393], Zizioulas also attributes this view to Catherine LaCugna.[394]

The fact that Zizioulas engages with Moltmann, Pannenberg, and LaCugna on the issue of Rahner's axiom is significant. It is significant because it reveals that Zizioulas has different priorities to those Social Trinitarian theologians who utilise Rahner's axiom in their own work. It is not an issue of mere disagreement but fundamental difference. The difference between Zizioulas and Social Trinitarian theologians on Rahner's axioms reveals that the Social Trinitarian theologians and Zizioulas are working on distinct projects which cannot be identified with each other.

Social Trinitarian theologians utilise Rahner's axiom to demonstrate the immediate relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity since the economy of salvation is directly linked with the Trinity; and this is seen to challenge a monarchical conception of God postulated by the immanent Trinity as a concept which stands apart from the economic Trinity. Rahner's axiom is seen to

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[391] Pannenberg, I, p. 328.
[392] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 157.
[393] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom'.
[394] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 204.

resolve the problem posed by a remote and sovereign God by uniting that God intimately with the story of salvation in creation. In comparison to Zizioulas' theology, this is a false problem. Those who follow Moltmann in postulating a Social Trinity seek to create a representative doctrine of the Trinity. That is, the doctrine of the Trinity is expected to carry a heavy burden for embodying idealised applicable relationships for created realities. The suggested strategy is to represent a relational, and perichoretic Trinity which is closely related to creation by virtue of its non-hierarchical and relational being.

By contrast, Zizioulas is not concerned with a representational doctrine of the Trinity. God's mode of being is not the basis for an idealised model of human and created relationships in the divine image. Instead, Zizioulas is concerned with divine-human communion as gifted in the persons of Christ and the Spirit. Zizioulas is concerned with maintaining the transcendence of God in order to maintain the absolute free sovereign nature of God, which is necessary for Zizioulas' conception of theôsis. Zizioulas' priority to maintain divine freedom is therefore incompatible with the Social Trinitarian aim to identify God's immanent nature with the economic Trinity, and vice versa.

I do not believe that Zizioulas sees himself as contributing to a Social Trinitarian revival. Where Zizioulas does engage with these theologians there is an evident distinction between Social Trinitarianism and Zizioulas' neopatristic synthesis. Zizioulas' aim is to engage in ecumenical dialogue with contemporary Western approaches to the Trinity, and to use the neopatristic synthesis to provide the basis for such an engagement. In this engagement, Zizioulas demonstrates that he shares some of the same concerns about the nature of Trinitarian doctrine in the West with Social Trinitarianism without sharing the same answers to those problems. Or to express it in another way, Zizioulas acknowledges that the alleged neglect of the Trinity in the West is a problem but because he expects a different function from the doctrine of the Trinity to the Social Trinitarian theologians Zizioulas disagrees with them on the basis of their use of Rahner's axiom.

Instead, Zizioulas roots the doctrine of the Trinity in the 'realism of the divine-human communion in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit'.[395] His aim is to establish dialogue with what he describes as 'modern Western theology'[396] using the presuppositions of contemporary Orthodox theology, and does so in particular by articulating the importance of theôsis. At the time of publication, a relational turn was the predominant voice in contemporary Western Trinitarian theology, and he therefore directs his work in dialogue with such theologians. He does not, however, formulate a social doctrine of the Trinity in collaboration with the Western theologians he identifies.

Whilst Zizioulas may agree with the problem that the West has neglected the Trinity he disagrees with the solution posed to that problem by those who advocate a social doctrine of the Trinity. For Zizioulas, the primary problem with Rahner's axiom is that it compromises the transcendence of God because it makes the doctrine of the Trinity an 'indispensable part of human experience' which ties God's existence with history and is thus 'essentially a return to the classical monistic view of existence according to which the being of God and the being of the world are inseparably linked up in some kind of affinity'.[397]

5.6.1 *Rahner's axiom compromises divine freedom by ontologising God's actions ad extra*

Zizioulas' critique of Rahner's axiom reveals a complete difference in priorities between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. In the first instance, it is important to identify a key difference in the way that Zizioulas' conceives of communion from the Social Trinitarian conception of God's relation to creation. Moltmann and LaCugna establish a perichoretic unity between God

[395] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 2.
[396] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study', p. fn.19.
[397] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.

and creation. Zizioulas does not. Instead, *otherness* between divinity and creation is a key concept. The Social Trinitarians are content to compromise the immanent Trinity, but for Zizioulas this doctrine is essential to maintain the freedom of God. Which is his priority. Zizioulas is suspicious of the terms immanent and economic Trinity and their identification in salvation history. Indeed, he suspects that Moltmann's treatment of the Trinity as an 'indispensable part of human experience'[398] is indicative of 'modern man's'[399] inability to operate with the notion of transcendence.

This assessment sets the tone for Zizioulas' criticism of 'in Rahner's terms, the Economic Trinity is the Immanent Trinity and vice versa, the Immanent Trinity is the Economic Trinity'.[400] Zizioulas objects to the underlying logic of this identification which entails that what is encountered of God in history is evident as indispensable to God's eternal being. Zizioulas agrees with the first clause of Rahner's axiom that 'the Economic Trinity is the Immanent Trinity' because without the identification of the immanent and economic Trinity God's self-revelation as Trinity would be partial, and humanity would be unable to participate in divine-human communion. The God who is revealed in Christ and through the Spirit is God the Holy Trinity, the eternal taxis of Father, Son and Spirit. God is indeed revealed through the divine economy, and it is on the basis of His self-revelation that humanity can come into communion with God.

However, Zizioulas disagrees with the second clause that 'the Immanent Trinity is the Economic Trinity'. According to Zizioulas, divine freedom is not possible in the 'Rahnerian equation between the immanent and the economic Trinity, nor of the Moltmannian "crucified God"'[401]. The revelation of God cannot be bound by any 'logical or ontological necessity'.[402]

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[398] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 8.
[399] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 8.
[400] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 8.
[401] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.
[402] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 205.

The ontological necessity inherent to Rahner's axiom, in Zizioulas' view, is seen first in the tendency to identify the immanent and economic Trinity because it confuses 'act with being in God'.[403] The actions of God cannot be identified with God's personal properties, or with any particular hypostasis as all God's actions are not only common to the three hypostases of the Trinity, what Zizioulas calls the 'unity of *opera ad intra*',[404] but are the result of God's freedom. Each Trinitarian person may act in a particular way in the divine economy, but they are not bound by those actions as personal properties. As Zizioulas argues, 'these activities *ad extra* were freely undertaken and applied by the Trinitarian persons and not dictated by their ontological "mode of being"'[405].

If the persons of the Trinity are identified with their acts 'one binds God's hypostatic properties to certain activities which thus become ontological'.[406] Therefore, Zizioulas argues that the identification between the immanent and economic Trinity is 'essentially nothing but a return to the classical monistic view of existence according to which the being of God and the being of the world are inseparably linked up in some kind of affinity'[407].

According to the Greek Fathers (such as Irenaeus) monism challenged the 'absolute ontological freedom of God'.[408] Indeed, the significance of the Greek Fathers for Zizioulas is that they formulated the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* to demonstrate the transcendence of God from creation otherwise Trinitarian theology would relapse into ontological monism; Rahner's axiom is a return to the very monism which the Greek Fathers abrogated. If the economic and immanent Trinity are identified completely with one another then it ties God's being with the divine economy in creation, and thus negates the importance placed on *creatio ex nihilo* for maintaining God's transcendence and divine sovereignty by the Patristic tradition:

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[403] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 205.
[404] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 205.
[405] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 205.
[406] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 205.
[407] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.
[408] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.

> they [the Fathers] produced the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* precisely in order to show that God existed *before* and *regardless of* the world, and thus that is imperative to be able to refer to God without implicitly or explicitly referring, at the same time, to the world[409].

Rahner's axiom compromises divine freedom since whatever occurs in the divine economy is determined by what God is by nature. Therefore, God is unable freely to reveal himself, but would instead be compelled to by nature. This is a return to the problem Florovsky identified with determinism, since God is compelled to reveal himself in the second person of the Trinity this means that God is not truly free[410]. In another essay, Zizioulas defends this point by distinguishing between the two terms *participation* (metaxê) and *communion* (koinônia)[411]. God's communion with creation does not entail that God participates in creation. Zizioulas claims that Athanasius made this distinction to show that, 'participation [μεταχη] was used for creatures in their relation with God, and never for God in his relation to creation'.[412] Creation is dependent upon God for its existence, 'this is truth as *communion by participation* (as compared with God, who is truth as *communion without participation*)'[413].

5.6.2 *Rahner's axiom ontologises kenosis and introduces suffering into the immanent Trinity*

Moltmann's perichoretic Trinity combined with Rahner's axiom: 'the Economic Trinity is the Immanent Trinity and vice versa' means that the incarnation is projected into God's eternal

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409 Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.
410 Paul Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 82.
411 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 94.
412 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 94.
413 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 94.

being: 'he becomes suffering by nature'.[414] The problem for Zizioulas is that the link between God's internal essence or being with historical revelation introduces kenosis/suffering into God's inner and eternal being. In that the incarnation becomes projected into divine being, the kenotic pouring in Christ within salvation history becomes part of God's essence.

Zizioulas agrees that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, that to behold the Son on the cross is to behold the triune Son crucified, but to reverse that axiom entails the introduction of the suffering act of Christ on the cross into the being of God. That God becomes *kenotic* by the compulsion of nature rather than free election through the Incarnation. This is linked to Zizioulas' objection to the use of *perichoresis* being used to define the nature of God. Zizioulas argues that the link between this notion of perichoresis, combined with Rahner's axiom, undermines the Gospel of hope for humanity as God becomes unable to transcend suffering. For if suffering exists within the being of God humanity has no hope of transcending suffering through participating in divine-human communion and becoming the image and likeness of God.

5.7 Conclusion

Zizioulas disagrees with those who uphold Rahner's axiom because it is not compatible with the priorities which Zizioulas' places upon divine freedom. The importance of divine freedom is essential for Zizioulas' understanding of theôsis made possible in the incarnation. It is apparent that this disagreement is rooted in a fundamental difference between the claims made by those who argue for Rahner's axiom, because their priority is upon ameliorating the perceived remoteness of speculative theology on the immanent Trinity by arguing for a reconceived conception of the Trinity in which the triune God is intimately tied to the divine economy of salvation. Zizioulas and Social Trinitarian theologians are merely purporting different answers to different questions. Rahner is concerned with amending problems in Neo-Scholasticism by a

[414] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 204.

patristic ressourcement in Catholic education. Moltmann and LaCugna wish to emphasise the immanence of God's being as Trinitarian in creation. Zizioulas emphasises divine-human communion but in which *otherness* and divine freedom are axiomatic and thus does not use the language of *theologia* and *oikonomia* to convey divine-human communion in the same way as those who postulate Rahner's axiom. In our examination of Zizioulas, it is important to be guided by his concerns, rather than by the concerns of those who utilise his work. Quotations from his work need to be rooted in his local concerns. His primary concern is to articulate theôsis as central to the Church. Unlike his Social Trinitarian interlocutors he is not seeking a representative Trinitarian theology which embodies Trinitarian koinonia as representative of a model for an idealised vision of creation.

CHAPTER 6. ON THE PERSON (1): A CONSIDERATION OF THE CHARGE THAT ZIZIOULAS PROJECTS PHILOSOPHICAL PERSONALISM ONTO CAPPADOCIAN TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Zizioulas' theological anthropology has been misinterpreted as establishing the person as imago trinitatis by virtue of embodying a perfect, or even imperfect, image of divine communion. Zizioulas does not establish the Trinity as a perfect projection of a relational human personhood drawn from philosophy. Rather, if we are to do justice to Zizioulas' theological anthropology it should be acknowledged that *imago trinitatis* is a misleading phrase. It would be more suitable to understand that Zizioulas argues that a human person through communion *'becomes Christ'*[415]; Jesus expresses the image of the invisible God, and a human persons becomes Christ through participation in the Church which is the mystical body of Christ who is the mediator for human persons so that a human person may come to participate in the life of communion of the Trinity. Farrow articulates this point well

> Now I do not wish to withdraw from the term 'deification'. Nor do I wish to argue against the notion that humanity, fully achieved, is ecclesial, or that ecclesial humanity is *imago trinitatis*. But I do think we must stop short of identifying human personhood, or human catholicity, or the ecclesial mode of being, as a form of divine perichoresis[416].

Human persons in communion do not come to embody a divine perichoresis in which a human person comes to indwell in other human persons; rather a human person in Christ participates in the filial relationship that Christ has with the Father and thus participates, through

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[415] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[416] Douglas Farrow, 'Person and Nature. The Necessity-Freedom Dialectic in John Zizioulas', in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. by Douglas Knight (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 109–24 (p. 118).

the Spirit and in Christ, in the freedom that belongs to the hypostasis of the Father. Zizioulas articulates the doctrine of adoption in which human beings come to participate in the mode of being of the Trinity and exist as free, unique, and irreducible persons.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that theologians, if they are concerned with truth, should discern what a theologian is attempting to do in their arguments before ascribing a particular position to them. Much of the controversy surrounding Zizioulas' ecclesiology lies in the interpretation of how Zizioulas relates the Trinity to the Church. In this controversy the question is asked whether for Zizioulas the Trinity is a paradigm for the koinônia of the Church[417], a reality which the Church "images" as a parallel reality. Consequently, it is also alleged that in his Trinitarian doctrine Zizioulas maintains that the Trinity is a paradigm for human personhood. But a personhood which is derived from philosophical personalism rather than patristic theology.

In this debate, the emphasis which Zizioulas places upon the person in Trinitarian theology has led some of his critics to claim that Zizioulas misinterprets the Greek Patristic tradition, treats personhood univocally, and 'ends up using modern insights of person which he then tries to foist on the Cappadocian Fathers'[418]. Such criticisms accord well with those who criticise Social Trinitarianism and identify Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian because it is congruent with the criticism that

> it is not just that as it happens social theories of the Trinity often project our ideals onto God. Rather it is built into the kind of project that most social theories are involved in that they have to be projectionist[419].

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[417] John Behr believes that Zizioulas conceives of the Trinity as a paradigm for communion in the Church, in that the Church *reflects* the Trinitarian communion and so juxtaposes the Trinity and the Church, cf. John Behr. 2003. 'The Trinitarian Being of the Church' in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly,* 48: 1, pp.67-88. See our discussion of this issue in our chapter, 'The Church as Image of the Trinity (2)'.

[418] Lucian Turcescu, '"Person" versus "Individual", and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa', in *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. by Sarah Coakley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), pp. 97–111 (p. 98).

[419] Kilby, 'Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity', p. 441.

This chapter shall argue that this argument is a misreading of Zizioulas' work. Such criticisms can be applied to many Social Trinitarian theologies. However, Zizioulas does not argue for a Social Trinity and therefore there is a need for a reparative reading of his theology of personhood.

It is particularly interesting that such criticisms of Zizioulas arise predominantly from his Orthodox contemporaries. Orthodox theology in the twentieth century has been marked by the dominance of the neopatristic synthesis; following the turn of the century a certain opposition to the emphasis placed on personhood has emerged. This criticism has taken a particular opposition to the dialogue Zizioulas has established with philosophy. But such criticisms tend to examine his personalism exclusively in terms of ontology, with a focus on its attending terminology (such as *ousia, hypostasis*, *atomon* etc), and they tend to associate Zizioulas with existentialism.

This chapter argues that they do so at the expense of locating Zizioulas' arguments on the person in the broader horizon of his arguments on theôsis, salvation, participation in Christ and the Spirit, and the sacraments of the Church. As Papanikolaou claims:

> The real issue, then, is not whether he has been influenced by modern personalism but whether a Trinitarian theology that affirms the monarchy of the Father is the only way to ground a personal ontology, and whether such an ontology does correctly and justify the various modern, philosophical understandings of personhood[420].

Zizioulas' arguments are primarily an articulation of theological anthropology as theôsis, which is fully integrated with his ecclesiology, and he claims that such an anthropology has the potential to address philosophical questions. However, this chapter also argues that this is a potential which is largely unrealised in Zizioulas' own works. For these reasons, this chapter shall argue that if we are

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[420] Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu', *Modern Theology*, 20.4 (2004), 601–7 (p. 605).

to do justice to Zizioulas' arguments on human personhood his dialogue with philosophy needs to be integrated with his arguments on theôsis as Christification.

6.1 A review of the arguments on personalism brought against Zizioulas

There are numerous Orthodox theologians[421] who criticise Zizioulas for integrating philosophical personalism with Orthodox theology, prominent amongst such criticisms, and with a particular relevance to our project of distinguishing Zizioulas from Social Trinitarianism, stands the criticism of both Turcescu and Loudovikos[422].

Loudovikos argues that Zizioulas' emphasis on the person is maintained to the detriment of nature and does not correspond with patristic theology because they maintained that nature was in need of transformation rather than being escaped from, a position which Loudovikos maintains that Zizioulas holds. Loudovikos is particularly relevant for our argument because his criticisms accord with the criticisms brought against Zizioulas for being a Social Trinitarian. He argues that Zizioulas prioritises person over nature; and does so not because he successfully explicates patristic theology, especially that of Maximus the Confessor, but because Zizioulas imbibes the direction of philosophical personalism since Kant[423].

Perhaps more influential outside Orthodox circles, stands the work of Turcescu. He is a Romanian Orthodox patristics scholar who is sceptical about Zizioulas' reading of Gregory of Nyssa and he is at the vanguard of those who charge Zizioulas with projecting philosophical relational personalism onto his reading of Gregory of Nyssa. Turcescu is quoted ubiquitously by

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[421] Agouridis; (Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos) Vlachos, 'The Decisions of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece on the "Holy and Great Council" and the Final Outcome' <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/the-decisions-of-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-on-the-holy-and-great-council-and-the-final-outcome>; Hierotheos Vlachos, *The Person in Orthodox Tradition* (Levadia, Greek Republic: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1998).

[422] Nicholas Loudovikos, 'Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position', *The Heythrop Journal*, 52 (2011), 684–99.

[423] Loudovikos, p. 685.

those who criticise Zizioulas for being a Social Trinitarian[424]. For them Turcescu has raised the important question whether Western philosophical sources have influenced Zizioulas' particular reading of the Cappadocian Fathers that emphasises communion; which have in turn been significantly influential for those who posit a social doctrine of the Trinity. As Coakley has identified:

> at least one critic has suggested that Zizioulas' stress on relational "personhood" owes as much to certain (minority, reactive) strands in Western philosophy as it does to the original Cappadocian exposition of *hypostasis*[425].

Combined with the suspicion that Zizioulas over relies on the juxtaposition between a supposed Cappadocian and Augustinian approach to the Trinity; Patristic scholars, such as Ayres, become suspicious with Zizioulas' arguments. Ayres says on Turcescu that 'Turcescu's essay in this volume seems to pursue the best lines of his earlier article in carefully distinguishing Nyssa's discussion of persons from the concerns of some modern theologians'[426]. Indeed, by drawing from Turcescu, Ayres argues that:

> Zizioulas makes little effort to distinguish clearly the relationship between divine and human personhood, predicating of divine personhood attributes that seem to owe most to modern personalism and little to the Patristic sources on which he draws[427].

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[424] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, p. 313. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity*, p. 14.
[425] Coakley, p. 190.
[426] Lewis Ayres, 'On Not Three People: The Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology as Seen in To Abalius: On Not Three Gods', in *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. by Sarah Coakley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 15–45 (p. 40,fn.7).
[427] Ayres, '(Mis)Adventures in Trinitarian Ontology', p. 133.

Turcescu's methodological approach consists in targeting Zizioulas' alleged attempts to locate in the Church Fathers a particular theology of the human person; especially a theology which distinguishes between person and nature, person and individual and necessity and freedom. Turcescu maintains that such concepts cannot be found in Gregory of Nyssa because Nyssa uses hypostasis to denote both person and individual[428]. He thus charges Zizioulas with misreading the Church Fathers in order to support his own claims on person. Instead, he argues that Gregory of Nyssa does indeed identify person with individual and that a relational ontology of personhood cannot be found in the Cappadocian Fathers. Thus, as Zizioulas does not successfully articulate Gregory of Nyssa's position Zizioulas must be projecting philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian theology.

6.2 Evaluating the evidence that Zizioulas projects philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian theology.

It is not our task in this chapter to subject Turcescu's reading of Gregory of Nyssa to scrutiny. That is a task for Patristic historical scholarship. However, I do question whether Turcescu's conclusion about Zizioulas projecting philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian theology is correct because upon evaluating Turcescu's arguments it is apparent that the claims which Turcescu makes of Zizioulas' philosophical personalism are speculative. Turcescu has not taken the step to research the problems and questions that Zizioulas sought to address, nor to accurately identify how Zizioulas draws, allegedly, from philosophical personalism. Such claims made by Turcescu are appealing because it is evident that Zizioulas does not offer a historical exegesis of his Patristic sources and that makes Turcescu's case plausible. But it is evident that Turcescu has not taken the step to investigate why this may be the case.

[428] Turcescu, p. 103.

There are too many instances of the subjunctive in Turcescu's claims; words such as 'perhaps', 'possibly', and 'likely' are all too frequent. He makes claims such as 'the texts and ideas I chose from Buber and Macmurray are clearly *reminiscent* of some of Zizioulas' ideas'[429]. He writes that 'Buber and Macmurray are the most *likely* to have influenced Zizioulas' concept of person'[430]. Indeed, he admits that 'it is difficult to pinpoint which modern author *may* have influenced Zizioulas' view of person'[431]. Yet, this does not prevent him from making the claim that 'it is plausible to *conjecture* that some of those he mentions approvingly did perhaps influence him'[432] and that 'it is *likely* that Zizioulas has borrowed some elements from Buber's and Macmurray's concept of person'[433]. Much of Turcescu's argument relies on how Zizioulas was received by Catherine LaCugna who regarded Zizioulas as reducing the nature of person entirely to relation, and thus exhibits all the same weaknesses as other personalist philosophers such as 'Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Franz Ebner'[434].

Moreover, as Papanikolaou identifies[435], Turcescu's reading of Zizioulas relies on a patristic readdressing of Gregory of Nyssa, but of all the Cappadocian Fathers, Zizioulas relies on Nyssa the least. Instead, Zizioulas predominantly uses the work of Gregory of Nazianzus to support his claims for the monarchy of the Father[436].

One cannot help but wonder why Turcescu, as an Orthodox theologian, has not done the research on the nature of a neopatristic synthesis and instead why he offers speculation and conjecture rather than substantiated claims on what a neopatristic synthesis seeks to achieve; especially when Zizioulas is transparent about his engagement with philosophy.

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[429] Turcescu, p. 106.
[430] Turcescu, p. 105.
[431] Turcescu, p. 105.
[432] Turcescu, p. 105.
[433] Turcescu, p. 106.
[434] Turcescu, p. 105.
[435] Papanikolaou, 'Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu', p. 602.
[436] Cf. John Zizioulas, 'On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood', in *Communion and Otherness*s (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 99–110 (p. 108,fn.18). Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 11,fn.23.

The argument that Zizioulas appropriates some form of philosophy seems misjudged. If this claim was substantiated then one would expect that Zizioulas would dedicate chapters to outlining a particular philosopher, or that the footnotes citing philosophers would be extensive. Indeed, this is the case with Florovsky who writes on Charles Renouvier[437]. Instead, Zizioulas' engagement with philosophy is relatively minimal; his work is lightly peppered with references to Heidegger or Levinas, for instance, on issues that may touch upon his work but one is left with the impression that such engagement has potential and is underdeveloped in Zizioulas' work. This does not indicate an in-depth engagement with philosophy that justifies the appropriation of personalist philosophies in Zizioulas' work.

Moreover, Turcescu has not taken the step to understand what Zizioulas is doing with these philosophers when Zizioulas does cite them. Papanikolaou claims that in a conversation with Zizioulas, Zizioulas admitted that Buber was an inspiration for a relational conception of personhood[438]. It is no surprise to the learned reader of Zizioulas' work that Zizioulas is not arguing for a strictly historical Patristic exegesis and that Zizioulas cites particular philosophers, such as Levinas or Buber[439]. This is because Zizioulas seeks to establish a dialogue with philosophers who argue for a relational conception of personhood, indeed as well as those philosophers who postulate an individualist conception of personhood.

But a particular problem implicit to this discussion on personalism is that personalism is not well demarcated as a philosophy. Personalism does not exist as a singular philosophical school or movement. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy identifies that it is more 'proper to speak of many *personalisms* than one personalism'[440]**.** But as Jacques Maritain argues, it is a futile endeavour

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[437] Georges Florovsky, 'On the Philosophy of Charles Renouvier', in *Philosophy: Philosophical Problems and Movements*, The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1989), XII, 128–32.
[438] Papanikolaou, 'Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu', p. 606,fn.13.
[439] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 13.
[440] 'Personalism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/personalism/#WhaPer> [accessed 31 July 2021].

to attribute personalism to common sources because there are 'at least a dozen personalist doctrines, which at times have nothing more in common than the word "person"'[441].

In this sense, by virtue of placing the person at the heart of their theological projects both Florovsky and Zizioulas could be described as personalists in their own right; explicating a theological personalism that is uniquely theirs. However, Zizioulas has maintained that attempts to identify him with a particular philosophical personalism is indicative of a 'superficial level of associations in terminology'[442]. He writes that most personalisms assume that 'a person … is a complex unity of consciousness which identifies itself with its past self in memory'[443]. Zizioulas writes that the French Personalism with which he is most associated

> as expressed by J.Maritain and E Mournier and the *Esprit* circles, is so influenced by Thomism that it ultimately subjugates the personal to the generality of nature or essence, leaving room only for a sociological aspect of the concept of the person[444].

Thus, Zizioulas does not agree with this personalist school because it reduces persons to a general nature.

He is, however, more favourable in his regard for relational personalisms; and in this respect does cite Macmurray and Buber as an example of an approach to personhood which conceives personhood on a relational basis[445]. Yet at the same time, Zizioulas does not seek to appropriate relational personalism into his ontology of personhood because the ultimate grounding for such an ontology is not a philosophical justification[446]. Instead, Zizioulas argues that the truth implicit to theology subjects philosophical claims to scrutiny. Ultimately, such

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[441] Cited by 'Personalism'.
[442] Zizioulas, 'The Being of God and the Being of Man', p. 20.
[443] Zizioulas, 'The Being of God and the Being of Man', p. 20.
[444] Zizioulas, 'The Being of God and the Being of Man', p. 20.
[445] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 212,fn.12.
[446] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 46,fn.40.

justification is found in the way that Zizioulas relates communion to participation in the life of the Trinity in Christ and the Spirit through the sacraments of the Church.

Against this criterion, Zizioulas is critical of such relational personalisms. In Buber's case, Zizioulas is concerned that relationship becomes ontologically constitutive in the sense that it merely supplants substance[447]. The problem of reducibility arises in such relational personalisms. Ultimately, Zizioulas questions whether any philosophy can posit a concept of human person that communicates the person as unique, free, and irreducible, he writes 'philosophy can arrive at the confirmation of the reality of the person, but only theology can treat of the genuine, authentic person'[448].

One reason for this limitation is that philosophy extrapolates personhood from the present reality of personhood. For theology this presents a problem because the present reality of humanity is marked by sin 'which gives rise to the question: is man that which we can know and experience as 'man'?'[449]. For Zizioulas, 'the empirical man does not represent the reality of the human being in fullness even for a purely humanistic approach to man'[450]. Thus, even the most perfect conception of relational personhood is utopian, and thus unachievable, because it has to confront the reality of sin.

Therefore, we question the assumption that Zizioulas' methodology is based on a correspondence between divine and human personhood; especially on the basis that such a projection is derived from a particular philosophy. Indeed, Zizioulas argues against a direct correspondence between Trinitarian and human personhood. He claims that analogies between human and divine persons are deficient and too limited to constitute a suitable methodology to construe the hypostasis of the divine and human persons in the same terms is 'a misuse of language … and therefore, we must avoid applying to the Trinity things "which are not seen in the Holy

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[447] John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), p. 27.
[448] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 43.
[449] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 206.
[450] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 207.

Trinity'"[451]. He recognises that human mortality, the possibility of addition and subtraction, and the biological and created nature of human personhood precludes correspondence between human and divine personhood. Instead, Zizioulas establishes the relationship between the Trinity and human personhood as it is mediated in the incarnation and the Spirit.

6.3 ***<u>What is Zizioulas trying to do?</u>***

Rather than looking to philosophical personalism, for Zizioulas human personhood must ultimately be grounded in the Eucharist because it is a participation in the Spirit into Christ; through whom the human person participates in the mode of God's own being (*tropos hyparxeos*). By considering the person in relation to the Eucharist, Zizioulas argues that the person is 'placed in the light of some strictly theological doctrines, such as Christology and pneumatology'[452].

The Eucharist is a foretaste of humanity's eschatology of existing in communion with the Father; Zizioulas writes 'the truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future'[453]. The Christology implicit in the Eucharist means that it becomes a future shadow of a personhood which exists in communion with the Father that is possible because humanity participates in Christ by sharing in the Eucharist. The Father 'although he hypostasizes and loves the Son alone (the "only begotten"), can "through the Son" love and bestow hypostasis on all creation ("all things were created through Him and for Him" Col.1:16)'[454].

Zizioulas roots his conception of human personhood in theôsis. In the chapter on 'the Spirit of Adoption' we examine Zizioulas' conception of theôsis as being a participation in Christ and the Spirit in the sacraments. However, here it is important to note the centrality of theôsis to Zizioulas' conception of personhood because it ameliorates the charges that Zizioulas makes

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[451] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 172.
[452] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 207.
[453] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 62.
[454] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 63,fn.68.

human identity dependent upon relational personalisms and projects them onto Patristic terminology. Indeed, with Turcescu's criticisms in mind, Alexis Torrance argues that

> if we are to explore the patristic sources for precedents, we must look at the patristic concepts of sanctification and deification rather than simply the uses and applications of words like *atomon, prosopon, ousia* and *hypostasis* (which is the usual approach in challenging Zizioulas)[455].

Zizioulas does clearly place an emphasis upon such terms in his Trinitarian theology; and there are questions to be raised about whether Zizioulas treats Patristic terms in a strictly historical sense. However, questioning the historical reading of Zizioulas' use of Patristic sources as an exegesis does not ultimately invalidate Zizioulas' arguments because his appeal to Patristic thought is rooted in the centrality of theôsis as the eschatological consummation of personhood and created nature in the person of Christ[456].

6.4 Zizioulas' work as Christian Hellenism and the importance of freedom for personhood

The question remains, however, about the relationship between theology and philosophy in Zizioulas' theology; and why Zizioulas places such an emphasis upon freedom in relation to personhood. Indeed, is it not an anachronism in reading into the Trinitarian doctrine of the Cappadocians ontological claims about the nature of person and freedom? I argue that rather than looking to philosophical personalism to explain his reading of Greek Patristic Trinitarianism,

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[455] Alexis Torrance, 'Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the Debate', *The Heythrop Journal*, 52, 700–707 (p. 701).

[456] See out chapter 9 'doctrine of adoption in Christ' for a further elucidation of theôsis as the realisation of the person.

Zizioulas' work should be grounded in the work of the neopatristic synthesis argued for by his Orthodox predecessors from which he drew and which placed theôsis at the heart of understanding human personhood.

Turcescu may be correct that the Cappadocian Fathers did not argue for a relational ontology, but this does not in itself invalidate Zizioulas' theology. Rather Zizioulas argues that the Cappadocian Fathers' theology on triune personhood contain important ontological insights for human personhood and the nature of being; and that Zizioulas seeks to draw out these insights as a neopatristic synthesis. For Zizioulas, the ontology of personhood does not rely upon defining the words person and hypostasis per se in Patristic terms; but following the spirit of the Church fathers in affirming that in Christ God became incarnate and changed humanity's relationship to the Father. Freedom is realised for humanity in affirming the doctrine of the monarchy of the Father who in God's very being is personal and free.

In emphasising that the ground of being is divine freedom and not necessity[457] it is evident that Zizioulas draws from the vision of *Christian Hellenism*[458] conveyed by Florovsky and seeks to continue his legacy. In a conversation with Zizioulas, McPartlan affirms that 'freedom is Zizioulas' recurrent existential theme. Indeed, he acknowledges it as his deepest theological preoccupation'.[459] This is the case because Zizioulas draws from Florovksy's concept of *podvig* in articulating the freedom of the person. This emphasis on the person coincided with the centrality of

> the freedom of man as a protagonist of the "ascetic achievement" in the Church, in which, according to Florovsky, all the aspects and content of Orthodoxy are synthesised, a "neopatristic synthesis"[460].

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[457] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 89.

[458] Georges Florovsky, 'The Predicament of Christian Hellenism', in *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings*, ed. by Brandon Gallaher and Paul Ladouceur (London: T&T Clark, 2019), pp. 193–221 (p. 193).

[459] Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p. 146.

[460] John Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', *Theologia*, 4 (2010), 31–48 (p. 45).

That is an ascetic achievement in which the monarchy of the Father who is free from ontological necessity is integral to human freedom. Human freedom is found in '*identifying his own will with that of God*'.[461] That is in participating in the creative personal will of the Father, and through that will realise their being as the image and likeness of God in creation.

Through this *Christian Hellenism*, Zizioulas claims that the Fathers instigated a 'revolution in Greek philosophy'[462] by affirming divine freedom. Just as the Fathers Christianised Hellenic philosophy, theology rooted in Patristic tradition engaged in dialogue with philosophy can *Christianise* contemporary philosophy. Understanding Zizioulas' work as a Christian Hellenism demonstrates that Zizioulas is 'no more superimposing a philosophical system on the Patristic writers than did these same writers Hellenize the teachings of Jesus'[463].

Zizioulas' work is that of a return to the spirit of the Fathers in their engagement with the problems posed by contemporary philosophy rather than a historical study of the Fathers. In a recent clarification of his views, Zizioulas writes 'the task of a systematic theologian who tries to be faithful to patristic thought is precisely to make explicit what is implicit in the expressions of the fathers'[464]. The theologian's task is different to that of the historian's, in that, whilst being faithful to the Fathers, the theologian is open to theological questions 'which the Fathers had not raised in their time'[465]. Zizioulas quotes from Gadamer to argue that the historian is subject to hermeneutics, the intervention of the historian's horizon of thought, and writes that 'understanding (the past) is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity as well'[466].

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[461] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 236.
[462] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 36.
[463] Papanikolaou, 'Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu', p. 605.
[464] John Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor', in *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St.Maximus the Confessor [Kindle]*, ed. by Bishop Maxim Vasiljevic (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2013).
[465] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor', p. fn.60.
[466] Hans Urs Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), p. 296; Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor', p. fn.61.

In this sense, Zizioulas follows Florovsky's *Christian Hellenism* as the basis for a *neopatristic synthesis* in relating patristic theology to contemporary problems without 'copying' the Fathers because

> the "neopatristic synthesis" proposed by Florovsky is in essence a reconstitution of the world of the Fathers, starting and concentrating on the person of Christ, in the challenges faced by theology at a given time[467].

This process is not about projecting a philosophical personalism onto God. Lossky provides a good indication of this approach in relation to philosophical questions concerning personhood. He writes that the Church Fathers did not have 'what one might call an elaborated doctrine of the human person in patristic theology, alongside its precise teaching on divine persons and hypostases'[468]. Indeed, he claims that attempting to find an elaborate doctrine of human personhood in the Fathers is a hazardous task:

> Would this not be trying to attribute to them certain ideas which may have remained unknown to them and which we would nevertheless attribute to them, without realizing how much, in our way of conceiving of the human person, we depend upon a complex philosophical tradition- upon a line of thought which has followed paths very different from the one which could claim to be part of a properly theological tradition? To avoid such confusion, as well as conscious anachronisms- inserting Bergson into the work of St.Gregory of Nyssa or Hegel into the work of St.Maximus the Confessor …[469].

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[467] Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', p. 44.
[468] Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladmir's Seminary Press, 1974), p. 112.
[469] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 111.

Whilst the Fathers did not have elaborate doctrine of human personhood, the Fathers did have the doctrine of theôsis; in which God exists in communion with created persons and that this communion realises persons as the divine image and likeness. Such an understanding of personhood can elucidate the problems of an overly rationalised conception of personhood.

Like Zizioulas, Florovsky maintained that this synthesis 'must begin with the central vision of the Christian faith, Christ Jesus'[470] as 'the main theme of Patristic theology was always the Mystery of Christ's Person'[471], in whom humanity exists in communion with the Father. For Zizioulas, communion in Christ becomes the horizon for theological questioning. Florovsky claimed that in Patristic theology, ecclesiology, the Church and Christ are united in an integral vision for theology:

> the whole dimension of Christology is disclosed only in the doctrine of *the Whole Christ-totus Christus, caput et corpus,* as St.Augustine loved to say … ecclesiology in the Orthodox view is an integral part of Christology. There is no elaborate "ecclesiology" in the Greek Fathers … The ultimate reason for that was in the total integration of the Church into the Mystery of Christ[472].

Zizioulas adopts the unity between these themes which are implicit to Florovsky's thought. There is a total vision for theology in which the person's freedom is realised through participation in the mystery of Christ. Through an ascetic achievement humanity achieves its freedom by existing in communion with the Father who is himself free from ontological necessity. Freedom

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[470] George Florovsky, 'Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church', in *Aspects of Church History*, ed. by Richard Haugh (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1989), IV, 11–30 (p. 23).
[471] Florovsky, 'Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church', IV, p. 24.
[472] Florovsky, 'Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church', IV, p. 25.

is a divine gift for humanity and Zizioulas writes that 'all of Christian doctrine ought to be precisely about this'[473].

6.4.1 ***The problem addressed by Christian Hellenism: Divine Freedom***

Understanding Zizioulas' relationship to philosophy, person and freedom is a matter of discerning the problems to which Christian Hellenism was posed as the solution. Christian Hellenism takes a specific form in that it seeks to establish the importance of freedom and the person. Florovsky's early thought propagated Christian Hellenism against 'philosophical utopian ideas in his country, in German and Russian idealism'.[474] Florovsky held that Russian theology had become subject to a 'Western pseudomorphosis'[475]. The problems posed by contemporary manifestations of determinism could be addressed through a ressourcement to Greek Patristics, which Florovsky argues maintained the personal will of God as the foundation for being.

For Zizioulas, the achievement of Patristic thought lay in articulating divine freedom, which the Fathers achieved through two '*leavening*s'[476] of Greek ontology which makes communion between the Father and creation possible. Zizioulas uses the term *leavening* precisely as the articulation of a Christian doctrine of God; which, in Zizioulas' view, led to a fundamental amendment to Ancient Greek ontological thought in order describe the free relation of God to creation and the free nature of God. With regard to the first ontological leavening, Zizioulas writes that the ontological significance of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* was that the Fathers attributed being to *will* meaning that:

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[473] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 237.
[474] Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', p. 44.
[475] Gavrilyuk, p. 172.
[476] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 39.

> when there is a will, then it is first a product of freedom and not of necessity, and secondly it is always subject to the possibility of radical change, unpredictability and innovation, that is, freedom[477].

Christian Hellenism is the claim that the Fathers amended Greek ontology by affirming that creation was the result of the free and personal will of God rather than determinism.

6.4.2 The impact of creatio ex nihilo on theôsis

Florovsky, and Zizioulas, maintain that by introducing the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* the Fathers ameliorated monism in Greek ontology, and in doing so the Fathers created the conditions for the freedom of the divine creative personal will to become the foundation for being[478]. This freedom of divine personhood became axiomatic to Zizioulas' theology of communion. Thus, Zizioulas came to abjure any sense of ontological necessity which could compromise the freedom of divine personhood. A person transcends their nature, rather than being determined by nature. For human personhood, in Florovsky and Zizioulas, *grace* is the transcendence from ontological necessity: 'it is the 'ascetic feat' as it is called. For Florovsky, the greatest saints, … are those who, in one way or another, transcend their nature, laws and necessity.'[479] This ascetic achievement is central to Zizioulas' ontological view of personhood.[480]

Zizioulas develops the insight from Florovsky that the Patristic ethos maintained that salvation lay with absolute divine freedom in which God is absolutely *other* to creation. Zizioulas cites Florovsky, 1962, 'The Concept of Creation in Saint Athanasius'[481] as the source for the need

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[477] Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', p. 36.
[478] See below, 'monarchy of the Father'
[479] Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', p. 38.
[480] See below, Chapter 9 'Humanity and the Incarnation'
[481] Florovsky, 1962, 'The Concept of Creation in Saint Athanasius' (*Studia Patristica VI,* pp.36-67) cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 39.

for the Fathers to break from the closed ontology of Greek philosophy. The act of creation, and of salvation, is not compelled by anything within created nature but is instead attributed to God's free act. The Father is the one who calls the Church into being as the body of Christ constituted by the Holy Spirit, reciprocally the Church is conceived in terms of communion, but with communion with God, as the body of the Son in the Spirit, and is brought into communion with the Father. In participating in the spirit into Christ, humanity is drawn into communion with the Father and thus are adopted into the filial relation the Son has with the Father within the person of the incarnate Christ. Through communion with the Father, the human person transcends the necessity of nature, and the consequent results of sin and death, to become *personal*, that is, *hypostatic*. Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology serves to demonstrate the absolute freedom and transcendence of God but who is immanent in Christ.

Freedom is the basis for this communion between creation and the divine, and Zizioulas draws out from the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* that communion cannot be *compelled* from either the divine or created nature. If God constitutes an unbreakable unity with the world then God's transcendence is threatened, with the implication that, 'this kind of God offers no real hope for Man'.[482] Thus, God has to be transcendent from creation in terms of articulating communion because humanity's own freedom is grounded in divine freedom rather than a 'syggeneia'[483] compelled between uncreated and created being.

6.4.3 Evaluation of Zizioulas' use of creatio ex nihilo drawn from Christian Hellenism

Florovsky emphasises the creative will of the Father in order to counter the determinism of the 'Western pseudomorphosis'[484] of Russian theology, especially as conveyed in Bulgakov's

[482] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 9.
[483] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 75.
[484] Gavrilyuk, p. 172.

sophiology. Florovsky emphasises the radical freedom of creation in being the result of the free will of God. Zizioulas too emphasises creation as being radically *other* to God, he writes that 'the absence, therefore, of freedom in the act of creation would amount automatically to the loss of ontological otherness, for both the Creator and his creation'[485]. Zizioulas therefore denies any suggestion that there could be an ontological affinity between God and creation.

Yet such a suggestion of ontological affinity is not alien to the Orthodox tradition. Zizioulas seems to assume the concept of radical difference between creation and creator from Florovsky. It is noticeable that there is only one reference to Bulgakov in the entirety of Zizioulas' corpus[486]. It seems that Zizioulas has all too readily assumed Florovsky's abrogation of Bulgakov. Indeed, Gallaher argues that Florovsky's Christian Hellenism 'emerged from Florovsky's desire to refute the Sophiologists' claim that both their thought and their use of philosophy has patristic (i.e. traditional) precedent'[487]. There is a polemical edge to Florovsky's work which Zizioulas seems to take for granted; and in recent attempts to vindicate Bulgakov as integral to contemporary Orthodox tradition[488] it seems that Zizioulas comes into criticism precisely because his work is at variance to the synergy postulated between creation and creator in the work of the Sophiologists. Contemporary research on Florovsky has demonstrated that there is a continuity between Bulgakov and his own work which his emphasis on Christian Hellenism does not abrogate, and thus in an indirect way Zizioulas' way of thinking is shaped by the romantic influences on Florovsky as much by his reading of Patristic sources.

However, such criticisms do not ultimately detract from the fact that theôsis is axiomatic in Zizioulas' theology; through which Zizioulas constructs his ecclesiology as the realisation of humanity's vocation to be the image and likeness of God within creation. Therefore, when

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[485] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 16.
[486] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 63.
[487] Brandon Gallaher, '"Waiting for the Barbarians" Identity and Polemics in the Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky', *Modern Theology*, 27.4 (2011), 660–91 (p. 662).
[488] For example, Brandon Gallaher, 'The Sophiological Origins of Vladimir Lossky's Apophaticism', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 66.3 (2013), 278–98.

attending to Zizioulas' theological reasoning on the Father as *arche* of triune being, we must consider how Zizioulas utilises Trinitarian doctrine to address problems relating to the realisation of humanity's personhood as the image and likeness of God. Zizioulas' aim is not to construct a speculative theology of the immanent Trinity, but to articulate how the Trinity is free from ontological necessity and the source of being to convey his conception of theôsis, which is rooted in the realisation of humanity's freedom. Zizioulas conveys both ontological leavenings most clearly in *Being as Communion* (1985), but in his earlier anthropological essay *Human Capacity and Human Incapacity* (1975)[489] he had already articulated the significance of divine freedom for the Patristic conception of anthropology through *creatio ex nihilo* and that the *arche* of divine being was the person of the Father.

It is not that divine personhood is a model for human personhood, but that humanity is created for communion with God. It is therefore through this divine-human communion (theôsis) that humanity must be conceived, and not through human nature in itself, instead true humanity is revealed in Christology:

> The humanity which is revealed in and through Christ is not a humanity which is ultimately defined in terms of its nature as such; it is true and real humanity only because it is constituted in and through personhood …For Chalcedon the equation "man=man" is unacceptable; it is that of "man= man-in-communion-with-God" that emerges from Christology[490].

[489] John Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 8.5 (1975), 401–47. Citations refer to its 2006 republication in John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. by Paul McPartlan (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp.206-248.
[490] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 248.

The cornerstone of this conception of theôsis is that God is sovereign, and whose freedom is absolute precisely because God is truly *hypostatic*, that is the bearer of the totality of its nature rather than its being determined *by* nature. To be free, God has to be *personal*, and Zizioulas finds this solution in the Orthodox position of maintaining the *monarchy of the Father* otherwise theôsis is ineffective*:*

> If the ground of God's ontological freedom lies simply in His "nature", that is, in His being uncreated by nature, whereas we are by nature created, then there is no hope, no possibility, that man might become a person in the sense that God is one, that is, an authentic person. But no, the ground of God's ontological freedom lies not in His nature but in His personal existence, that is, in the "mode of existence" by which He subsists as divine nature. And it is this precisely that gives man, in spite of his different nature, his hope of becoming an authentic person[491].

The importance of the Patristic first leavening of Greek ontology, i.e. *creatio ex nihilo*, for Zizioulas lies with the act of creation being the free act of God, who created creation to exist in communion with himself. This communion requires an absolute otherness between created and uncreated being so that this communion is affirmed in perfect freedom by humanity as creation's royal priesthood. Consequently, communion cannot be compelled by nature, an *entelecheia*[492], within either created nature or divine nature, but can only be affirmed in freedom. Creation is not the product of an ontological pre-existent condition, such as substance, but of the divine free will. The Fathers, such as Irenaeus and Athanasius, achieved this through *creatio ex nihilo*. But for Zizioulas, the freedom of creation requires that God is himself free from ontological necessity:

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[491] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 44.
[492] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 209.

> I venture to suggest that unless we admit *on a philosophical level* that personhood is not secondary to being, that the mode of existence of being is not secondary to its "substance" but *itself primary* and constitutive of it, it is impossible to make sense of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*[493].

Zizioulas demonstrates that *creatio ex nihilo* enables humanity to participate in a free event of communion with God, 'the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* was employed by the Fathers in order to oppose a view of a creation of a world out of pre-existing matter'.[494] If creation is the product of divine freedom, then God himself must be free from ontological necessity.

6.5 ***On the alleged dichotomy between nature and person***

Zizioulas is also often perceived as presenting a dichotomy between person and nature[495]. Zizioulas' work can be unhelpfully phrased as to give the impression that: a. he subsumes substance to person and b. that created nature, the material existence of humanity, is something from which to escape. Certain phrases from Zizioulas give this impression, for instance: 'in man's case this question [for freedom] comes into conflict with his createdness: as a creature he cannot escape the "necessity" of his existence'[496].

The Orthodox theologian, Loudovikos, criticises Zizioulas for establishing a tension between nature and person; indeed, he claims that Zizioulas is a dualist and associates him with

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[493] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 220.
[494] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 221.
[495] Cf. for such a criticism of Zizioulas' work, Douglas Farrow. 2007. 'Person and Nature. The Necessity-Freedom Dialectic in John Zizioulas' in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*. Douglas Knight. P.122. Zizioulas provides an extended riposte in John Zizioulas. 2013. 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor' in *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St.Maximus the Confessor.* [Kindle] Ed. Bishop Maxim (Vasiljevic). Sebastian Press: Alhambra, California.
[496] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 43.

Manicheism[497]. Zizioulas' personalism is deficient because it contains an inherently negative view of nature to the extent that Zizioulas denies created nature as the gift of God's creation. Loudovikos argues that

> nature is thus in practice identified with the Fall… Nature, like an autonomous metaphysical monster 'dictates its laws', and finally swallows poor humans up. If we do not succumb to the temptation to see a shadow of Gnosticism here, we cannot but admit that, for the first time since Origen nature and the Fall are completely identified[498].

Loudovikos postulates this argument in order to discredit Zizioulas for imbibing existentialist philosophy which leads Zizioulas to move beyond the parameters of patristic thought in which nature is affirmed as gift. Indeed, Louth remarks that Zizioulas often pushes the relationship between person and nature too far, and that Zizioulas' language can convey that idea that nature itself is a fallen state of existence[499]. Indeed, that Zizioulas' language of a biological and ecclesial hypostasis 'seems to me to go beyond the notion of a second nature'[500] in that it conveys a dualistic sense of human existence.

For Zizioulas, there is no dichotomy between nature and person; in that nature is not something to be escaped from or denigrated. Zizioulas states that Maximus the Confessor, and the Greek Fathers, maintain that 'nature and person form an unbreakable ontological unity'.[501] In the person of the Father, nature and person coincide and form a unity, 'that is to say, the substance never exists in a "naked" state, that is, without hypostasis, without "a mode of existence".[502] Divine being represents the full actuality of being, a mode of existence into which created being is called

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[497] Loudovikos, p. 3.
[498] Loudovikos, p. 686.
[499] Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (London: SPCK, 2015), p. 225.
[500] Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present*, p. 225.
[501] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor'.
[502] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.

to exist[503]. Through theôsis, the human person adopts a synthesis between nature and the person. Theôsis is not an escape or transcendence of nature.

Person and nature only form a dichotomy in a fallen existence. The fall entails a broken communion results in the person living purely under created nature. Created nature by virtue of being contingent means that it is subjected to the limitations of mortal nature, i.e. death, '*revealing and actualising the limitations and potential dangers inherent in creaturehood, if creation is left to itself*'[504].

Zizioulas instead understands freedom as implicitly tied with salvation from fallen existence; in which freedom means not the negation of nature but that the particular is no longer subject to the universal (as Zizioulas claims is the case with Greek ontology), and that substance no longer takes priority over hypostasis. In fallen existence, 'nature is imposed on us as a necessity … particularly through individualism (in both its ontological and moral sense) and death'[505]. To escape from the fall is to re-affirm true personhood as hypostatic, that is, the total unity between nature and personhood as unique, particular and free, this is achieved in communion; this is not an escape from nature.

Zizioulas has a tendency to emphasise the dichotomy between person and nature because he believes it is implicit to Medieval scholasticism; and here does so precisely because he opposes such a dichotomy as a theological vision for personhood. He believes scholasticism diverged from Greek Patristic thought in giving rise to an idea of *natura pura* 'which has led historically to an objectification of nature as a *res,* conceivable in itself (as the material or the biological "nature") and often in opposition to or in contrast with the person'.[506] As Zizioulas explains:

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[503] See below on the union between person and hypostasis for an explication of this conception of divine personhood.
[504] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 101–2.
[505] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor'.
[506] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor'. It is the fall that has caused a conflict between person and nature, see chapter 6. Here Zizioulas' objection is linked with his opposition of perceiving an ontology as a matter of 'things', this is seen in his objection to the Eucharist in scholastic theology, see chapter 6, on 'the separation between the Eucharist and the Church'.

> The problem is, therefore, in the final analysis, that those who refer to patristic statements about freedom as "a characteristic of nature" take nature as a concept *in itself* (a Medieval tendency) and forget that in the Greek Fathers all natural characteristics (including will and freedom)- and nature itself- remain non-existent without the person who "enhypostasizes" them. Thus, in conclusion, nature is not free (willing, self-determinative, etc.) unless it is hypostasized. In this sense it can be said that the person makes nature free[507].

The constraint of human freedom as a choice between 'givens',[508] that is as a choice between fundamental presuppositions, does not apply to divine freedom. Divine freedom is not based on freedom as a choice between presuppositions[509] because God's being precludes the *given*, as God is 'the author of all that exists'[510]. Decision presupposes an act of deliberation between possibilities, and Zizioulas rejects this conception of freedom since it compromises divine freedom through 'the assumption of a metaphysical 'given' confronting God'[511]. God is eternal and free from the condition of time, which Zizioulas maintains is tied with givenness, decision and choice.

Furthermore, Zizioulas does not conceive the Trinitarian persons as individual subjects of consciousness[512] because they possess one will and one mind ad intra and ex extra. Zizioulas conveys divine freedom as freedom from the given, and as the foundation for human freedom:

> the purpose of the divine economy is precisely to lead humanity and through it the entire creation "from the slavery of corruption to the freedom of the glory of the children of

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[507] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor', p. fn.56.
[508] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 206.
[509] Zizioulas claims that his understanding of divine freedom in terms of decision is found inter alia, in Barth and Jüngel (Zizioulas, 2012, *TF*, p.206,fn.31)
[510] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 206. This is the charge which Zizioulas brings against the notion of God in Plato's *Timaeus* who although created 'willingly (*thelesei*)' divine freedom was constricted in the creative act since, 'he had to create out or pre-existing matter, on the model of eternally preconceived ideas, and within a given space (*chora*)' (Zizioulas, 2012, *TF*, p.194)
[511] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 206, fn.31.
[512] Another factor against considering Zizioulas as a Social Trinitarian, 'which includes among other things conceiving the Trinity as three distinct "centres of consciousness and will" and maintaining that the three are indeed one' (Sexton, 2014, p.20)

God" (Rom.8:21) through our "sonship", i.e. our reception by grace in the Spirit into the very life and freedom of the Triune God[513].

Freedom is ultimately a movement of transcendent love. Zizioulas describes this movement as the gift of Christ to creation as it is implicit to redemption. A love which humanity finds by existing in communion with the Father, and this communion constitutes Zizioulas' conception of communion which occurs in the person of Christ. Zizioulas also describes this communion 'as the object of *asceticism*',[514] in that humanity has an *ascetic achievement* in attaining its freedom in communion with the Father.

Thus, the dichotomy between nature and the supernatural is a false one. Zizioulas merely affirms the contingent nature of created existence which depends upon God for eternal life. Created nature cannot exist in itself without falling into non-existence, so by existing in communion with the Father created nature is fulfilled and completed. It is redeemed and deified rather than 'escaped from' as Loudovikos would claim[515].

In Zizioulas' conception, the fall did not damage the *nature* of things, but broke their *communion* with God. Theôsis is not the transformation of nature but a change in the way that creation exists through the restoration of communion with the Father. Indeed, McPartlan claims that Zizioulas' conception of theôsis is based upon Maximus the Confessor's 'doctrine of deifying transformation'[516] in which theôsis begins at baptism which 'renews the "mode of existence" (*tropos*) without changing the "essential principle" (*logos*) in accordance with which he was created'[517] Created nature is not destroyed in theôsis, nor transformed into that which it is not as created nature, but instead becomes what it truly is in existing in communion with the Father 'what exists

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[513] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 207.
[514] Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St.Maximus the Confessor'. Zizioulas writes that his work is often accused of missing asceticism (Zizioulas, 2013, *Maximus).*
[515] Loudovikos, p. 687.
[516] McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, p. 153.
[517] McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, p. 152.

is the single reality of nature and creation- even to the point of the *identification* of earthly and heavenly reality'.[518] Zizioulas adopts a liturgical view of creation in that creation is always referred to communion with the Father.

6.6 ***The person of the Father as the ontological principle of God***

Loudovikos' criticism of Zizioulas on the relationship between person and substance is rooted in their alleged opposition to one another in Zizioulas' ontology. This section of the chapter will discuss the relationship between divine substance and hypostasis in Zizioulas' conception of divine personhood. Loudovikos believes that Zizioulas supplants divine substance with divine personhood; and this separates Zizioulas from Cappadocian Trinitarian theology. He argues:

> It seems, however, that the Cappadocians did not desire to abandon 'substance' or 'homoousion'; on the contrary, concerning Trinitarian theology, they worked diligently to tie their 'personality' language with the tradition's 'substantialist' content[519].

Again, it appears that Loudovikos has not followed Zizioulas' argument. In *Being as Communion,* Zizioulas outlines a 'second leavening'[520] of Greek ontology that may be drawn from the Church Fathers in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather than denigrating divine substance, or supplanting substance with personhood; the point which Zizioulas makes is that substance is not something which exists on its own, or is self subsistent, but that in God it is always hypostatised because of the monarchy of the Father. Zizioulas writes:

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[518] John Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 123–31 (p. 126).
[519] Loudovikos, p. 689.
[520] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 40.

> The basic ontological position of the theology of the Greek Fathers might be set out briefly as follows. No substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, but by the ontological "principle" or "cause" of being- i.e. that which makes a thing to exist- is not the substance or nature but the person or hypostasis. Therefore, being is traced back not to substance but to person[521].

This quotation is a summary of Zizioulas' position on the monarchy of the Father. The point of Zizioulas' first ontological leavening[522] is to demonstrate that the relationship between creation and God is not one built on a relationship caused by necessity, such as an ontological *syggeneia*, but is based entirely upon creation as the free gift of God as a person. Ultimately, Zizioulas' affirmation of the monarchy of the Father demonstrates that 'only a Trinitarian theology that affirms the monarchy of the Father can ground and justify the philosophical notions of person in terms of freedom, uniqueness, and relationality'[523].

This leads to Zizioulas' second ontological leavening, which has to do with how God exists *in se* and that the nature of this existence is not necessitated but is attributed to freedom, and thus he maintains the *monarchia of the Father* as a way to preserve this personal freedom.

The Trinitarian debates of the fourth century, such as that with Arianism and Eunomianism, provided the means for affirming absolute divine freedom, 'not only was the being of the world traced back to personal freedom, but *the being of God Himself* was identified with the person'.[524] The Cappadocians, 'above all by St.Basil',[525] instigated this second leavening of Greek ontology in that '*identification of the "hypostasis" with the "person"*'[526] enabled the being of God to be identified with the person of the Father.

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[521] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 41–42, fn.38.
[522] See chapter 6 on creatio ex nihilo.
[523] Papanikolaou, 'Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu', p. 605.
[524] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 40.
[525] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 40.
[526] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 36.

Athanasius addressed Arianism by distinguishing between the *will* and the *substance* in God, 'that the world was created out of the will and not of the substance of God safeguarded God's freedom vis-à-vis the world'.[527] For the purposes of exploring Zizioulas' position on the monarchy it is not necessary to explore Athanasius and Arianism, except to state that Zizioulas affirms the Nicene position that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father.

Against Eunomianism, the Fathers sought to articulate the distinctions between the Trinitarian persons without falling into Sabellianism (modalism) or into Arianism (that the Son is of a different divine substance). Eunomianism was derived from Arianism, and in Zizioulas' estimation, was concerned to preserve monotheism by identifying the divine substance exclusively with the Father[528]. The substance was unbegotten (*aggenêtos*) but since the Son was begotten the Son falls outside the divine substance.

According to Zizioulas, the Cappadocian response was to maintain the *simplicity* of divine substance. Basil the Great[529] distinguished between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Zizioulas concludes that the property of being *unbegotten* does not belong to the substance, but to the *hypostasis* of the Father[530]. Thus, the Son could be *homousios* with the Father, but *begotten* from the Father. Gregory of Nazianzus reformed the Nicene Creed 'from the substance of the Father (*ek tes ousias tou patros*)'[531] to 'from the Father (*ek tou patros)*'.[532] Zizioulas maintains an *apophatic* position on substance, since theology is unable to describe or ascribe properties to substance, substance is literally beyond speech (*apophasis*). The substance is held in each hypostasis of the Trinity, thus maintaining the *simplicity* of divine substance. The properties of the Trinitarian hypostases are

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[527] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 194.
[528] Zizioulas, 'Trinitarian Freedom', p. 195.
[529] *Contra Eunomium,* 1, 14-15.
[530] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 162.
[531] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 162.
[532] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 162.

unique only in the hypostases' relation to one another, 'unbegottenness or fatherhood to the Father, begottenness or sonship to the Son, and *ekporeusis* (spiration) of the Spirit'.[533]

Divine substance is simple and one, and the *cause* (*aition*) of the Trinitarian mode of existence (*tropos hyparxeos*) is the hypostasis of the Father, 'the one *arche* in God came to be understood ontologically, that is, in terms of origination of being, and was attached to the person of the Father'.[534] The cause of the Trinity is not the substance, rather the *tropos hyparxeos* (Trinitarian mode of being) is ascribed only to the Father who *begets* the Son, and from whom the Holy Spirit *proceeds*.

According to Zizioulas this was an ontological revolution, since *hypostasis* was distinguished from *ousia* and associated with *prosôpon*. This means, for Zizioulas, that *personhood* does not lie with 'what' something is, i.e. substance, but *how* something is. That is in being unique, particular and in relation (*ekstasis*). Zizioulas cites Basil the Great on their importance of distinguishing between *ousia* and *hypostasis:*

> those who say that ousia and hypostasis are the same are compelled to confess only different *prosopa* and by avoiding the use of the words *treis hypostaseis* do not succeed in escaping the Sabellian evil[535].

In earlier attempts to discuss the Trinitarian hypostases the pre-Nicene fathers followed the wake of Hellenic philosophy in which the *hypostasis* was identified with *ousia* as Athanasius wrote, '*hypostasis* is *ousia* and has no other meaning apart from being (το ον) itself'[536]. For instance, the use of *persona* by Tertullian lacked ontological content. That is, it did not, unlike *hypostasis*,

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[533] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 160.
[534] Zizioulas, 'The Trinity and Personhood', p. 162.
[535] Epistle, 236, 6 cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 37, fn.25.
[536] Letter to Bishops of Egypt and Libya, PG.26, 1036B cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 36.

denote concrete and unique particularity. The Trinitarian formula, *una substantia, tres personae*[537] conveys the Trinity as the manifestation of one God in three *roles* leading to Sabellianism/modalism[538]. The use of the terms are important here; since in Tertullian *substantia* is used to denote the Greek equivalent of *ousia*, and uses *personae* rather than *hypostasis*. It was not until the Cappadocians that *hypostasis* came to denote the Trinitarian persons, and when it did there was a significant change in the definition of *hypostasis* away from its previous association with *ousia*.

Zizioulas' problem with Sabellianism is that it attributes God's being beyond the level of the person to the level of substance, which Zizioulas identifies with determinism. In disassociating *hypostasis* from *ousia*, and identifying *hypostasis* with *prosôpon*, the Fathers demonstrated that the person was no longer illusory in being subjected to a generalised nature nor subject to the necessity of nature but came to be a free, unique, irreducible, concrete entity. The significance of this for Zizioulas is that if the divine persons are hypostatic this means that being is no longer attributed to nature but as the 'product of freedom'.[539]

6.6.1 The irreducibility of person to substance

The significance of this prima facie innocuous technicality in Greek Patristic thought lies in demonstrating the *irreducibility* of personhood; into which is folded Zizioulas' own concern to demonstrate the absolute freedom of divine personhood. True being is not reducible to *what* something is, this is the mark of Greek monism according to Zizioulas, 'there is the widespread assumption that the term "being" denotes the *ousia* or substance or essence of God, and it is to be

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[537] Tertullian, *Against Praxeas,* 11-12 PL 2, 1670D

[538] As Ratzinger points out in the case of Justin Martyr's use of the term *persona* to depict dramatic role. However, he would contest Zizioulas' reading of Tertullian's use of *persona* as lacking ontological content, since according to Ratzinger by the time of Tertullian, '*persona* had found its claim to reality' (1990, 'Retrieving the Tradition: Concerning the notion of person in theology' in *Communio*. 17. pp.441-442).

[539] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 39.

distinguished from the persons of the Holy Trinity'[540]. To *reduce* being to *what* something is replicates the problems inherent to Greek monistic ontology, namely to diminish freedom. The Cappadocian Fathers conveyed *irreducibility* by demonstrating that the person and nature must *coincide:*

> It [being] denotes (a) the τι ἐστιν (*what* he is) of God's being, and this the Cappadocians call the *ousia* or substance or nature of God; and (b) it refers to the ὁπως ἐστιν (*how* he is), which they identify with his personhood. Thus, Basil C.Eun.I.14-15, Gregory Naz., *Theol. Or.* 3.16[541].

Ousia in divine being cannot exist in itself without existing simultaneously with the divine *hypostases*. But *hypostasis* and *ousia* would not fully coincide if *hypostasis* was reducible to *ousia* for then *hypostasis* would not bear the totality of its being, or put another way true divinity would not lie with the hypostases of Father, Son and Spirit but with the *ousia* of which the *hypostaseis* subsist.

Lossky in his *Image and Likeness* (1974)[542] maintains, like Zizioulas, that the Cappadocian Fathers distinguished *hypostasis* from *ousia* precisely to demonstrate that *hypostasis* is not a particular instance of a general *ousia.*[543] He claims that St. Basil went beyond the Aristotelian distinction between a 'πρωτη and δευτερα οὐσια'.[544] If *hypostasis* was a secondary instance of *ousia* the problem of Sabellianism would arise again, since the person would merely be an instance of a general and primary substance. If *hypostasis* was identified fully with *ousia* then three *hypostases* would result in tritheism, since there would also be three *ousia*. Thus, *ousia* and *hypostasis* needed to be distinguished

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[540] John Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 113–54 (p. 125). Indeed, Zizioulas notes that Alan Torrance raises the objection to Zizioulas on the basis that personhood is different to being
[541] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 125.
[542] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God.*
[543] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, pp. 113–14.
[544] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 114.

from each other, in the solution *mia ousia, tres hypostaseis* there is a coincidence between *ousia* and *hypostasis* and a distinction in that the *hypostases* each bear *ousia* in its totality.

6.6.2 Monarchy of the Father

If each hypostasis is the bearer of its totality then it is irreducible to substance. Zizioulas then argues that the reason why the Trinity subsists the way that it does is not due to an impersonal substance but is fundamentally personal, as Zizioulas writes 'the Trinity is a "movement" initiated by a person'[545] this person being the Father, he adds:

> if God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person- as the hypostasis of the Father- makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God. This point is absolutely crucial. For it is precisely with this point that the new philosophical position of the Cappadocian Fathers, and of St Basil in particular, is directly connected. That is to say, the substance never exists in a "naked" state, that is, without hypostasis, without a "mode of existence". And the one divine substance is consequently the being of God only because it has these three modes of existence, which it owes not to the substance but to one person, the Father[546].

It is Zizioulas' position that the Greek Patristic legacy to Trinitarian theology is to ascribe the unity of God, 'the ontological "principle" or "cause" of the being and life of God'[547], not to

[545] Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', p. 131.
[546] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.
[547] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.

substance but to *hypostasis*, namely the person of the Father. The importance of this for Zizioulas is that:

> when we say that God 'is', we do not bind the personal freedom of God- the being of God is not an ontological 'necessity' of a simple 'reality' for God- but we ascribe the being of God to His personal freedom. In a more analytical way this means that God, as Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through 'being' His free will to exist[548].

Thus, the being of God does not lie, according to Zizioulas, exclusively with oneness of substance but the communion of the one God is attributed to the Father who is cause of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. This means that for Zizioulas the ontological principle of God, namely what sustains the communion between the triune persons, is implicitly personal.

6.7 ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, Zizioulas' notion of freedom is not an abrogation of nature but is tied with the *ascetic achievement* in that freedom is realised in communion, that movement of love, with the Father so that the human person can share in the creative and personal freedom which belongs to the Father. The communion which is necessary for created nature to fulfil itself must be founded upon the axiom of absolute divine freedom if creation is to become free.

This chapter has argued that Zizioulas develops his Trinitarian theology to resolve the problem of the identity of the Church but that necessarily involves an ontology that is personal since the heart of the Church is communion with the Father, in Christ and the Spirit. Zizioulas

548 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.

sees in divine-human communion that the 'mystery of the Church'[549] is intrinsic to questions relating to the 'being of the world'[550] and 'the being of man'[551].

But it is not the case that Zizioulas projects the nature of Trinitarian communion onto the Church, or that Zizioulas projects a relational personalist philosophies onto God. Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology is an answer to the question, if the Church is the foundation of divine-human communion then whom is the Church in communion? The purpose of Zizioulas' Trinitarian personhood is not to provide a paradigm but a conception of divine freedom, and how human persons become free through their participation in the divine life. Through his Trinitarian theology Zizioulas outlines the nature of being sustained by the one who is free and with whom creation exists in communion. The concept of the person emerged as the Church endeavoured to 'give ontological expression to its faith in the Triune God'[552].

However, this chapter does find that Zizioulas' work is susceptible to the same problems that Florovsky makes in his total abrogation of Sophiological thought; and that the way of emphasising the radical freedom of creation is established in opposition to Sophiology which led him to take *creatio ex nihilo* as a given which has not been the case in previous Orthodox proposals. Recent research has shown that Florovsky's views on creation are fundamentally shaped by Bulgakov. Thus, whilst Zizioulas does not consciously project philosophical personalism onto the Trinity neither is his theology of personhood strictly patristic. Zizioulas' theology of personhood is a neopatristic synthesis, with all the strengths and failings thereof.

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[549] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.
[550] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.
[551] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.
[552] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 36.

CHAPTER 7. ON THE PERSON (2): ZIZIOULAS' INTERPRETATION OF PERSONHOOD IN HIS CRITIQUE OF THE WEST

Zizioulas' reading of Augustine, and of the West, has been well received by Social Trinitarian theologians because it is pertinent to their own aim to posit a Social Trinity based upon a retrieval to Cappadocian sources against the primacy of divine substance and absolute subject in their own Western heritage. As Rowan Williams writes, a derogatory reading of Augustine and the West can be found in a range of twentieth century Orthodox theologians

> and a good many contemporary Western theologians have been inclined to take such judgements on trust, and to conclude that we have little to learn from Augustine in the task of constructing a properly 'relational' model of God's Trinitarian life[553].

The potency of Zizioulas' Trinitarian conception for Social Trinitarianism led his critics to question Zizioulas' commitment to the de Régnon paradigm[4]. His critics identify that the de Régnon paradigm had 'become intrinsic to Trinitarian theology within modern systematics'[554], and that this was largely due to the influence of Zizioulas upon social-Trinitarianism. According to Ayres, Zizioulas re-enforces a narrative in which 'the story of the supposed errors of Western Trinitarianism serves to persuade the reader that a turn to "eastern" emphases is necessary'[555]. Indeed, the patristic criticism he has received, from the likes of Ayres and Ludlow[556], questions the foundations of this narrative precisely due to its potent influence in contemporary Trinitarian theology.

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[553] Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 171.
[554] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, p. 385.
[555] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 386.
[556] Morwena Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa Ancient and [Post]Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 52.

The reception by Social Trinitarian theologians frames any encounter of the critics of Social Trinitarianism with Zizioulas' work. Zizioulas becomes known as a theologian who maintains an Orthodox Trinity over and above a Western conception, and thus generative for a social analogy of the Trinity derived from Cappadocian theology in contrast to an Augustinian psychological analogy for the Trinity. This chapter shall instead consider why Zizioulas criticises a Western conception of Trinitarian personhood, and the aim of doing this is twofold. First, to consider Zizioulas' arguments in relation to renewed scholarship on the juxtaposition between a scholastic and a Greek conception of the Trinity in order to reveal that Zizioulas' arguments are ultimately anachronistic. Second, in our aim to distinguish Zizioulas from Social Trinitarianism this endeavour roots Zizioulas use of the de Régnon not as a Social Trinitarian project but in relation to the Orthodox perspectives of the West which informed Zizioulas' work.

Zizioulas posits an ontology in which the Trinitarian persons exist in communion which is held together by the Father; and he identifies that it is a mistaken endeavour to locate the source of being in 'isolated ahistorical substances, since the source of reality is not "a" substance but a relational system'[557]. Being does not find its ontological foundations within a distinct identifiable 'substance' but through the communion of the triune persons and hypostatical principle implicit to the monarchy of the Father. Consequently, implicit to Zizioulas' project is a dichotomous opposition between a conception of the human person rooted in communion and Boethius' notion of the person as an 'individual substance of rational nature' based upon an epistemology containing 'the myth of a detached or neutral subjectivity'[558].

Zizioulas' use of the term 'objectified' reveals the inherent problem he identifies with approaching the human person *qua* substance. To consider the person in terms of capacities or qualities belonging to an inherent nature is to reduce the nature of personhood to a particular

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[557] Rowan Williams, 'Eastern Orthodox Theology', in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, Third (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), pp. 572–89 (p. 510).
[558] Williams, 'Eastern Orthodox Theology', p. 513.

category and thus the person is an object. By contrast, Zizioulas argues for the irreducibility of personhood. To objectify or reduce persons compromises the freedom required for communion as freedom is circumscribed by the necessity of substance. Consequently, the objectification of persons, according to substance, is incongruent with *divine-human communion* (*theôsis*). For Zizioulas approaching the human person vis-à-vis substance is incongruous with Zizioulas' conception of divine-human communion; which he believes to be implicit to a Patristic Eucharistic consciousness. Zizioulas' solution to the problem is to posit a *neopatristic synthesis*; which seeks to denigrate the influence of an external metaphysics upon Orthodox theology through a return (*ressourcement)* to Patristic sources but which simultaneously engages with (post)modernity. Therefore, refuting any ontology founded upon substance constitutes a central concern within his work.

His attention is drawn to theology in the 'West'. According to Zizioulas, 'Western' thought has 'operated with this concept of the person for a long time'[559] representing a tendency to approach the nature of the human person *quâ* substance; namely through 'objectified substance'[560]. This is a tendency that Zizioulas identifies not only within philosophy but is attributable to theological 'Aristotelian Scholasticism'[561]. In particular, Zizioulas claims that 'The West … identified the being, the ontological principle, of God with His substance rather than with the person of the Father'[562] and that

> The subsequent developments of Trinitarian theology, especially in the West with Augustine and the scholastics, have led us to see the term *ousia*, not *hypostasis*, as the expression of the ultimate character and the causal principle (ἀρχη) in God's being[563].

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[559] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 211.
[560] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 209.
[561] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 210.
[562] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 41.
[563] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 88.

7.1 ***Rooting Zizioulas' arguments against theological West in the neopatristic synthesis***

Zizioulas' repudiation of a 'metaphysics of substance' is, to an extent, engendered by the need to affirm an Orthodox approach to theology by Russian émigrés. Zizioulas' particular explication of the *neopatristic synthesis* regarding personhood derives from a tendency within Orthodox theology, since Lossky and Florovsky, to ground the theological hypothesis upon *communion* as perceived in the patristic tradition; in a manner comparable to *ressourcement*, or *La Nouvelle Theologie*. Indeed, Papanikolaou has argued that the centrality of *divine-human communion* to Patristic thought:

> becomes a self-identification marker against 'Western' theologies, which they see as excessively rationalistic and therefore a threat to the very heart of theological discourse defined in terms of the realism of *divine-human communion*. On these two points, the affirmation of the realism of *divine-human communion* and the rejection of so-called 'Western' rationalism, Lossky and Zizioulas share much in common with other contemporary Orthodox theologians. There exists an identifiable consensus in contemporary Orthodox theology that is united around these two principles, particularly that of the realism of *divine-human communion*[564].

The *neopatristic synthesis*, inherent to the works of Lossky and Zizioulas, began as a direct reaction against the speculative epistemology of what Zernov terms the 'Russian Religious Renaissance' but has since, in reaffirming the patristic tradition, sought to emancipate Orthodoxy from any perceived 'Western' theologoumena or philosophical influence[565]. Broadly speaking, *sophiology* was heavily criticised, notably by Florovsky and Lossky, for propagating an extra-divine

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[564] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apohaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 2.

[565] It is worth stating that although the neopatristic synthesis was posed against Bulgakov and Sophiology, recent research has argued that the neopatristic synthesis was actually indebted to Bulgakov. Gallaher, 'The Sophiological Origins of Vladimir Lossky's Apophaticism'.

intermediary reality, *Sophia*, which owed its conceptual 'existence' more to the various streams of late-Romantic German mysticism and idealism, such as Hegel's speculative 'absolute subject' or Fichte's 'transcendental ego', than to a patristic vision of personhood.

Unfortunately, further arguments on Sophiology are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the neopatristic synthesis was also posed in response to the problems posed by neo-scholasticism in Catholicism, and therefore we shall consider how the *neopatristic synthesis* was directed against neo-scholasticism as it shapes Zizioulas' own critique of the West generally. Specifically, it is alleged that scholastic theology, and indeed Western theology since Augustine, has been influenced by a recourse to philosophical sources than to a Patristic phronema. In particular, the focus is on the alleged reduction of the Trinity to divine substance.

Zizioulas seems to take the presuppositions of what Henessey terms the 'de Régnon paradigm'[566] for granted. The position commonly attributed to Theodore de Régnon in his *Études de théologie positive sur la sainte Trinité*[567] is that the Cappadocians considered the Trinity in terms of the diversity of persons whereas Augustine began with the unity of divine nature. With this paradigm in mind Zizioulas presents positions on Augustine's Trinity without a nuanced examination of Augustine's primary source material. Attributing the primacy of divine substance over personhood in the Trinity had something of a consensus in twentieth century scholarship. In particular, Zizioulas cites from JND Kelly 'in contrast to the tradition which made the Father its starting point, he [Augustine] beings with the divine nature itself'[568]. Zizioulas also cites from Rahner[569] repeating the same argument arguing that Augustine's attribution of *ousia* over *hypostasis* as the causal principle in God's being has resulted in the possibility of scholastic manuals writing on the One God before considering the Trinity. By contrast the Cappadocians attributed cause to the Father. Upon the time of the publication of *Being as Communion* this distinction was taken as a

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[566] Hennessy, p. 180.
[567] de Régnon.
[568] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 33,fn.59.
[569] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 58f. cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 88.fn.66.

given. Indeed, Zizioulas only cites de Régnon once in his entire corpus and that is to make the claim that de Régnon's paradigm is a well-established scholarly position. He writes 'the fact, well-known as an observation of historians, that the West always started with the one God and then moved forward to the Trinity, whereas the East followed the opposite course'[570].

However, recent publications have questioned attributing this position to de Régnon, and it is relevant to this thesis because it not only questions the utility of perpetuating a dichotomy between West and East but reveals that this consensus on the divide between East and West lying with substance arose in the twentieth century and that it is hard to find evidence to support this position in the primary source material in either Augustine or the Cappadocians. We shall consider this argument below, however, for now it is important to state that this renewed scholarship on de Régnon is revealing for the context into which Zizioulas posits his arguments.

First, for the reason that de Régnon posed a contrast not out of purely historical motivations but as part of a Patristic and Thomist ressourcement to find a 'theological alternative to the increasingly rigid neo-Scholasticism of his day'[571]. Rather than contrasting Latin and Greek sources de Régnon sought to demonstrate a continuity between them that could counter the reliance on neo-Thomist manuals. Thus, it would be more proper to speak of a scholastic and Patristic opposition than a Greek and Latin opposition in reference to de Régnon.

Second, the neopatristic synthesis to which Zizioulas refers began as a counter movement to neo-scholasticism as part of a patristic ressourcement. The renewed research into de Régnon reveals how influential de Régnon was upon Lossky. Barnes' study[572] shows that in the French edition of Lossky's *Éssai sur la théologie mystique de l'église d'orient*[573] twelve out of forty three footnotes refer to de Régnon in reference to Greek Trinitarian theology. But in the English translation 'all the citations to de Régnon are missing except two direct quotations … what, in the original, were

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[570] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 34.
[571] Hennessy, p. 181.
[572] Michel René Barnes, 'De Régnon Reconsidered', *Augustinian Studies*, 26.2 (1995), 51–79 (p. 58).
[573] Vladimir Lossky, *Éssai Sur La Théologie Mystique de l'église d'orient* (Paris: Aubier, 1944).

Lossky's footnote references to the *Études*, become, in the English translation, footnote references to the Cappadocian texts originally discussed by de Régnon'[574]. The argument is that for want of footnotes, the trope of Cappadocian priority of persons becomes popularised and attributed to the Cappadocians rather than Lossky's reading of de Régnon; and that the justification for such an argument is not as concrete as Zizioulas or Lossky claim. Whether this claim has merit or not, the point is that Lossky popularised de Régnon in his seminal work *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*[575].

These two points are worth considering when it comes to examining Zizioulas' arguments about the theological West. It is important to consider Zizioulas' work as a continuation of the neopatristic synthesis of Florovsky, Lossky et al which was originally posed to counter neo-scholasticism. As identified in our chapter on Zizioulas' questions, the legacy of the Russian émigré's criticism of neo-scholasticism was important for Zizioulas. He continues this opposition to scholasticism in his own context where he perceived a 'scholastic captivity' of the Greek Orthodox Church and critiques that the method of theology done in the 'dogmatic manuals' prioritised rational epistemology and 'substantialist' approaches to personhood over ontology resembling a Thomistic approach to theology. He writes, 'the German Protestant and Roman Catholic Universities of the last century acted as the pattern and the prototype in the establishment of the theological faculties in the University of Athens and Salonica in Greece'[576]. Orthodox theology had become 'a variation of Western scholasticism'[577]. Thus, Lossky and Zizioulas share the concern to maintain a 'neopatristic synthesis' in defending the centrality of *divine-human communion* against the prioritisation of nature over person and against the prioritisation of

[574] Barnes, p. 58.
[575] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.
[576] John Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 349–60 (p. 350).Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 350.
[577] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 350.

epistemology over ontology[578]. As Zizioulas writes, 'you cannot return to the Patristic ethos of theology and still keep your scholastic methodology'[579]. Thus, for Zizioulas the central emphasis upon the Patristic concept of *divine-human communion* excludes the methodology of Thomistic scholasticism.

Zizioulas' perception of the 'West' seems to have been influenced by, or merely assumed from, Lossky's criticism of the West for its rationalistic approach to theology. Zizioulas has a touch of the polemic against the West which Florovsky did not exhibit, indeed Florovsky criticised Lossky for dividing Trinitarian theology in two approaches: one rooted in the Cappadocians and another with Augustine. As Florovsky writes:

> Lossky probably exaggerates the tension between East and West even in the patristic tradition. A 'tension' there obviously existed, as there 'tensions' inside the 'Eastern tradition' itself, e.g. between Alexandria and Antioch. But the author seems to assume that the tension between the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians and that of Augustine, was of such a sharp and radical character as to exclude any kind of 'reconciliation' and overarching synthesis[580].

For Florovsky, Augustine could be considered as a Father of the Church. But Zizioulas has seemed to have followed in Lossky's wake in attributing the theological differences between East and West to Augustine. Indeed, the claim that Lossky has an important influence upon Zizioulas has a certain consensus amongst Zizioulas' commentators, as McGuckin expounds:

> it does not take much reading to demonstrate the fingerprints of this approach in hosts of subsequent Orthodox theologians not least Metropolitan John Zizioulas, with his own highly

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[578] See our chapter 8 on Zizioulas' answers: truth

[579] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 350.

[580] Georges Florovsky, 'Review of V.Lossky, Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church (London 1957)', *The Journal of Religion*, 38 (1958), 207–8 (p. 207).

philosophical rendering of what he too has elevated as Cappadocian Trinitarianism resonating with personalist metaphysics[581].

Lossky seems to be significant for the theological landscape within which Zizioulas operates. This seems to be an indirect influence, i.e. from Lossky to Zizioulas through Zizioulas' contemporary Yannaras. Like Lossky, Yannaras appropriates Psuedo-Dionysius' apophaticism in addition to affirming personhood in terms of irreducibility, *ekstasis* and communion leading to 'a continuity of thought on personhood that can be traced from Lossky through Yannaras to Zizioulas'[582]. Although such a continuity may be postulated, Papanikolaou writes that in a conversation with him Zizioulas is somewhat less than receptive to the suggestion of an indirect influence from Lossky through Yannaras in his theology of personhood: 'Zizioulas was willing to admit that may be the case, but added that the influence would be slight given the substantial difference between their theologies'[583]. Those differences in particular rotate around the role of apophaticism, an antinomic approach for understanding the Trinitarian persons. This particular dynamic is beyond the scope of this chapter[584].

However, there are significant similarities in terms of the *form* and *content* of their theologies of personhood which suggests that Lossky contextualises the Orthodox critique of the West, of which Zizioulas is a part. In particular, there is the claim that the West prioritises the substance of

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[581] John McGuckin, 'On the Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church', in *Alexander Schmemann Lecture* (St.Vladimir's Seminary, New York, 2014) <https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/on_the_mystical_theology_of_the_eastern_church> [accessed 8 July 2021]. URL: https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/on_the_mystical_theology_of_the_eastern_church [Accessed: 8th July 2021].

[582] Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Personhood and Its Exponents in Twentieth-Century Orthodox Theology', in *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, ed. by Mary Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 232–46 (p. 238).

[583] The scope of this the Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apohaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 198, fn.4.

[584] Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God', *Modern Theology*, 19.3 (2003), 357–85. Is a good source for exploring the differences between Lossky and Zizioulas.

God over the triune persons. Like Zizioulas, Lossky maintains that hypostasis is not reducible to substance and that God's nature is personal:

> The hypostasis as such, in as much as it is irreducible to the οὐσια is no longer a conceptual expression but a sign which is introduced into the domain of the non-generalizable, pointing out the radically personal character of the God of Christian revelation[585].

Lossky maintains that scholastic theology did not integrate the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, but continued to attribute *hypostasis* with *substance*. He argues this position is attributable to Boethius 'in his definition of person: *substantia inidividua rationalis naturae* (and let us note that *substantia* here is a literal translation of *ὑποστασις*)'[586]. Indeed, Von Balthasar claims that Boethius' conception of personhood predominated throughout the middle ages[587]. There is a certain consensus that Thomas Aquinas 'received intact this concept formulated by Boethius for designating created being'[588]. Despite the fact that applying it to the triune persons found it problematic because it triplicates divine substance neither 'Thomas Aquinas, nor even Richard St.Victor, who criticized Boethius, abandoned the notion of human person = individual substance in his anthropology, after having transformed it for use in Trinitarian theology'[589]. Zizioulas claims that the assumption of the person as rational individual was also assumed by Augustine, who thus considered the triune persons as the rational dynamics of a singular mind[590]. Such a move pathed the way for the person to be considered as a self-contained individual in post enlightenment Western thought; and Zizioulas constructs a historical genealogy to make this claim:

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[585] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 113.
[586] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 116.
[587] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, 'On the Concept of Person', *Communio*, 17 (1986), 18–26 (p. 22).
[588] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 116.
[589] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 116.
[590] John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. by Knight Douglas (London: T&T Clark, 2008), p. 77.

> It can be demonstrated … that in all of these cases the real issue lies in the attempt to understand man by looking introspectively at him either as an autonomous ethical agent (Tertullian, Antiochenes) or as the *Ego* of a psychological complex (Augustine) or as a substance possessing certain potencies (Scholastics)[591].

In reference to divine personhood; Lossky claims that in adapting Boethius by conveying the triune persons as *relatio* Aquinas was aligning himself closely with Augustine[592]. A position repeated by Balthasar[593] and Ratzinger who writes 'according to Augustine and late patristic theology, the three persons that exist in God are in their nature relations. They are, therefore, not substances that stand next to each other, but they are real existing relations, and nothing besides'[594]. But as shall be examined, Zizioulas claims that the definition of persons as pure relation enabled Augustine, and those that followed him, to prioritise divine substance over person[595].

Unfortunately, a fair evaluation of scholastic theologians, especially Aquinas, is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting that Zizioulas does not subject the sources from Aquinas or Boethius to historical scrutiny. There do not appear to be any citations of Aquinas' work in Zizioulas' works *Communion and Otherness, Lectures*[596]*, The One and the Many* or *Being as Communion*; and this is surprising considering the importance the alleged contrast between scholasticism and Greek Patristics has in his theology. Instead, Zizioulas replicates the Orthodox claims made against them as a target against which to riposte using his understanding of the Greek Patristic tradition. As David Bentley Hart indicates, the Greek Patristic and Scholastic distinction is a convenient trope, as many theologians

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[591] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood', p. 405.
[592] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 116.
[593] Von Balthasar, 'On the Concept of Person', p. 22.
[594] Joseph Ratzinger, 'Retrieving the Tradition: Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology', *Communio*, 17 (1990), 439–54 (p. 444).
[595] Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 77.
[596] A notable exception is a brief citation in Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 71.

> take it as license for their [Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians] differing critiques of "Platonism" or "Hellenism" of classical Trinitarian metaphysics; and all of us who, in our weaker moments, prefer synopsis to precision find in it a convenient implement for arranging our accounts of doctrinal history into simple taxonomies, under tidily discrete divisions[597].

Such a distinction serves as useful taxonomy for Lossky and Zizioulas who share the view that the adherence to associating the person with substance lead scholastic theology away from Patristic tradition. Consequently, the 'recovery' of a Patristic ethos directed towards a vision of the Church's 'catholicity'[598] has been accompanied by a critical attitude on certain doctrinal issues which are perceived to obscure this catholicity; in particular, and evident throughout Zizioulas' works, issues pertaining to the relation between substance and person in human and Trinitarian personhood, and to some extent, though not as extensive as Lossky, on the subjects of *filioque* and the monarchy of the Father.

In the light of this context, it appears that the legacy of the neopatristic synthesis, which was directed against the rationalistic excesses of the neo-scholasticism encountered by Orthodoxy in the early 20th century, leads Zizioulas to make generalised criticisms of Western theological positions on personhood whilst closing himself from insights on personhood in relation to God that could otherwise assist his ecumenical endeavour. There seems to be little need for Zizioulas to perpetuate the historical arguments made against Augustine.

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[597] David Bentley Hart, 'The Mirror of the Infinite: Gregory of Nyssa on the Vestigia Trinitatis', in *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), pp. 111–33 (p. 111).
[598] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26.

7.2 ***An ecumenical task***

It is important to identify that Zizioulas is not anti-Western. He writes that 'slogans such as "anti-Westernism" or "pro-Westernism" [do not] have any place in a serious theological effort'[599]. Plested remarks that Zizioulas adopts a 'critical but deeply constructive criticism of the West'[600]. For Zizioulas, dialogue with the 'West' is implicit with the process of a broader 'return' to the roots of the tradition perceived in the Church Fathers. As an ecumenical project, such a 'return', or 'neopatristic synthesis' seeks a move away from a confessional bias towards a deeper engagement with the roots of both 'Western' and 'Eastern' traditions. Indeed, Zizioulas writes that this is the purpose of his seminal work, *Being as Communion* (1985):

> These studies are addressed to the reader who seeks in Orthodox theology the dimension of the faith of the Greek Fathers, a dimension necessary to the *catholicity* of the faith of the Church and to the *existential* implications of Christian doctrine and ecclesial institution. They are addressed to the Western Christian who feels, as it were, "amputated" since the East and West followed their different and autonomous paths[601].

Zizioulas' mentor, Florovsky, perceived that the 'patristic revival' has an implicit 'imperative' for ecumenical dialogue and a thorough theological 'free engagement with the West'[602]. Lossky, as an émigré in the Sorbonne, researched 'Western' mystical spirituality, such as Meister Eckhart and St. John of the Cross, Florovsky was actively engaged with the fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, whilst Zizioulas was president of the World Council of Churches. Indeed, the enterprise of a 'neo-patristic synthesis' itself has significant parallels to ressourcement, evident in the works

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[599] Zizioulas, 'The Being of God and the Being of Man', p. 40.
[600] Marcus Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 212.
[601] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26.
[602] Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology Part Two*, VI, p. 308.

of Henri De Lubac and in what was latter called *La Nouvelle Théologie,* and began as a shared endeavour to free theology from the faults of neo-scholasticism through a return to Thomistic and Patristic sources.

However, the simplistic narrative of Orthodoxy being opposed to the West must be challenged since the neopatristic synthesis of Florovsky was from its inception an ecumenical endeavour. Andrew Louth argues that the patristic ressourcement owes much to Roman Catholic Patristic scholars, and such a ressourcement was not a purely Orthodox endeavour but an ecumenical task. He writes that 'the publication in fine critical detail editions, with translation, of the works of the Greek Fathers has been of enormous benefit to Orthodox, who have been able, as a result of this work, to gain a much deeper and more accurate knowledge of their own tradition'[603]. Moreover, the return to the sources in Catholicism, reacting against neo-scholasticism, has allowed Aquinas to be detached from the 'cold intellectual categories of "scholasticism"'[604]. As established in our chapter on Zizioulas' questions, this renewed reading of Patristic sources enabled de Lubac to be a source of inspiration for Zizioulas. A particular problem with the neopatristic synthesis is allowing neo-scholasticism to colour their impression of the theological West. The Patristic ressourcement by Orthodox theologians was fuelled by the rhetoric that 'only a creative return to the Fathers offers a real alternative to a Western theology characterised by rationalism and impersonalism, and responsible for many of the ills in the world'[605]

In this context, there is an opposition between a desire for ecumenism and Zizioulas seeking to identify problematic tendencies in scholasticism, whilst seeking to challenge individualism in modernity. But in the light of Zizioulas seeking a catholicity in the faith of the Church it seems counterproductive to misinterpret Augustine on personhood, and to deny Western spirituality on

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[603] Andrew Louth, 'French Ressourcement Theology and Orthodoxy: A Living Mutual Relationship?', in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 495–508 (p. 506).
[604] Louth, 'French Ressourcement Theology and Orthodoxy: A Living Mutual Relationship?', p. 507.
[605] Plested, p. 197.

the grounds it psychologises the Self, when upon further examination such prayerfulness is grounded upon the ecstatic movement towards communion which can surely be incorporated into divine-human communion.

Zizioulas' defence of the irreducibility of personhood leads him to be overly critical of the West, in particular of Augustine. The criticisms which Zizioulas brings against *reducibility* in modernity and certain aspects of neo-scholasticism in regard to Augustine possibly obscures potential cross fertilisation with the West to allow for a true ecumenical neopatristic synthesis.

Indeed, there are affinities between Zizioulas and Augustine. Zizioulas does allude to Augustine's *totus Christus* in his first work *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*[606] in which Christ is a corporate personality that is eschatological and constituted by the Spirit, Zizioulas writes '*the whole Christ* in Augustine's apt phrase'[607] and although Zizioulas develops the concept without further reference to Augustine, the union of humanity in the mystical body of Christ is a key concept for Zizioulas' ecclesiology. Indeed, further work on the relationship between Augustine's and Zizioulas' ecclesiology could be productive for future work on Eucharistic ecclesiology.

7.3 ***Filioque***

The matter of the filioque is a matter of history as much as of doctrine. When considering Zizioulas' consideration of filioque it is important to avoid a cliched discourse of grandstanding in which ecumenical dialogue becomes an arena for the rehearsal of an unresolvable issue; and in which the Orthodox become characterised as intransigent dogmatists. The discussion is about discerning what is at stake in ecumenical dialogue, and as Zizioulas would argue, about discerning

[606] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*.
[607] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 15.

the theological presuppositions behind that discussion rather than taking the discussion in terms of propositional claims.

In the light of Zizioulas seeking a catholicity in the faith of the Church it is not necessarily the case that there is in Zizioulas' theology a dichotomy between the importance he places on the *monarchy of the Father* and the filioque clause; and this is because in the process of discerning catholicity Zizioulas demonstrates a hospitable flexibility. But it has to be weighed against his questioning in which he maintains the importance of the monarchy of the Father. Thus, for Zizioulas, filioque is not indicative of standing on an Orthodox cause in which the filioque must be refuted; rather the discussion centres on the importance of ontological freedom within the Trinity. The discussion on the filioque for Zizioulas does not pertain then primarily to the filioque clause but to the importance of the monarchy of the Father. Likewise, for Zizioulas the monarchy of the Father secures the singular procession of the Spirit, and therefore, protects the Spirit's personhood and freedom.

Zizioulas is a committed ecumenist and is willing to accept theological positions in the West which do not contradict what he sees to be the Patristic position that maintains the monarchy of the Father. Whereas, for Lossky, the filioque clause was the definitive theological divide between the East and the West, as Lossky claims:

> This relationship between the two persons who take their origin from the Father was established by the western doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit *ab utroque,* that is to say from the two persons at once; from the Father and from the Son. 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. In order to understand what the East desired to safeguard in protesting against the western formula it will suffice to compare

the two Trinitarian conceptions which confronted each other about the middle of the ninth century[608].

In Zizioulas' regard 'Lossky's view have led to extremes that are beginning to show the weaknesses of his position'[609]. Zizioulas does not perceive the filioque to be the definitive dividing line between Orthodoxy and the West and can accept the *filioque* clause if the Son as the source of manifestation refers to the *economy* rather than the immanent Trinity, and if in the immanent Trinity the Son is bequeathed a mediatorial role, and as long as it maintains the *monarchia* of the Father.

Zizioulas believes that Photius obscured the real issue in the *filioque* debate. The issue according to Zizioulas centres on the 'ultimate ontological category in theology'[610] which in Zizioulas' view is the person rather than substance.

This point is not negated by Augustine's understanding of the *filioque*. In a concession to Augustine, Zizioulas writes that in *theologia* the Spirit can be manifested through the Son as long as the Father remains the primary ontological category for the Trinity. This does not imply two *archai* or principles for the Spirit rather 'Augustine refers to the Father as the one from whom the Spirit proceeds *principaliter*'[611] which he equates with the monarchia of the Father in Cappadocian thought. Zizioulas claims that the debate on *filioque* is obscured by the lack of clarification on the issue by the East discussing the Father as *'aition'* that conveys the Father as the ontological cause of both Son and Spirit.

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[608] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 56.
[609] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 5.
[610] John Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', in *Communion and Otherness*, ed. by Paul McPartlan (T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 178–205 (p. 196).
[611] Zizioulas, 'Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person', p. 197.

Zizioulas' theological concern is with maintaining the monarchy of the Father rather than an in toto rejection of the filioque clause of the Nicene creed[612]. In his essay on the filioque[613], Zizioulas demonstrates an openness to accepting the statement from the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity which Zizioulas cites:

> the East and West can easily continue dialogue also as regards the *Filioque* question providing there is full acceptance of the doctrine of tradition on the *monarchia* (μοναρχία) of the Father. The *monarchia* of the Father means that the Father is the sole cause/origin both of the Son and the Spirit[614].

Moreover, he writes that 'if Roman catholic theology would be ready to admit that the son in no way constitutes a "cause"(aition) in the procession of the Spirit, this would bring the two traditions much closer to each other with regard to the filioque'[615]. This concession on the filioque is based on the Greek Patristic precedent for attributing a mediating role for the Son in the procession of the Spirit: 'Saint Gregory of Nyssa explicitly admits a mediating role of the son in the possession of the Spirit from the Father.'[616] Zizioulas can adopt this position as long as there is a recognition that the sole cause of the distinction of the triune persons is the Father and he cites from *Not Three Gods* by Gregory of Nyssa, 'We do not deny the difference between Him (the Father), who exists as the causer, and he who is from this causer'[617]. The Father is the cause whilst the Son and the Spirit as caused. However, the Son can have a mediatorial role in the procession

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[612] For an exploration of why the Monarchy of the Father is important for Zizioulas see chapter 'on the person (1): Perichoresis and Monarchy of the Father.

[613] John Zizioulas, 'One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 41–49.

[614] Zizioulas, 'One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque', p. 41.

[615] Zizioulas, 'One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque', p. 43.

[616] Zizioulas, 'One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque', p. 43.

[617] Cited in Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 79.

of the Spirit, citing from Gregory of Nyssa he writes: 'As for that which is caused (the Son), we recognise a further difference. The Son comes immediately and directly from the Cause, whereas the Spirit comes through the one who comes directly from the Cause, that is, through the mediation of the Son'[618]. This mediatorial role is a suitable safeguard for the fact that the Son is the only begotten and that the Spirit is not begotten alongside the Son.

Zizioulas argues that this role can be articulated with the help of the preposition *dia* (through) the Son. He claims that if the Council of Florence (1438-39) had adopted the term 'through the Son' rather than 'from the Son'[619] it would have successfully communicated the Son as a mediator rather a cause of the Spirit. Zizioulas sees the filioque question as a matter which the Churches of the East and the West can resolve. But it is a matter of making apparent the theological presuppositions behind such ecumenical dialogue. For Zizioulas, the Trinity must be considered in the light of the single cause as it cannot be considered in the sense that the Son and the Father are two distinct causes for the Spirit in God's immanent being because to do so would be to subjugate God to ontological necessity. As Zizioulas writes, in ecumenical dialogue 'all we have to do is avoid anything that obscures the principle that, within the Trinity, the Father alone is cause and agent'[620].

7.4 ***Conclusion***

Does renewed research into Augustine and the Greek Patristics negate Zizioulas' project? For certain scholars like Turcescu[621], the fact that Zizioulas' position on the monarchy of the Father and the person cannot be derived from a historically accurate reading of Gregory of Nyssa invalidates Zizioulas' theology of personhood. As conveyed in the previous chapter, Alexeis

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[618] Cited in Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 79–80.
[619] Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 82.
[620] Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 82.
[621] Turcescu.

Torrance[622] and Papanikolaou[623] claim that Zizioulas' arguments are not about corresponding Patristic terminology to theologies of personhood. Instead, Zizioulas seeks to bring the spirit of the Patristic age, namely its rootedness in the divine-human communion between created human persons and the Trinity, mediated in the incarnation of Christ in the Spirit, and gifted to humanity in the sacraments, into dialogue with contemporary philosophical and ethical questions concerning personhood. In this dialogue, Patristic scholarship which examines Patristic concepts in depth can act as a cautionary measure to ensure that a neopatristic synthesis does not stray too far from Patristic sources. It prevents Zizioulas from making unjustified claims about Augustine and can act as a corrective to Zizioulas ignoring the importance of subjectivity in the life of communion. On the theological West, Zizioulas can be too easily influenced by the attitudes of his neopatristic predecessors in attributing the rise of individualism to Augustine. This need not be the case since Zizioulas is a committed ecumenist, and it has been demonstrated that on the subject of the filioque he can be flexible in accommodating a broader return to a synthesis between East and West.

[622] Alexis Torrance, 'Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the Debate', p. 701.
[623] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 160.

PART 3: A REPARATIVE READING OF ZIZIOULAS' EUCHARISTIC ECCLESIOLOGY

CHAPTER 8. PRINCIPLE QUESTIONS POSED BY ZIZIOULAS

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters considered the questions which are being asked by Zizioulas' Trinitarian interlocutors. They also considered how Zizioulas features in that questioning. This section of the thesis seeks to challenge the way that contemporary Trinitarian literature conveys Zizioulas' work as either propagating an Orthodox version of Social Trinitarianism, a purely relational personalist existentialism, or which distinguishes Zizioulas' ecumenical ecclesiology from his ontology of divine and human personhood.

The purpose of these two chapters is to argue for a reparative reading of Zizioulas' work by making Zizioulas' *theological reasoning* apparent, through which he postulates his concepts, rather than simply considering those concepts in themselves. This means we shall correlate Zizioulas' concepts with the questions he considers and the reasoning he deploys to answer those questions. To do so reveals that Zizioulas' ontological vision is anchored in his ecclesiology to form an integral liturgical vision which is the foundation of his theological reasoning. His questions arise from his ecumenical ecclesiological work but are considered within an ontological framework; his questions relating to the Church are fundamentally questions about what it means to be human, specifically a free and irreducibly unique person.

The nature of that reasoning is rooted in the emergent neopatristic synthesis, seen in his predecessors, inter alia, Florovsky, Yannaras, and Lossky. This leads Zizioulas to develop an ontological conception of ecclesiology in which participation in Christ fulfills the ontological nature of humanity; and that becomes the lens though which he considers questions relating to

the Trinity as the ontological foundation of being, and in whose Trinitarian life the Church participates through Christ, as the *totus Christus*.

As we have stated previously the difference between Zizioulas' communion and Social Trinitarianism does not lie primarily in Zizioulas propounding merely a different concept of relationality or communion to the Social Trinitarians. Zizioulas' concept of communion is not a qualified version of Social Trinitarianism that happens to be derived from Orthodoxy. The difference lies in how that concept was formed in relation to its problems and questions so that each concept belongs to a different respective logic of questions and answers. It becomes apparent that Zizioulas' concept of communion (*koinônia*) has a different nature to Social Trinitarianism in that they seek to resolve different problems.

Even though Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism make some temporary alliances in some discussions, Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology is rooted in the neopatristic synthesis of his Orthodox predecessors and Zizioulas uses that theological lens to perceive ecclesiological problems in contemporary ecumenical discourse. Accordingly, this chapter is dedicated to reconstructing the problems and questions with which Zizioulas wrestles. The next chapter examines how Zizioulas correlates those questions and problems with the answers he provides to those problems.

We were going to relegate the ecumenical dimensions of Zizioulas' work to a second order of discourse, and focus on the issues of contention which relate to Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology. However, in applying a logic of question and answer to Zizioulas' work, it became apparent that the ecumenical question was forefront and centre because we found that his theology is structured around the problems related to his pivotal ecumenical question, 'what is the Church?'[624]. The centrality of this question in his work casts his Trinitarian theology into a new light; in that Trinitarian theology serves the purpose of illuminating the implicit relation between human personhood and ecclesiology by providing the ontological foundation for human transformation.

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[624] John Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 136–47 (p. 146).

Specifically, Zizioulas contests confessionalism, a propositional approach to truth, and a purely institutional view of the Church which he believes to be assumed in much ecumenical discourse.

The answer to these problems lies with a ressourcement to a patristic ethos for the Church, in which theôsis as *participation in Christ* functions as an axiomatic concept in his theology. The Church exists for the transformation of humanity into the image and likeness of God through its participation in the body of Christ. These ontological and Trinitarian questions are implicit to Zizioulas' question of ecumenism since they belong to the question of human transformation and divine-human communion. Zizioulas perceives that an approach to ecumenical dialogue in which the Church is construed as primarily a societal institution founded on agreed propositions on human salvation, and which accepts a divided Church as a matter of course, is incompatible with the liturgical reality of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. This is because what it means to be Christ's body carries ontological commitments that transcend the limitations of a broken communion. Zizioulas' emphasis on ontology rooted in the being of God challenges institutional complacency for a divided Church.

Drawing out Zizioulas' question means that this chapter is predominantly expository and analytic in its character rather than evaluative. To understand the logic of question and answer which is implicit to Zizioulas' work, we locate Zizioulas in his ecumenical career, and as the inheritor of an approach to theological questions that belonged to the Russian émigré theologians of the neopatristic synthesis who worked within the broader context of a ressourcement in Catholic theology, this is because this is the milieu in which Zizioulas works.

We shall proceed by first identifying the question which Zizioulas sets his work as the answer. It is our claim that Zizioulas seeks to answer the question about the nature of the Church: 'as long as we fail to tackle the question, "what is the Church?", we shall never reach agreement in the ecumenical movement'[625]. Once we have identified this question, we shall demonstrate, in the next

[625] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.

chapter, how he construes his answer to that question by developing a neopatristic synthesis rooted in the Eucharist as participation in the Spirit into Christ that enables the person to participate in the life of the Trinity. We shall argue that Zizioulas' answers are in correlation to his ecumenical question about the nature of the Church. This claim shall be maintained by examining how Zizioulas applies his neopatristic synthesis to the question of the Church, examine the Trinitarian and anthropological claims he makes which arise from his ecclesiology, and how Zizioulas justifies his claim that humanity is united with the Trinity through communion by expounding Zizioulas' concept of theôsis.

8.2 An Introduction to Zizioulas' Ecumenical Ministry

Zizioulas' ecumenical career is the milieu in which he has expounded his theology. Our argument is that Zizioulas construes much of his work to answering the question, 'what is the Church?'. His ecumenical career demonstrates that this question is located in his ecumenical discourse. Zizioulas develops an ontological vision for the Church, and the importance of the oneness of the Church is linked implicitly to his vision for ontology that he communicated within an ecumenical domain. The driving dynamics of his theological outpouring are the existential and ontological questions which are implicit to his vision for a neopatristic synthesis, and he addresses those questions within an ecumenical context to answer the question 'what is the Church?'. To this end, we must understand the relationship between his theological writing and his ecumenical ministry.

Zizioulas is, in his own words, a 'pastoral theologian'[626] who follows in the example set by 'St. Ignatius of Antioch and above all St. Irenaeus and St. Athanasius'[627]. What he means by this is that their ecclesiology is not drawn from their positions as 'doctors, as academic theologians

[626] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.
[627] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.

interested principally in Christianity as "revelation"'[628] but as Bishops of the Church who 'approached the being of God through the experience of the ecclesial community, of *ecclesial being*'[629]. This is significant because his view of Patristic theology was that it was written specifically from an integration between the mind of the Church and the celebration of the Eucharist, and it is from this 'eucharistic consciousness' that theology addresses the problems facing the Church. Zizioulas draws from his own Orthodox tradition, but he writes for the Church Catholic in the hope of recovering a vision for the Church which is based upon the Eucharist as the incorporation of humanity into Christ. There is a symbiotic relation between Zizioulas' theological work and his ecumenical ministry. His neopatristic perspective is communicated largely at ecumenical gatherings, and through his academic work in the UK; consequently a brief biographic sketch is necessary to illuminate the shape and course of his problematic.

In 1986 Zizioulas was called from the laity by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to be the Bishop and Metropolitan of Pergamon[630]. Pergamon is a titular see, which is poignant since Zizioulas insists in the later chapters on Episcopacy in *Being as Communion* (1985) that, 'there is no Bishop, not even for a moment or theoretically, who is not conditioned by some form of community'[631]. Zizioulas studied at the University of Athens and Thessalonika (1950-1955). He spent a semester at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, where he began to engage with the question of ecumenism. In 1955 he obtained a scholarship from the Conseil Oecumenique de Eglises to study for a Masters degree at Harvard studying patristics with Georges Florovsky.

The impression Florvosky made on Zizioulas is evident in his work, which exhibits a preoccupation with the relevance of Patristic theologies for existential questions relating to the

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[628] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.
[629] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.
[630] The biographic details of Zizioulas' career are outlined in Paul McPartlan, 1993, *Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in dialogue,* Edinburgh: T&T Clark. Patricia Fox, 2001, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God.* Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press. Athanasios Melissaris. 1999. 'The Challenge of Patristic Ontology in the Theology of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon' in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*. Vol.44, No.1-4. pp.467-489.
[631] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 137.

human person[632]. Georges Florovsky coined the term 'neopatristic synthesis'[633] which instilled in Zizioulas the sense that through a return to the Church Fathers 'Orthodox theology is fundamentally a doxology, a liturgy … it is a Eucharistic theology'[634]. A return to the Fathers is the return to a theology rooted in the liturgy of the Church. A neopatristic synthesis was also a commitment to find in the liturgy a basis for reunion between East and West, a commitment to ecumenism. Florovsky was a founding member of the World Council of Churches, and along with the Anglican Archbishop Michael Ramsey and theologian Karl Barth, collaborated in 1950 to ensure that the WCC did not become a pan-Protestant organisation but one which included Orthodox and Anglican delegations.

Florovsky acted as both a research supervisor and mentor to Zizioulas when Zizioulas returned to Harvard after his national service to undertake no less than two doctoral theses. Florovsky supervised a thesis on Maximus the Confessor, and the other thesis was taken through the University of Athens under the direction of A.G Williams, a Professor of Church History at Harvard, on the 'Unity and of the Church in the Bishop and the Eucharist in the first three centuries of the Church'[635]. This work was also conducted under the supervision of Georges Florovsky whilst Zizioulas resided in Harvard for the duration of his doctorate. Whilst completing his theses, Zizioulas undertook teaching at both the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and the Orthodox seminary in New York, St Vladimir's, where he became immersed in the neopatristic culture of the Saint-Serge Institute after Alexander Schmemann, Jean Meyendorff

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[632] Baker, however, believes that Zizioulas went further than Florovsky by denying 'the law of nature' implicit to being personal because Zizioulas denies nature. However, we disagree that Zizioulas denies nature, see the chapter 'On the Person (1)' on the point of dichotomy between person and nature. From a pre-published paper for: Matthew Baker, 'Neo-Patristic Synthesis and Ecumenism: Towards the "Reintegration" of Christian Tradition', in *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue*, ed. by Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (London: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2014), pp. 235–60 (p. 259).

[633] Georges Florovsky, 'The Legacy and Task of Orthodox Theology', *Anglican Theological Review*, 31.2 (1949), 65–71 (p. 70).

[634] John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, trans. by Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), p. 20.

[635] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries.*

and Georges Florovsky had both moved from Paris to St. Vladimir's in the early 1950s. Florovsky later worked at Harvard which is where Zizioulas encountered him.

He completed his doctorate on the Bishop, the Eucharist and the Church in 1965, receiving his doctorate from the University of Athens, after which he became an assistant Professor in Church History. During this time, he became a member of the working groups on the Eucharist and 'Development of Conciliar Structures'[636] for the Faith and Order Commission for the World Council of Churches, and was soon co-opted into permanent membership of the Commission in Geneva. In 1970, Zizioulas moved from Geneva to Edinburgh to become a Professor of Patristics, and later became a Professor of Systematic Theology at Glasgow and a visiting Professor at the Research Institute in Systematic Theology at King's College London. It was there he became acquainted with Colin Gunton, for whom Zizioulas was a key influence. In 1975, Zizioulas became a delegate for the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the central committees of the World Council of Churches and its Faith and Order Commission. He was consecrated Bishop in 1986, and became Professor of Dogmatics at the Thessaloniki School of Theology. Though ostensibly an academic, his work is primarily ecclesiological and ecumenical but weighted with considerable Patristic scholarship and systematic theological analysis. He was one of the founding members in 1979 of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church, and a member of the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He is also co-chairman of the International Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue. He continues his ecumenical work as co-chair for the Joint Commission, and in his role as a representative of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Pope Francis, he announced the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015).

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636 Patricia Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), p. 5.

His work is derived from, and addressed to, the 'ecclesial being'[637] of the Church and which retains the call to ecumenism 'the sacred cause of the restoration of Church unity'[638]. Throughout his corpus there is a drive to demonstrate the existential significance of the Church, which he considers to be the mystical body of Christ, rather 'than an institution based on the *a priori* acceptance of fleshless, abstract or dry doctrines'[639].

Zizioulas' own theological work has had an enduring impact on the shape of ecumenical discussion in recent decades. We do not suggest that the ecumenical theological discussion takes its lead from Zizioulas, rather we claim that there is a reciprocal relationship with the formation of Zizioulas' ecclesiology with the ecumenical discussion to make Zizioulas a highly influential figure in that discussion. The term *koinônia* (meaning 'to share', amongst many other usages, including 'participation', is used commonly to denote communion and that term has typified ecumenical discussion). As Louth has pointed out 'I think it cannot be a matter of chance that this notion [*koinônia*] is central to Zizioulas' thought in all its dimensions'[640]. *Koinônia* is a common term in ecumenical discussion; though that in itself does not point to the reciprocal interrelationship between Zizioulas' work and ecumenism. However, there is a substantial convergence between the centrality of *koinônia* in the conception of the Church, and that in the communion of the Church there is a foretaste of the eschatological communion with the Trinity, with *koinônia* as a central thesis in Zizioulas' work. The nature of the plenary sessions of the Joint Commission bear the hallmarks of Zizioulas' theology, with sessions being held on '*The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity'* during the respective 1980 and 1982 Sessions, and '*Primacy and Synodality in the Church'* (Sessions 13 & 14 in 2014 and 2016). Zizioulas has written profusely on Primacy and Synodality, and the relationship between the Church, Eucharist and the

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[637] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.
[638] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 3. This was given at the keynote address for the World Conference of Faith and Order, August 1993. *The Church as Communion*
[639] Athanasios Melissaris, 'The Challenge of Patristic Ontology in the Theology of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon", *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 44.1–4 (1999), 467–89 (p. 469).
[640] Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (London: SPCK, 2015), p. 218.

Trinity. *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* (Feb, 2007)[641] was produced by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, and Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue also published the Cyprus Agreed Statement *The Church of the Triune God* (2006)[642]. It is interesting that both focus upon the centrality of the Trinity in its ecclesiology and defining the Church as Communion. The *Growing Together* document understands that: 'the divine life is one of communion (in Greek, *koinônia*), and that the Church is a communion by participation in the eternal communion of the Son with the Holy Spirit'[643]. John Zizioulas acted as the co-chairman for the publication *The Church of the Triune God* (2006) which begins by emphasising the communion between the Trinity and the Church. It is the product of an agreement, made at a 1989 meeting, to discuss 'the mystery of the Church in the light of our faith in the Trinitarian God' and then to explore 'the mystery of the Church in relation to Christology, pneumatology and anthropology'[644]. These are topics which are pivotal to Zizioulas' ecclesiology.

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[641] Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue. (Feb 4, 2007) *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue.* https://iarccum.org/doc/?d=32 [Accessed: 25/01/2017] Here after referred to as GT

[642] Hugh Wybrew, Constantine Scouteris, James Rosenthal, Ian Harvey and Terrie Robinson. *The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Statement agreed by the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue.* (2006). http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103818/The-Church-of-the-Triune-God.pdf [Accessed: 25/01/2017] Here after referred to as CTG.

[643] Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue, 'Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue', 2007, p. 14 <https://iarccum.org/doc/?d=32> [accessed 25 January 2017].

[644] Hugh Wybrew, Constantine Scouteris, James Rosenthal, and others, *The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Statement Agreed by the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue*, 2006, p. 9 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103818/The-Church-of-the-Triune-God.pdf> [accessed 25 January 2017].

8.3 ***<u>The Questions</u>***

8.3.1 Problems of Method: The Church is identified with the body of Christ

Zizioulas' method is rooted in a neopatristic synthesis. Zizioulas does not define a neopatristic synthesis in *Being as Communion* (1985), but he does examine the neopatristic synthesis in his work on Florovsky[645], and in our next chapter we shall analyse what a neopatristic synthesis means for Zizioulas in constructing his own method to address his questions.

Through his method, namely a neopatristic synthesis[646], Zizioulas identifies his task as amending the ecclesiological problems which arise from an engagement in ecumenism. Zizioulas maintains that the question which must be established and addressed in ecumenical discussion; 'as long as we fail to tackle the question, "what is the Church?", we shall never reach agreement in the ecumenical movement'[647].

How does Zizioulas address this question? Zizioulas writes that the task of relating 'the institutional with charismatic, the Christological with the Pneumatological aspects of ecclesiology, still awaits its treatment by Orthodox theology'[648]. This quotation points to Zizioulas' aim in his ecclesiology: but it also outlines the themes which Zizioulas discusses in attempting to answer the question, '*what is the Church*?', and rather than being limited to Orthodox theology his answer is directed at an ecclesiology for the universal and Catholic Church. In *Being as Communion* (1985), Zizioulas states an important problem with which he wrestles, that of a synthesis between pneumatology and Christology in ecclesiology:

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[645] John Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', *Theologia*, 4 (2010), 31–48.

[646] In the next chapter we shall examine how Zizioulas defines a neopatristic synthesis. However, at the being of *Being as Communion* he indicates that this involves correlating the fathers with existential questions, especially as they present themselves in our contemporary context. See, chapter 9, 'truth in relation to the Incarnation and the Eucharist'.

[647] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.

[648] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.

> The question, however, remains still open as to *how* Pneumatology and Christology can be brought together into a full and organic synthesis. It is probably one of the most important questions facing Orthodox theology in our time[649].

This problem is really the core of Zizioulas' questions and answers. He attempts to address the question, 'what is the Church?' by providing a synthesis between a Pneumatology and Christology that demonstrates that the purpose of the Church is the transformation of humanity in the Spirit into Christ, so that creation can exist in communion with the Father. This task is not one he believes that the Orthodox churches have the resources to answer, nor do the 'Western' traditions of the Church alone, and so the ecumenical task is that

> Orthodox theology needs to work closely together with Western theology if it is to be really helpful to itself and to others … a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology concerns Orthodoxy as much as the West[650].

Zizioulas writes that he is reticent in ecumenical discussion to provide an Orthodox perspective on this question on the basis of uniquely Orthodox concrete theses. It is not as though Orthodoxy draws from a confessional document like the Augsburg Confession to provide a definitive answer to the question. Orthodoxy interprets the shared sources which belong to all Christians. The difference lies in the '*theological presuppositions*'[651] which govern the method of interpretation of those sources which Orthodoxy shares with all Christians, which he names as, 'the Bible and the Fathers'[652]. The way forward for ecumenical discussion does not lie in postulating

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[649] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 126.
[650] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 126.
[651] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.
[652] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.

'concrete theses'[653] which provide definitive statements on matters of doctrine or ecclesiology, or by asserting 'special sources'[654] from which each denomination draws.

For Zizioulas, ecumenical dialogue proceeds not through agreeing on ratified statements, but through learning the *theological presuppositions* of those involved, and then discerning the theological principles through which the question 'what is the Church?' can be answered:

> after a rather long experience in ecumenical discussions, I have come to the conclusion that instead of trying to agree on concrete theological theses we should try to agree on theological principles[655].

The reification of confessional identity is perceived by Zizioulas to be an obstacle to articulating these theological principles built upon the true identity of the Church. Zizioulas' solution to the problem of denominational loyalty above the Catholic nature of the Church lies with the application of a neopatristic synthesis to ecclesiology. From a neopatristic synthesis Zizioulas concludes that the liturgy demonstrates the Church is not primarily an association of denominations but is the *totus Christus*, 'the Church is described as Christ Himself, *the whole Christ* in Augustine's apt phrase, while ecclesiology ceases to be a separate chapter for theology and becomes an organic *chapter of Christology*'[656].

The result of Zizioulas' neopatristic ecclesiology for ecumenism means that ecumenical unity cannot be sought on the grounds of propositional statements but 'considering this unity, first and foremost, *sacramentally*, i.e. as the incorporation of human beings *in Christ*'[657]. From Zizioulas'

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[653] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.
[654] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.
[655] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 137.
[656] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 15.
[657] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 16.

view of the Church as the body of Christ a total theological vision emerges, in which questions of Trinitarian theology, anthropology and ontology are implicit to this ecclesiological perspective. As Zizioulas writes, the Church

> is not simply an institution. She is a "mode of existence", *a way of being*. The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God. In virtue of this bond, so characteristic of patristic thought, ecclesiology assumes a marked importance, not only for all aspects of theology, but also for the existential needs of man in every age[658].

These questions take the guise of Trinitarian and anthropological questions, and questions to do with ontology which come to shape a definite systematic theology founded upon the implicit identification of the Church as the *totus Christus*. Rowan Williams' remark about Zizioulas' book *Communion and Otherness* (2006) applies to the totality of Zizioulas' oeuvre: 'this book is, in effect, a systematic theology, though it is not structured like one'[659]. For Zizioulas, the Church is expressed through a union between Christology, Pneumatology and ecclesiology, since

> the Holy Spirit, in making real the Christ-event in history, makes real *at the same time* Christ's personal existence as a body or community. Christ does not exist *first* as truth and *then* as communion; He is both at once. All separation between Christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit[660].

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[658] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.
[659] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, p. xi.
[660] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 111.

Rowan Williams is astute in pointing out that the 'Eucharist properly belongs only in such a context, not as the collective affirmation of a group united by particular kinds of human common ground or common interest'[661]. The Church is not united by its adherence to a set of common principles or common social and political projects but is united in its liturgy through a union between the Eucharist and its celebration by the Bishop, precisely because it is through the sacramental mystery that humanity comes to participate in the mystical body of Christ. Such a liturgical view of the Church, 'put awkward questions equally to the liberal consensus in the Western churches (as this last point shows), and to managerial ecumenism (validate the ministries and the rest will somehow follow)'[662]. In the celebration of the liturgy by the Bishop, the Church Catholic is manifest because through the sacramental mystery Christ is present. Using Ignatius in a later essay, *The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist* (2011)[663], Zizioulas claims

> the Eucharist does not simply make the local community into the Church, but that it makes it the catholic Church (*katholike ecclesia*), that is the *full and integral body of Christ*… Each local eucharistic community presided over by the bishop surrounded by the college of presbyters and assisted by deacons, in the presence of the 'multitude' (*plethos*), i.e. the laity, constitutes the 'catholic Church' precisely because in it the *total Christ*[664] is found in the form of the Eucharist[665].

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[661] Rowan Williams, 'Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church. By John D. Zizioulas. New York, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press and London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1985. Pp.268. £9.95', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 42.1 (1989), 101–5 (p. 102).
[662] Williams, 'Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church. By John D. Zizioulas. New York, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press and London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1985. Pp.268. £9.95', p. 102.
[663] First published in *Nicolaus* 10 (1982), pp.333-349. Published in John Zizioulas. 2011. *The Eucharistic Communion and the World.* T&T Clark: Edinburgh.
[664] Italics my own.
[665] John Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 99–113 (p. 100).

Throughout his works, Zizioulas has a particular vision for ecclesiology in which the liturgy as participation in the body of Christ is the foundational reality for the Church. It is a vision which was formulated to address a series of problems which Zizioulas perceived to be at work in the relationship between ecclesiology and ecumenism.

The questions which Zizioulas considers in his works have to do with the nature of the Church. Here is where the publication of Zizioulas' articles in a collected volume *One and the Many*[666] have made the task of discerning Zizioulas' complex of questions and answers much more apparent than in past considerations of Zizioulas' task. Zizioulas makes his own complex of questions and answers unequivocally clear in his essay, '*The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition'* (2010)[667]. The answer which Zizioulas provides in the conclusion of this essay is built upon his notion of the Church as the *totus Christus*; in which the Church's identity is that of Christ's very own identity. As Zizioulas writes, 'the Church has no ὑποστασις of her own but draws her identity from Christ'[668]. There is instead a total identification between Christ and the Church, since the Church participates and is constituted by Christ's own hypostasis,

> such a Christology, conditioned by pneumatology, explains the fact that the Mystery of Christ is in essence nothing other than the Mystery of the Church[669].

To support this axiomatic claim, Zizioulas provides a series of *theological presuppositions*. These include an inseparable connection between ecclesiology and Trinitarian theology, plus a Christology conditioned by Pneumatology as to convey the personhood of Christ as a '*corporate*

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[666] John Zizioulas, *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010).
[667] Published in John Zizioulas. 2010. *One and the Many*. Sebastian Press: Alhambra, California. pp.136-146. First given as a colloquium paper as, '*The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition'* at the 1986 Chevetogne Colloquium on, 'The Mystery of the Church as a Possible Fundamental Difference between the Christian Communions'. Published in French in *Irenikon* 3 (1987). Then in English in *One in Christ* 25 (1988).
[668] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 144.
[669] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.

personality'[670], that is a *One* and *Many*. As such, a relational ontology which is engaged with Pneumatology and Trinitarian theology is required, without which, Zizioulas writes, 'we shall never be capable of understanding the Mystery of the Church'[671].

To fully comprehend the nature of Zizioulas' question, to which he posed his ecclesiology as the answer, we need to explore the related problems of that question; this is because the form of his answer is a total theological vision which readdresses the scope of the problem, and questions the assumptions which arise from a propositional approach to ecumenism. Zizioulas' question was derived from a series of problems which he identified with ecclesiology that are obstructive to effective ecumenical work and constructing the unity of the Church. These problems include: a confessionalist approach to ecumenism, a propositional approach to truth, and a historical diagnosis of these issues which are related to the separation between the Church and the Eucharist. Zizioulas addresses these problems not from an institutional view of the Church but from the perspective of ontology, in that the Church exists to realise humanity as the image and likeness of God. Through this perspective Zizioulas posits the eschatological unity of the Church in the Spirit into Christ, as the whole Christ, as an answer to the problems inherent in a confessional approach to ecumenism; which was based on a propositional approach to truth[672].

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[670] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.
[671] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.
[672] See chapter 9, 'Zizioulas' Ecclesiology' and 'Zizioulas' Method: Neopatristic Synthesis'

8.3.2 'Scholastic Captivity': Neo-Scholasticism in Greece.

Walter Kasper writes that

> Neo-Scholasticism was the attempt to solve the modern crisis of theology by picking up the thread of the high scholastic tradition of medieval times. The aim was to establish a timeless, unified theology that would provide a norm for the universal Church[673].

Vladimir Lossky's theology is opposed to this neo-scholasticism throughout his *Mystical Theology*[674]; maintaining that its tendencies were contrary to the mystical drive of Orthodox theology drawn from Patristics. Zizioulas' own Trinitarian theology engages with the residual aspects of this neo-scholasticism as he perceives it in Latin Trinitarian theology. One could say that the entire ecumenical movement in the 20th century was united against neo-scholasticism. Indeed, his juxtaposition between an Augustinian and Greek approach to Triune personhood appears to be reliant on that opposition as it appears in neopatristic predecessors, who are in turn indebted to de Régnon. However, neo-scholasticism as it appears in Catholicism is not Zizioulas' primary target. Rather by neo-scholasticism, Zizioulas refers to the 'scholastic' influence in Greek academic theology, and it is this legacy in Greek thought to which Zizioulas is opposed. It is the equivalent to the Latinising elements of Russian Orthodox theology which were identified by Florovsky[675].

Zizioulas maintains that the German liberal protestant view of Church history, and a scholastic methodology, were adopted in the theology departments as a distinct discipline in the established universities in Greece. Zizioulas shares his concern with his contemporary Christos Yannaras that theology in the Greek Universities became a hermetic discipline removed from the liturgy of the

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[673] Walter Kasper, *Theology and the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1989), p. 1.
[674] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.
[675] See chapter 6, Christian Hellenism

Church, and of other academic disciplines. Yannaras claims that throughout the nineteenth century, with the establishment of the University of Athens in 1837, and Thessalonica in 1925, a sterile form of scholasticism predominated, in which theology was seen as an objective science which could hold its own with other scientific disciplines in the academy: the 'conservatives followed mostly the Roman Catholic models, while liberals preferred Protestant Patterns. European models were always followed, the German [approach] having priority in the Universities'[676]. The question which arises from the Westernisation of theology in Greece was whether theology could be studied in a way other than a neo-scholastic perspective, in which theology is treated not in the light of the Church's liturgy and eschatological vision but as a form and confessional discipline.

The result of this was that theologians such as Trembelas operate with an ecclesiology, 'with an idea of a distinction between the *human* and *divine* aspect of the Church'[677] precisely because such theologians were influenced 'by Western scholasticism'[678]. Likewise, Yannaras identifies Trembelas as a key figure in Greek theology who perpetuated the predilection of Greek theology to a scholastic mode of theology[679]. Yannaras writes that Trembelas advocated a pietistic spirituality using Patristic and Scriptural citation as support;

> thus, inaugurating a new era of "neo-scholasticism" in Greece, in which an intellectualist *argumentatio* concerning "truths" is drawn from an appeal to the *authoritas* of Scripture and the Fathers. This "neo-scholasticism" has continued to dominate Greek theology, disguising distortions of the Church's gospel with patristic references[680].

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[676] Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), p. 194.
[677] John Zizioulas, 'Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 274–83 (p. 278).
[678] Zizioulas, 'Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology', p. 278.
[679] Yannaras, p. 208.
[680] Yannaras, pp. 208–9.

Chairs were established in the field of *'Symbolics,* which exist up to this moment and which aim at comparing Orthodoxy with other confessions on the basis of such confessional books'[681]. The epistemological approach to theology in the faculties were based on an analytical propositional approach to truth, which Zizioulas holds to be incongruous with the ancient Church, in which every branch of knowledge, 'addressed itself to the mystery of existence in general'[682]. The approach to theology was based on dogmatic manuals which copied the styles of neo-scholasticism in

> the structure of dogmatic manuals, such as those of Christos Androutsos and Pagiotes Trembelas, indicates the "Scholastic Captivity" of Orthodox theology in the early part of the century in which the content of Orthodox thought was determined by a "scholastic methodology"[683].

Furthermore, the issue is compounded by the specialisation of theology as a distinct discipline existing within a university comprised of other disciplines, and an increased fragmentation of sub-disciplines within theological faculties which is at odds with an Orthodox and Patristic ethos. For example, within a theological faculty biblical scholars can pursue research which is purely historical and could be exercised by classicists without reference to the pertinent questions of theology. Zizioulas argues that the purpose of a university was originally conceived on an 'ancient concept of Truth as an unbreakable totality'[684] in which the various disciplines could dialogue with each other and converge on one truth. The opposite has occurred, in which academic disciplines have autonomy and conduct their research in isolation from each other. Zizioulas challenges a notion of truth which can allow for such fragmentation through postulating a neopatristic synthesis, so

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[681] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 352.
[682] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 356.
[683] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apobaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 10.
[684] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 356.

that the sub-disciplines of theology can engage each other with mutual questioning, and that theology can engage with other disciplines in the pursuit of truth. This requires a restoration to the vision for truth which Zizioulas perceived in the ancient Church:

> a theology that through its patristic and liturgical foundations claims to have a vision of cosmic transformation, of a transfiguration of the world, which includes such matters as the overcoming of death- not "spiritual" but of *physical* death- and the conversion of the human individual into a true person living in the image of the Holy Trinity, cannot ignore either the natural sciences or sociological concerns … present theology to them as a matter for which no aspect of human existence is irrelevant[685].

Theology for Zizioulas is not a propositional or confessional discipline but is a participation in the truth of the divine mystery, through which the Church participates in the Spirit into the body of Christ. Church unity cannot be proposed based on a propositional approach to truth but based on the mystery of the Church expressed in its liturgy. Zizioulas calls for a neopatristic synthesis to restore this perspective. However, in order to explore theological questions through the fullness of a liturgical vision of Catholicity, Zizioulas argues that a problem which needs addressing is the historical separation of the Church from the Eucharist, which has enabled the emergence of an individualistic and institutional ecclesiology.

8.3.3 ***Propositional Approach to Truth***

A confessional approach to ecumenism is linked to the problem of a propositional approach to truth. A question which Zizioulas raises in *The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox*

[685] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 357.

Tradition[686] is the difficulty he has in presenting an Orthodox perspective to a particular question, since he claims that Orthodoxy does not produce authoritative pronouncements to shape its theological identity, for instance, Zizioulas names Vatican II and the Augsburg Confession[687]. The sources for Orthodox theology are those common to the Church, which are the Bible and the Fathers[688]. An Orthodox perspective is not a matter of drawing from particular unique denominational sources but a matter of interpreting common Christian sources. Zizioulas contrasts an approach to ecumenical dialogue which is founded on 'concrete theses'[689], or 'propositions'[690], with an approach which is based on arriving at *theological presuppositions*[691]. That is exploring the manner in which questions are considered based on interpreting the common sources of faith. By contrast, an approach which is wedded to 'concrete theses' is a commitment to a 'reconciled diversity'[692] that seeks to retain confessional identity rather than unity in Christ.

The theological principles upon which ecumenical dialogue is constructed are a matter of a theological logic and drawing the consequences for ecclesiology from those principles. For Zizioulas, these principles centre on theôsis as the participation through the Spirit into the Sonship of Christ with the Father. From this principle, the principles for ecclesiology are derived and they are accompanied by other principles relating to ontology, anthropology and Trinitarian theology.

A propositional approach to truth obscures the logic of those principles being realised. Truth for Zizioulas points to the personal mystery of divine existence which is shared through

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[686] Published in *One and the Many* (2010) pp.136-146. Originally given as an address at the 1986 Chevetogne Colloquium on "The Mystery of the Church as a Possible Fundamental Difference Between the Christian Communities". It appeared first in French in *Irenikon* 3 (1987). The English original was first published in *One in Christ* 25 (1988).

[687] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.

[688] One cannot but help be reminded here of Geoffrey Fisher's sentiment that in the Anglican Communion, 'we have no doctrine of our own- we only posses the Catholic doctrine of the Catholic Church enshrined in the Catholic creeds, and those creeds we hold without addition or diminution' (Fisher. 2nd Feb 1951. 'We Possess the Catholic Doctrine of the Catholic Church' in *Church Times*. p.1). Albeit, Fisher went onto claim that the Anglican Communion possesses the Christian faith in a purer form than any other Church.

[689] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 137.

[690] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 353.

[691] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 136.

[692] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 137.

Christ in his incarnation, and which has practical implications for the Church and its mission. Truth is an all-encompassing prerogative in which questions relating to medicine, ethics, law, history, literature, all the disciplines in the academy are of interest to the Church because the truth which belongs to those questions converge on the divine mystery, 'truth was regarded as indivisible and One and that the various scientific disciplines were not unrelated to each other but sought somehow to converge in this one Truth'[693]. Zizioulas maintains that truth for the 'ancient Church'[694] was understood to partake in the mystery of God's plan for creation, a mystery which is celebrated in the Eucharist;

> it was inconceivable at that time that faith would be a matter of accepting certain propositions and that the acceptance of these propositions could in itself be the basis of what was called the Church… in the ancient Church itself, the term "theology" was not based on creeds or propositions of faith; it was used to denote the grasp of the mystery of divine existence as it is offered to the world and experienced in the ecclesial community[695].

A propositional approach to faith and truth is limited to the assent on agreed concrete theses rather than a participation in the divine mystery, this shapes a historical understanding of faith and the nature of the Church, thereby entrenching confessionalism. Zizioulas identifies four problems with a propositional approach to truth.

First, 'it assumes that faith is mainly an intellectual process through which one's mind is illuminated so that it can formulate the truth of revelation in the form of *propositions*'[696]. A particular example of a target for Zizioulas is the dogmatic manual theology of Androutos who expounded

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[693] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 355.
[694] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 354.
[695] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 354.
[696] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 353.

a confessionalism through a series of propositions in his *Dogmatics of the Orthodox Eastern Church* (1907), in which faith is seen a series of propositions to which assent is given by the intellect.

This leads to the second problem;

> tradition is understood as handing down from generation to generation the original faith of the Apostles, mainly in the form of creeds and theological statements, usually but not necessarily written. These have to be subscribed to by each generation[697].

The tradition of the Church is identified with the historical transmission of agreed propositions which is affirmed or denied by each generation[698].

This leads us to the third problem which Zizioulas identifies with propositions, that, 'theology draws its content from these propositions or becomes itself the promoter of such propositions through its systematic work'[699]. Theology becomes a task of affirming these propositions as the content of revelation rather than articulating the mystery of the Church and of divine existence in its gift to humanity. If theology is perceived as the task of affirming and examining propositions.

Finally, confessionalism is entrenched since ecumenical work is linked to the theological task of expounding theological propositions, and the identity of the Church is acquired through agreed theological formulations:

> thus as a result of confessionalism, Christendom consists of confessional bodies, identified with some *credo*, written or unwritten, explicit or inexplicit, to which the members of this body adhere as to a condition of faith[700].

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[697] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 353.
[698] We discuss this problem of tradition in further detail in our section below entitled, 'The Eucharist makes the Church' in Chapter 9.
[699] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 353.
[700] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 353.

In his doctoral work, entitled *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001), originally published in 1965, Zizioulas identified an inherent connection between a liberal protestant German historicism and a propositional approach to truth in theology. Zizioulas connects a propositional approach to truth with an approach to Church history as a matter of a Hegelian style dialectic between heresy and Orthodoxy, Judaism and Hellenism, which achieves synthesis through the course of the Church's history[701]. This antithetical approach to Church history was purported by the 'Tubingen School'[702].

In this view of the primitive Church, the unity of the Church was not attributed to its Eucharistic existence and its celebration by the *episcopos* but was predominantly a matter of, 'ideas that dominate'[703]. Church history is seen as a 'synthesis of ideological currents'[704] which are concurrent to a 'Hegelian scheme of history'[705]. Zizioulas cites F.C Bauer's theory of the Hellenisation of the Judaic elements of Christianity[706] as an example of a Hegelian scheme of history implicit to the Tubingen approach to Church history, in which the original thesis was a Judaic Church to which Hellenism was its anti-thesis, through Constantine a synthesis was achieved between the Judaising and Hellenist tendencies of the Church.

Zizioulas' objection is not with Bauer's theory per se, he does not spend especially long countering this theory, than it is with notion of an assumed ecclesiology which underpin such antithetical theories of Church history, and this is the notion that Church unity is attributed to an evolution and synthesis of ideas. A particular target is Adolf Von Harnack who conveys the Church

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[701] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 12.
[702] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 11.
[703] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 11.
[704] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 11.
[705] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 11.
[706] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, pp. 11–12.

as an evolution from the primitive Church which is comprised of individuals, then to the local Church and finally to the universal Church as a 'world-wide organisation'[707]. The individual is submitted to the authority of the world-wide Church, and this Harnack views as negating the primitive simplicity of the early Church. For Harnack, the Protestant reformation was a counter to the 'catholicity' of the Roman Church as 'though catholicity was something bad for the essential nature of the Church'[708]. Zizioulas charges Harnack with postulating an opposition between the individual and the universality of the Church, something which Zizioulas maintains was alien to the ethos of the early Church but is the product of a projection of modernity, with its concern over the rights of the individual, onto history[709].

The problem that Zizioulas identifies with Harnack specifically, and the Tubingen School generally, is its identification of ecclesiology with '*individualism*'[710]. An identification which Zizioulas claims contemporary ecclesiology, and ecumenical dialogue has not fully recovered. Zizioulas perceives such individualism in the work of Sohm who presented the Church as an invisible reality comprised of the predestined elected and believers[711] in contradistinction to the ministries and organisation of the Church. Harnack purports an individualistic view of the Church. The Church in essence is a society of individuals, whose purpose is the, 'inner moral renewal of each human being … the "life in Christ" was regarded as an inner psychological state of each individual'[712]. Here we can detect the origins of Zizioulas' objection to the concept of the person as an individual,

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[707] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 13.
[708] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 13.
[709] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 13.
[710] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 13.
[711] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 27, fn.19.
[712] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 28, fn.19.

since it is at variance with his ecclesiological vision of communion in Christ which he perceives to exist in a liturgical vision for the Church.

It is an exaggeration to regard Zizioulas as contesting a view of the Church as merely an association of like-minded individuals in his objection to individualism in the Church, since it does not do justice to the role of pneumatology in Protestant ecclesiologies. The Augsburg Confession defines the Church as 'societas fidei et Spiritus Sancti in cordibus'[713] and so gives an essential role to the Holy Spirit in unifying the Church. However, whilst Zizioulas clearly places a high importance on the role of the Spirit in constituting ecclesiology, he challenges the assumption that ecclesiology is a matter of a community of individuals unified by the Spirit:

> the question here is a different one, and concerns our *starting point* in looking at the Church and her unity: is it correct to start from the phenomenon of the Church as "community", or from the notion of the person of Christ as the incarnate Word who also contains within Himself the "many"?[714].

If the unity of the Church is seen to be through the incorporation of human beings into Christ sacramentally, then it is incompatible with the notion that unity is constituted through a dialectic of agreed propositions held by individual believers that is then baptised by the Spirit. Church unity is a matter of ontology because the Church participates in Christ.

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[713] Society of Faith and the Holy Spirit in our hearts cited in Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 16.
[714] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 16.

8.4 What is the Church?

8.4.1 *Confessionalist Ecclesiology*

Christos Yannaras writes that in Greece during the 1960s, a new trend emerged which emphasised the 'eucharistic rather than institutional constitution of the Church'[715]. Zizioulas is integral to the emergence of a trend of emphasising the eucharistic constitution of the Church. He is opposed to the notion that the Church is primarily an institution rather than the mystical body of Christ. In his ecumenical engagement, this tendency manifested itself in an opposition to the assumed acceptance of numerous denominations which are distinct and independent of one another, Zizioulas calls these denominations, 'confessions'.

In an illuminating discussion on the contribution of Orthodox theology to ecumenical dialogue, entitled *The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education*[716], Zizioulas contests the notion that Orthodox theology should be presented as an expression of a 'confessionalist theology'[717] presented alongside other confessions of theology. Zizioulas expresses a similar frustration to this style of ecumenical dialogue in *Being as Communion* (1985) and outlines that his studies seek to detach, 'Western theology from the confessional mentality with which it habitually approaches Orthodoxy, by considering it as something "exotic", different, "worth the trouble" of being known'[718]. At worst, Zizioulas maintains that Orthodoxy can be seen as 'a constant troublemaker at meetings of assemblies and Central committees, when the Orthodox threaten …

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[715] Yannaras, p. 273.

[716] Published in Zizioulas. 2010. *One and the Many*. pp.349-359. First published as, Zizioulas. 1978. 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education' in *Orthodox Theological Education for Life and Witness of the Church: Report on the Consultation at Basel, Switzerland, July 4-8, 1978*. (World Council of Churches, Programme on Theological Education: Geneva).

[717] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 351.

[718] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 26. A complaint also raised in John Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 126–36 (p. 126).

to overthrow documents that are well-worked out and planned in advance'[719]. The purpose of Orthodox theology is not a vitriolic articulation of a unique confessional theology in contradistinction to Protestantism or Catholicism but exists to articulate the truth inherent to *'the Church'*[720].

The second issue is that Zizioulas laments the conditions for a confessional theology: 'the greatest enemy of the catholicity of the Church is the self-sufficiency in which East and West have indulged after the great schism'[721]. Zizioulas holds that as long as this assumption of the self-sufficiency of confessions continues, the ecumenical movement will fail in its purpose. The Western and Eastern parts of the Church need to serve each other as one Church.

A series of questions arise here, one of which is how can Zizioulas expect ecumenical dialogue to eschew a confessional perspective when that is the reality faced by the present situation in the Church? Confessional perspectives have implicit questions and concerns which constitute their tradition, and not always as a self-conscious confessional question but as a question which emerges from scriptural exegesis. The second question which arises here is, who expects Orthodox theology to be conveyed as a confessional theology?

In answer to the first question, Zizioulas argues for an eschatological notion of truth which ultimately transcends a propositional notion of truth which underlies a confessionalist approach to ecumenism. There needs to be an acknowledgement of a Catholicity which runs through confessional differences, as Zizioulas maintains:

> The catholicity of the Church, in other words, is not simply a matter of bringing together the existing cultures and nations in their present state of concerns and preoccupations. It is that

[719] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 126.
[720] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 355.
[721] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 135.

dimension of the Church which brings together also historical identities and traditions so that they may be transcended in the unity of the Body of Christ[722].

Before we can explore the answer Zizioulas provides, we need to engage with Zizioulas' diagnosis of the problem at hand. Zizioulas identifies that the problem with ecumenism is that it has been based largely tackling the problem of a divided communion as an institutional problem that be solved through structural reform through the proposal of propositions to be ratified. One of the problems with this institutional and propositional ecumenism lies in an approach to ecumenism in which the *oikoumene* is understood to be the sum of different nations, cultures, and peoples which inhabit the global North and South which merely happen to advance Christianity as a cause, like a political or social cause. In other words, Zizioulas is critical of an approach to ecumenical work in which multiculturalism and ecumenism are equated with each other and treated as sociological and political problems. This is termed as a '*geographical conception of ecumenicity*'[723]. Building on this, ecumenism is often a convergence of different Christian Spiritualties, so whilst taking into account their geographic and cultural differences, there is also the compounding matter of accounting for tradition and historical differences 'which make up the totality of the Christian ethos'[724]. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the differences in Christian traditions and culture, it seems that few people engaged in ecumenism consider this more than simply a convergence of traditions which are treated with interest and respect. This is a limited approach to ecumenism which does not reflect an eschatological vision of the Church, in which the Spirit works to unite humanity in Christ. This approach to ecumenism operates with an unconscious assumption and acceptance of a divided Church which has been the modus vivendi since the schism of 1054[725]. Zizioulas advocates that engagement with tradition should mean more than a respect of the other

[722] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 128.
[723] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 127.
[724] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 127.
[725] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 127.

perceived as a different tradition, and that ecumenical work must strive for a synthesis between the traditions of the Church in the light of the inherited tradition which exists in the emergence of the eschaton in the liturgy[726]. This point needs to be explicated further, and we shall revisit it when we consider the relation between eschatology and history in Zizioulas' opposition to a propositional approach to truth.

In answer to the second question, Zizioulas argues that the Orthodox themselves have contributed to the assumption that ecumenism is exercised in the guise of a confessional theology. Part of the problem is the Orthodox have 'been obsessed with negative conservatism, almost a sort of dogmatic fundamentalism, fighting everything that smells of modernism and progressiveness'[727] rather than providing a witness to the eschaton that exists in Orthodoxy's liturgy, so that Orthodoxy's presentation of itself has been in opposition to the progressiveness of the West. But the problem goes deeper, and finds its origins in Orthodoxy's historical engagement in ecumenical discourse which has perpetuated a confessionalist theology, an issue which has been exacerbated by theological formation in academia and the seminaries in Greece and Russia which has lead to a style of theology in which truth was conveyed as propositions.

Zizioulas maintains that an Orthodox confessional style of ecumenical engagement was precipitated by the emergence of confessionalism in the seventeenth century. In conversations between Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, the Orthodox were asked 'what books or definitions and formulations of your faith do you possess that you regard as expressing your proper identity as a Christian?'[728]. Up to this point, Zizioulas argues, the Orthodox had not considered themselves as a particular confession, but simply in the Patristic ethos of the one Church which celebrates the liturgy in the apostolic succession as a participation in the divine mystery. In being asked to define themselves as a confession, or to provide a confessional answer

[726] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 135.
[727] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 127.
[728] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 351.

to a doctrinal question, the Orthodox were immediately put on the back foot. They were being asked to provide an Orthodox position to questions which were being debated between Catholics and Protestants, and thus the answers they provided we already defined by the terms set by the reformation problematic. The Orthodox started to produce Confessional books, such as, 'the Confession of Doritheos of Jerusalem'[729]. An implicit problem was such confessions borrowed terms from Catholicism to dialogue with Protestantism, as is the case of Peter Moglia[730], or vice versa in the case of Cyril Lucaris who argued favourably for Calvinism[731]. Such confessions were questioned by 'the First Congress of the Orthodox Theological Faculties, which took place in Athens in 1936'[732]. Despite this questioning of the utility of those seventeenth century confessions, Zizioulas argues that there is a persistent expectation for Orthodoxy to produce its own confessional material. Zizioulas disparages that in Orthodox theological faculties chairs have been established to compare Orthodoxy with other confessions on the basis of confessional materials, predominantly in Universities and Seminaries set up on 'German Prototypes'[733]. In defining itself as a contained confession, Orthodoxy was obliged to explicate its doctrines as a series of propositions to be argued, contested and defended. In both the seminaries and the Universities, Zizioulas believes this caused a crisis in Orthodox theology in which Orthodox theology 'was basically a variation of Western Scholasticism'[734].

Furthermore, confessional theology in Orthodoxy was perpetuated by the establishment of Universities in Russia and Greece in which theology was taught in the secular universities as a distinct specialised subject on what Yannaras calls a 'Protestant German Model'[735]. Orthodox

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[729] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 351.
[730] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 352.
[731] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 352.
[732] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 352, fn.4.
[733] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 352.
[734] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 350.
[735] Yannaras, p. 193.

faculties enforced a sense of confessional identity, 'Orthodox theological schools on the whole educate not for the *Church*, but for a "confessional" Church'[736].

8.4.2 ***Separation between the Church and the Eucharist***

Zizioulas maintains that the Eucharist makes the Church, whilst in turn, the Church makes the Eucharist, the 'Eucharist is the heart of all ecclesiology'[737]. This position is a balanced position that amends the problems of scholasticism on one hand, which holds that the Church makes the Eucharist, and the 'eucharistic ecclesiology' of Afanasiev, on the other hand, who maintained that the Eucharist makes the Church. Zizioulas' ecclesiology rests on the identification between the body of Jesus in the Eucharist and the body of the Church, 'the ecclesiological presuppositions of the Eucharist cannot be found outside the Eucharist itself'[738].

Neo-Scholasticism, and its dominance in Roman Catholicism, was being challenged by a new approach to theology through a *ressourcement* to Patristics by both Catholic and Orthodox theologians in a mutual cross-fertilisation of sources. Zizioulas' approach is very much part of this new style of theology, *nouvelle theologie,* which he used to challenge neo-scholasticism in Greek theology, and the remnants of a neo-scholastic approach he perceives to be at work in ecumenical dialogue. In his book, *Orthodoxy and the West* (2006), Christos Yannaras conveys a useful sketch of the theological landscape in which there was a cross-fertilization between Orthodox and Catholic theology through a *ressourcement* to scripture and the Fathers, and which Greek theologians were slow to uptake:

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[736] Zizioulas, 'The Ecumenical Dimensions of Orthodox Theological Education', p. 355.
[737] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 131, fn.19.
[738] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 69.

> But fifty years later things have radically changed. In 1944 Vladimir Lossky's *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* has rediscovered the patristic presuppositions of theology, but Trembelas totally ignored it. Florovsky's ecclesiological and Meyendorff's first Palamite studies had appeared, together with the pioneering articles of Lot-Borodine. And above all the postwar flowering of patristic studies had taken place, the unexpected turning of leading Roman Catholic theologians to the study of the Greek Fathers of the undivided Church, notably Danielou, Dalmais, Congar, Bouyer, De Lubac, Balthasar and Ivanka[739].

The dominance of neo-scholastic a-historical propositional manual style theology across the Orthodox world, in both Greek academic theology and the Russian seminaries[740] was indicative of a 'Babylonian Captivity' of modern Orthodoxy to, 'the tortuous paths of medieval scholasticism'[741]. However, the mutual flourishing of *ressourcement* which had occurred between Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians in the 1940s and 1950s provided a route to restore the Patristic ethos implicit to the Orthodox liturgical tradition in its theology. Zizioulas attributes this move to the Catholic patristic theologians, such as Yves Congar, Danielou and De Lubac:

> the first important factor responsible for new, positive and creative developments in Orthodox theology in our century is rather curiously, the work of "Western" theologians …. [The] return to the ancient patristic sources, which has characterised Western theology in our century, is largely responsible for the Orthodox theological renaissance[742].

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[739] Yannaras, p. 211.

[740] Cf. Florovsky, 1989, 'Western Influences in Russian Theology' in *Aspects of Church History*. Vol.4. Nordland Publishing Company: Belmont Massachusetts. pp.157-182.

[741] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.

[742] Zizioulas, 1980, 'Ortodossia' in *Enciclopedia del Novecento*, vol.5 (Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma) pp.1-18. We are indebted to Paul McPartlan for providing a translation of this crucial passage in his book, McPartlan, 1993, *Eucharist Makes the Church*, p.xv.

The *ressourcement* project in De Lubac proved an expedient source for Zizioulas' claim to restore the importance of the Eucharist for ecclesiology. Through the patristic *ressourcement* of De Lubac, Zizioulas perceived that ecclesiological history has entered a third phase, the first having been the patristic era, and the second having been scholasticism. In this third phase 'this revival has recovered the ancient link between Church and Eucharist that was obscured, if not lost, in the middle ages'[743]. Through *ressourcement* and the accompanying scholarship in liturgical, biblical and patristic studies by Catholic theologians, such as Gregory Dix[744] Zizioulas claims that Orthodox theologians were reminded of the 'patristic concept of the Eucharist'[745] as the '*work of the people* (λειτουργία)' and as the 'assembly *in this place* (επι το αὐτὸ)'[746].

Ressourcement enabled Zizioulas to make a historical diagnosis for the emergence of the view of the Church as primarily an institution before it is a Eucharistic assembly (*ekklesia)*. With De Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* (1949) as a key source[747], Zizioulas attributes the rise of an institutional view of the Church with the separation of the Church and the Eucharist which occurred in scholastic ecclesiology in the thirteenth century[748]. Henri De Lubac and Zizioulas share a mutual target in the decline of the importance of the Eucharist for Ecclesiology, which has resulted in a purely institutional view of the Church, that possesses the *potestas*[749] to make the Eucharist, rather than the Eucharist constituting the Church:

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[743] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[744] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[745] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[746] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[747] Paul McPartlan (1993, p.xiv) claims that in a personal conversation with Zizioulas, Zizioulas said that De Lubac's Corpus Mysticum was a key source for his study on the Eucharist. Zizioulas cites Corpus Mysticum frequently in this essay, and throughout Being as Communion (1985).
[748] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 64.
[749] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.

the theological tradition that has been influenced by Medieval Scholasticism both in the West and the East has tended to answer this question by saying that it is the *Church* that makes the Eucharist, and not vice versa[750].

In his essay, *'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist'* (2010)[751] Zizioulas contrasts a New Testament and Patristic ecclesiology with scholasticism, and the resultant conflicts on the Eucharist between Catholic and Reformed tradition. Zizioulas wrote his doctoral dissertation on the unity of the Church on the basis of the unity between the Eucharist and the Bishop, as a patristic restoration to the errors on antithetical schemes of Church history promulgated by the Tubingen School[752]. Zizioulas build on his doctoral research to argue that in the Pauline Epistles, and in the epistles by Ignatius, the Church and the Eucharist were identified with each other[753]. In 1 Corinthians, 'the terms for Lord's Supper (κυριακον δειπνον), "coming together in the same place" (συνερχεσθαι επι το αὐτο), and "Church" (ἐκκλησιά) are used to denote the same reality'[754]. That is the Church was the Eucharistic assembly gathered together in the same place as a local concrete community. Zizioulas claims that Ignatius of Antioch developed the ecclesiology in the Pauline Epistles to maintain that the Church was not simply the local catholic community gathered in the Eucharist, but that in gathering to celebrate the Eucharist that local Church is the Church Catholic, 'i.e. *the full and integral Body of Christ*'[755]. For Zizioulas, the early Church attributed Catholicity to the celebration of the Eucharist that was presided over by the Bishop, surrounded by Presbyters and assisted by deacons. The Eucharist and the orders of the Church, in both clergy

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[750] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 67.

[751] Published in Zizioulas, 2010, *One and the Many,* pp.61-74. Zizioulas. 2011. 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist' in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World,* pp.99-110. First published as, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Eucharist' in *Nicolaus.* 1982. Vol.10. pp.333-349. Referred to as *EPH* hereafter.

[752] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 11.

[753] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, pp. 45–68.

[754] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 62.

[755] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 62.

and the laity, as an ordained order are united with each other. The celebration of the Eucharist is for Zizioulas the primary identifying factor of the Church.

The union between the Church and the Eucharist continued to constitute the unity of the Church throughout its engagements with various heresies, from Gnosticism to the Arianism, and Donatism. Orthodoxy, as in maintaining the right and true belief of the Church was linked with the celebration of the Eucharist[756]. Zizioulas quotes Irenaeus, 'Our faith [belief: γνώμη] is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our faith'[757]. Orthodoxy is not a matter merely of holding right belief but is a necessary condition for participation in the Eucharist, because the unity of the Church was constituted by the Eucharist. This ecclesial perspective Zizioulas believes the Tübingen School failed to consider in their assessment of Church history[758]. Their perception of Church history is that of a history of ideas in a secular mode, whereas in *Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Eucharist* (2010) Zizioulas commends Henri De Lubac and Yves Congar for maintaining the importance of the Eucharist for Church history[759]. Zizioulas argues that even despite their separation at the schism, the East and the West continued to maintain the unity between the Eucharist, the Church and the Body of Christ:

> The Eucharist continued to constitute the sacrament of the Church, that which expresses the Church's unity and which makes the Body of Christ and the body of the Church identical. Church, Eucharist, and the Body of Christ continue up until that time to constitute one and the same reality in the West as is also the case in the East[760].

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[756] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', pp. 63–64.
[757] Irenaeus, Haereses, IV, 8.5 cited in Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 62.
[758] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 14.
[759] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 64.
[760] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 64.

Ecclesiology for Zizioulas in his assessment of the Patristic Church is a matter of participation in the Body of Christ; it is a mode of existence which unifies persons together in the Eucharistic assembly whilst acknowledging their diversity through the various ministries of the Spirit but which constitute the one body of Christ.

In *Corpus Mysticum*, De Lubac maintains the same view of the Church as an identification between the Body of Christ, the Church and the Eucharist, 'of the Church, in contrast, both in the context of the Eucharist and elsewhere, we still commonly use, without further explanation … the body of Christ, the body of the Lord, the body which is the Church, the true body of the Church'[761]. De Lubac maintains that into the twelfth century, the Eucharist and the Church were both identified with the body of Christ, and he cities the references to various medieval theologians who make that connection, and citing from a manuscript quoting Hesychias, 'He poured out his intelligible blood on the altar, that is, his body. But the Church is the body of Christ'[762], and in other Augustinian Formulations, 'by eating the body of Christ they become the body of Christ'[763].

In Zizioulas' view, De Lubac's extensive historical research makes a strong case that up until the thirteenth century, the Church in the West maintained an essential unity between the Body of Christ, the Church and the Eucharist[764]. The heart of the Church for Zizioulas and De Lubac is an inseparable complementarity between the Eucharist and the Church. As Balthasar once said of De Lubac

> the Church (through her hierarchical office) "makes the Eucharist", and the "Eucharist makes the Church" as incorporation into Christ's body. For this reason, the Eucharist can only be genuine in the Church[765].

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[761] Henri De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Gemma Simmonds SJ and Richard Price (London: SCM Press, 2006), p. 79.
[762] De Lubac, p. 81.
[763] De Lubac, p. 82.
[764] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[765] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri De Lubac* (SanFrancisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), p. 108.

De Lubac, along with Zizioulas, holds that from the beginning of the Church the Eucharist was considered in relation to the Church, and the Church exists as the mystical body because it is associated with the body of Christ in the Eucharist. By participation in this body, the many become one[766]. The gathered people of God were made into the Church by the Spirit because of their participation in the body of Christ in the Eucharist, 'literally speaking, therefore, the Eucharist makes the Church'[767].

This distinguishes the Church from a sociological reality of a collected group of individuals, because the many individuals are incorporated into the one person of Christ. However, from the thirteenth century a 'disassociation began to occur'[768]. The Eucharist came to be referred to as the 'flesh of the sacrament'[769] and could be referred to in its own terms without its association with the Church. A stage of development occurred gradually in which the Eucharist was referred to as the *flesh* in its own terms, and *body* when it was considered as part of the one body of Christ as the Church. Over the course of the thirteenth century, the preoccupation of the Eucharist came to be with the *substance* of the bread and wine being transformed into the body and blood of Christ[770].

The result of this preoccupation with transubstantiation meant that a tendency arose in which the body of the Church could be considered in distinction from the Eucharist[771]. Zizioulas does not appear to contest the doctrine of transubstantiation, rather it seems that the emphasis on the *substance* of the Eucharistic elements was part of a separation between the Eucharist and the Church. For instance, in another essay, *The Church as 'Mystical' Body of Christ*[772] he writes that from

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766 De Lubac, p. 248.
767 De Lubac, p. 88.
768 De Lubac, p. 96.
769 De Lubac, p. 99.
770 De Lubac, p. 152.
771 De Lubac, p. 74.
772 John Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 286–306.

the thirteenth century onwards, 'three uses of the term 'body of Christ' (the Christological, the ecclesiological and the Eucharistic) are carefully distinguished by the scholastics as to acquire entirely different and indeed *independent* meanings… *Corpus Mysticum* was to be used for the Church alone'[773]. The fact this remains a concern for Zizioulas from his earlier essays to an essay which appears for the first time in *Communion and Otherness*[774] shows how pivotal a concern the Church as the *corpus mysticum* is for Zizioulas. The consequence of this change meant that rather than the Eucharist constituting the Church, the Church was now perceived as producing the Eucharist. This change to ecclesiology had a series of negative results.

First, the *Church precedes the Eucharist*. Rather than a mutual constitutive relationship between the Church and the Eucharist, Zizioulas believes that a view of the Church producing the Eucharist has an accompanying erroneous Christology, in which Christology precedes pneumatology. It allows even for the innovation in describing the Pope as 'a *caput* of the mystical body, which would have been impossible if the term, 'mystical body' had retained its earlier association with the Eucharist'[775]. The body of Christ exists before the Spirit has made manifest Christ, which is a contradiction. Zizioulas holds that the incarnation event was a synthesis between the Spirit and Christ, because the Spirit incarnated Christ. The same problem manifests itself in the Eucharist. If it is the institution of the Church which produces the Eucharist, then the Church rather than the Spirit causes the Eucharist to exist. The Church is a historical entity, rather a Spiritual body, which produces the 'means of grace'[776]. The fundamental problem is that the order of ecclesiology is reversed 'the order suggested by traditional dogmatic manuals is precisely this: first comes Christ, then follows the Spirit, then the Church, and finally the Sacraments'[777]. The Church is primarily in this view a social and historical reality which exists as an institution.

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[773] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 290.
[774] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*.
[775] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 290.
[776] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[777] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.

Second, an institutional view of the Church *objectifies* the sacraments[778]. The Eucharist no longer constitutes the Church because of an incorporation into Christ. The Eucharist is reduced to an objectified 'means of grace', which exists alongside other sacraments as one amongst many. It is a view of the sacraments of which Zizioulas is highly critical. As he writes in *Being in Communion* (1985) a restoration to a patristic consciousness means that the view of the sacraments as one sacrament amongst many 'as an objective act or a "means of grace" "used" or "administered" by the Church'[779] must be abandoned. The Eucharist cannot be conceived outside of the liturgical event, since the Eucharist constitutes the Church. Thus, Zizioulas is critical of the adoration of the Eucharistic elements outside the liturgy of the Eucharist. The Eucharist becomes 'a product of the priestly machinery'[780].

Third, *Christology and Ecclesiology* are treated as distinct subjects from *sacramental theology*[781]. A position which Zizioulas believes to be untenable in the light of Patristic theology. The Eucharist is no longer regarded as manifesting, 'the total body of the Church'[782]. We shall consider the connection between Christology and Ecclesiology in further depth, but for Zizioulas this results in the Church first and foremost being constituted by a reality which precedes the Eucharist. The Church's hierarchy, its Bishops, conceived as leaders and administrators in charge of presbyters, *produce* the Eucharist because by the Church's charism they alone possess the '*potestas'* and '*character indelibilis'*[783] to produce the Eucharist. Zizioulas also believes that the separation between the Church and the Eucharist stratifies the orders of the Church. The model of ecclesiology presented by the patristic consciousness was of an essential unity between the Bishop who presides at the Eucharist, surrounded by Presbyters as *collegium*[784] and served by Deacons who celebrate the

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[778] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[779] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.
[780] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[781] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 64.
[782] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.
[783] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.
[784] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 70.

Eucharist together with the laity, and together they consecrate the Eucharist; a vision of the eschatological vision in Revelation in which the twelve surround Christ proclaiming the *Sanctus*. However, with the objectification of the Eucharist, there has arisen a 'presbytero-centric'[785] view of the Eucharist in which the only condition necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist is its celebration by the presbyter, without the Bishop or the laity. In certain quarters of Eucharistic theology, it is the presbyter alone who consecrates the Eucharist.

These factors have entrenched an institutional view of the Church that leads to unity being posited on the basis of shared creedal or confessional affirmations rather than unity in the Eucharist. The impact of a scholastic view of the Church was felt keenly in the reformation debates between Catholicism and Protestantism. Reformed debates on the Eucharist tended to restore the role of the laity in the celebration of communion[786], but it was denigrated to an occasional sacrament. The identity of the Church was no longer identified with the Eucharist, but the revelation of the Word[787]. The separation between the Eucharist and the Church impacted itself upon the exercise of academic theology by Orthodox theologians in their 'confessions, such as those of P.Mogila, Dositheus of Jerusalem, Cyril Lucaris etc'[788]. In Orthodox theology, Zizioulas claims that this contributed to a dichotomy between the celebration of the Eucharist in the Church, and an academic theological understanding of ecclesiology which became both confessional and propositional. The Church is not, 'simply a community of faith and hearts, as the 'Augsburg

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[785] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 70.

[786] Luther rejected a particular priesthood, in favour of the universal priesthood of baptised. McPartlan (2008) notes that in response the Council of Trent so emphasised the priesthood of the clergy that they neglected the laity (p.273). In the same year as Zizioulas wrote *EPH* (1982), the WCC *Faith and Order* document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) began with the priority of the Priesthood of Christ in which all the baptised participates ('Ministry' n.17). In his article, '*Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist'* (1969), Zizioulas likewise argues that all the sacraments of the Church participate in the mystery of Christ, and within his priesthood there are various *orders,* Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and the laity, but all are required to consecrate the Eucharist because it is ultimately participation in the high priestly ministry of Christ (cf 201, p.121).

[787] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.

[788] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.

Confession'[789] defines the Church, or as 'a system of ideas or a form of "religion"'[790] removed from its episcopacy or institutions, or an experience of the heart or an institution. solution to these problems lie with a reassessment on what it means for the Church and the Eucharist to be integrated with each other as the Mystical Body of Christ.

8.5 ***Conclusion***

In our analysis of Zizioulas' questions, it is important not to underestimate the importance of the legacy of the neopatristic synthesis upon the formulation of Zizioulas' questions which exist in symbiosis with the development of his neopatristic synthesis founded upon the Eucharist. The nature of his theological reasoning is firmly rooted in the emergent neopatristic synthesis, seen in his predecessors, inter alia, Florovsky and Lossky. This is crucial because they form the basis for maintaining a Christian Hellenism against the captivity of Greek theology to neo-scholasticism. Zizioulas' questions became rooted in his ecumenical ecclesiological work, and the importance of this ecumenical work was impressed upon through Florovsky identifying that ecumenism is implicit to the neopatristic synthesis. This led him to develop an ontological conception of ecclesiology in distinction to a conception of ecumenism which is limited to doctrinal propositions. Zizioulas presents an ecclesiology in which participation in Christ fulfills the ontological nature of humanity, and becomes the lens through which he considers questions relating to the Trinity as the ontological foundation of being, and in whose Trinitarian life the Church participates through Christ. His ecumenical questions are driven by his adoption of the neopatristic synthesis, in which these ecclesiological questions are dealt with through a developed ontological understanding of

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789 John Zizioulas, 'The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. by Luke Ben Tallon (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 39–81 (p. 69).
790 Zizioulas, 'The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God', p. 69.

the Church. Thus, his question is, 'what is the Church?' is answered through the patristic Eucharistic consciousness in which the Church exists as the *totus Christus*.

There is a development from Zizioulas' first work on the unity of the Eucharist, the Bishop and the Church in the person of Christ towards his address in *'The Eucharistic Vision of the World* (1967)'[791]. In this essay, Zizioulas develops a wider vision of the Church as the realisation of created nature through the realisation of the human person as the image and likeness of God, that is to be free and personal. Zizioulas works out his ontology of personhood in his key anthropological essays, '*Human Capacity and Human Incapacity'* (1975) and '*From Mask to Person*' (1977). From his earliest work, the essential otherness between the divine and creation becomes central to his integration between ecclesiology and ontology. Thus, his questions, such as the separation of the Church from the Eucharist, arise because Zizioulas identifies them as contrary to the theological presuppositions established through a Eucharistic consciousness of the Church, which exists as the mystical body of Christ.

This neopatristic synthesis provided Zizioulas with the means to challenge the neo-scholasticism inherent to Greek academic theology in the twentieth century. For Zizioulas, the problems of neo-scholasticism in Greece had their parallels to the latent confessionalist and institutional assumption in ecumenical dialogue. Zizioulas tackles these problems by questioning the nature of truth; theology for Zizioulas is not a propositional or confessional discipline but is a participation in the truth of the divine mystery, in which the Church is in the Spirit the mystical body of Christ. The Church is called to be Catholic rather than confessional, because the Church exists for the realisation of the human person as the image and likeness of God. On this basis, the confessionalist identities which form the basis for ecumenical dialogue can be challenged because there is a transcendent identity of the Church, that of the true catholicity in Christ.

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791 Published as John Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

For Zizioulas, Orthodoxy is tied to the correct identity of the Church, in which the Church's institution must be rooted in the Eucharist, and its canonical unity must be tied with Eucharistic unity. This exists in his early work, 'Eucharist, Bishop, Church' (2001) and is developed in his theological ontology in which Catholicity is tied to salvation in Christ. In this conception of ecclesiology, Catholicity is a criterion for Orthodoxy as the Church's unity and identity depends upon Eucharistic unity. Thus, the fragmentation of the Church is a kind of heresy in the face of the demand for unity in Christ. As shall be argued in the next chapter, the solution to this problem lies with the restoration of a Eucharistic consciousness established by Patristic theology, and how a restoration of that same Eucharistic consciousness conveys the true nature of the Church.

CHAPTER 9. KOINONIA AS PARTICIPATION IN THE TOTUS CHRISTUS

9.1 Zizioulas' Method: Neopatristic Synthesis.

9.1.1 The Church as the Eucharist over Propositional Approach to Truth

Zizioulas' neopatristic-synthesis provides the framework which he uses to address the problems relating to ecclesiology, which we have outlined in the last chapter. It is necessary to explore Zizioulas' neopatristic synthesis because it functions as the method which drives Zizioulas' integration of Trinitarian theology with ecclesiology by the means of a ressourcement to the *Eucharistic consciousness* which Zizioulas believed to be implicit to Patristic thought. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how Zizioulas addresses the problems identified in the last chapter by addressing the nature of his answers.

Zizioulas' ecclesiology is an exercise in neopatristic synthesis, formulated under his mentor Florovsky, in which the Church is identified with the Eucharist, as a participation in the mystical body of Christ. This ecclesiology was posited as an answer to the problem of the institutional and confessional conception of the Church which was assumed in ecumenical dialogue. Where Zizioulas diagnoses the roots of the problem in the separation of the Church from the Eucharist in medieval scholastic theology, the remedy lies with explicating a Patristic vision for ecclesiology in which the Eucharist constitutes the Church. This ecclesiology is centred on the transformation of the human person as constituent of God's recapitulation of creation through Christ and the Spirit. This transformation of the human person is the purpose and nature of the Church, and this reality drives his approach to questions relating to Trinitarian theology and ontology.

Zizioulas claims that Greek Orthodoxy in the twentieth century was subjected to a 'Babylonian Captivity'[792] because it adopted a confessional manner of ecumenical dialogue and a neo-scholastic manual style of academic theology in the Greek Universities: 'the tortuous paths of medieval scholasticism'[793]. The problem with a neo-scholastic methodology is that it can lead to a treatment of the Church as an institution which is distinct from the Eucharist. This has significant consequences for ecclesiology in which confessional identity is asserted over and above the Church as '*Una Sancta'*[794]. The *One Church* does not belong to Orthodoxy alone, or any one denomination, rather Zizioulas sees in a neopatristic synthesis the vital imperative of a restoration between East and West as One Church. Zizioulas claims

> the gradual abandonment of the confessional mentality of past generations and the recognition of the need for our theology to be an expression not of one confession but of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church herself, now directs the course of theological study towards the sources of the ancient undivided Church[795].

The solution lies in a restoration of a 'lost consciousness of the primitive Church'[796] through a ressourcement to Scripture and the Fathers. Here we must add a note of caution about Zizioulas' use of the phrase ancient or primitive Church. As his predecessor Florovsky notes, the term primitive Church is often used in some quarters of German Liberal Protestantism without historical sensitivity; it is a byword for their narrative of decline of the Church in Roman

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[792] John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), p. 20.
[793] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.
[794] John Zizioulas, 'The Self-Understanding of the Orthodox and Their Participation in the Ecumenical Movement', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 321–33 (p. 321).
[795] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 1.
[796] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.

Catholicism 'and what is sought is always the "primitive Christianity" that existed before history'[797]. But it is a view of the Church which does not necessarily consider either the liturgical of the Patristic history of the period. Florovsky cautions that historical insensitivity leads to abstracting idealised principles from an idealised view of history which can lead to 'an arid sectarianism of doctrinaire scholasticism'[798].

Rather than purporting abstract principles, Florovsky advocates that a neopatristic synthesis recovers the catholic consciousness which is alive in the liturgy. Florovsky affirms that the historical Christ is alive in the 'catholic consciousness of the Church'[799] which is celebrated in the liturgy. Zizioulas disagrees with the emphasis that Florovsky places on the connection between this Catholic consciousness and the historical Christ who is alive in the Church's tradition, favouring instead an eschatological view of the Eucharist which tempers history[800]. However, Zizioulas shares Florovsky's affirmation that the recovery of the ethos of the 'primitive Church' lies in the catholic consciousness which exists in the celebration of the Eucharist. Zizioulas maintains that this ressourcement recovers the 'decisive importance of the *Eucharist* in ecclesiology'[801].

This neopatristic synthesis is a process in which questions are considered in the consciousness of the primitive church to which the Eucharist is central to ecclesiology. The restoration of the centrality of the Eucharist to ecclesiology was posited as a corrective to the a-historical propositional methodology of neo-scholasticism, so that Orthodoxy can contribute to ecumenism not based on confessional identities but through what it means to participate in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as the body of Christ. Zizioulas sustains this claim by drawing on the foundational sources for the Church in West and East, namely Scripture and the Fathers. These

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[797] George Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology Part Two*, ed. by Richard Haugh (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1989), VI, p. 296.
[798] Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology Part Two*, VI, p. 295.
[799] Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology Part Two*, VI, p. 295.
[800] See section below the 'Eucharist makes the Church'.
[801] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.

sources do not provide a series of propositions to which assent must be given, but instead provides a focus on the Eucharist that in turn provides the *theological presuppositions* that constitute a framework for questions relating to ecclesiology, and ecumenism.

Zizioulas' doctoral thesis, *The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries* (1965)[802] applies a neopatristic synthesis to ecclesiology that gives rise to the Church as the *whole Christ*, which implies 'considering this unity, first and foremost, *sacramentally*, i.e. as the incorporation of human beings *in Christ*'[803]. It is this basis for ecclesiology which Zizioulas spends his career explicating. For Zizioulas, a total theological vision emerges from the Church as the body of Christ, in which questions of Trinitarian theology, anthropology and ontology are implicit to this ecclesiological perspective. Zizioulas makes the case for the importance of Patristic ecclesiology as he conveys his theology not exclusively to an Orthodox audience, for whom the importance of Patristics is a given, but to an ecumenical context. Zizioulas' theology is didactic, and thus he provides justification for the use of Patristic ecclesiology because he communicates for a specific purpose, and this is to draw out the significance of Patristic tradition for ecumenical ecclesiology. Namely, that it challenges the assumption of the 'self-sufficiency in which East and West have indulged after the Great schism'[804]. The self-sufficiency of the Eastern and West dimensions of the Church, not to mention the adherence to denominational division, is inconsistent with the view that in the celebration of the Eucharist the Church participates in the *totus Christus*.

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[802] Published as John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, trans. by Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001)

[803] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 16.

[804] John Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 126–36 (p. 135).

Indeed, his first publication after his thesis, '*La Vision Eucharistique du Monde et L'homme contemporain* (1967) '[805], is a programmatic address in which Zizioulas elaborates on a liturgical vision for the Church as participation in Christ, a vision which illuminates subjects relating to the Church's relation to the world, to anthropology and ethics[806]. In this paper, Zizioulas makes the argument that the ancient Church conceived of the Church as a 'single, unique sacrament, the sacrament of Christ as it is called in Holy Scripture'[807]. The Eucharist is understood as Christological, 'it is the body of Christ himself, the *totus Christus*'[808]. But crucially, rather than the Eucharist being conceived of as 'an *object*, a *thing*, a means of expressing our piety and facilitating our salvation'[809], the Eucharist consists in the fact that is a gathering in which 'the *whole mystery of Christ (*the *totus Christus*)- the salvation of the world- is revealed in it, lives in it and is concentrated in it'[810]. The Church 'is in the Eucharist and by the Eucharist'[811] and because the mystery of Christ is revealed in the Eucharist the liturgical tradition becomes the foundation for the theology of the Church:

> the entire universe is a liturgy, a cosmic liturgy that offers the whole of creation before the throne of God. Orthodox theology, too, is basically a doxology, a liturgy; it is a Eucharistic theology[812].

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[805] John Zizioulas, 'La Vision Eucharistique Du Monde et l'Homme Contemporain', *Contacts, Revue Francaise de L'Orthodoxe*, 57 (1967), 83–92; Also published as, John Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 123–31.
[806] Zizioulas has not developed this initial insight on the relationship between the Eucharist and ethics.
[807] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[808] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[809] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[810] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[811] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 123.
[812] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 123. Paul Molnar contests Zizioulas' relationship between communion and revelation, cf. Molnar. *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*. See Chapter Five for our exploration of Molnar's criticism of communion and revelation.

The liturgy conveys the mystery of Christ, and this mystery is the means by which the life of the Church is united with truth about creation and about God: 'it contemplates the being of God and the being of the Church with the eyes of worship'[813]. A liturgical vision of the world consists in an affirmation of the world as the creation of God, and that in the Eucharist the gifts of creation, all that is in creation, passes through the hands of the celebrant as an offering to God. Not so that creation is transformed into something that it is not, but that in undoing the distortion of sin, it is transfigured into what it truly is. Zizioulas illustrates this in the liturgy, where in the 'grand entrance'[814] the laity process their gifts of bread and wine and hand them over to the celebrant; during the Eucharist these gifts are consecrated as the body and blood of Christ, and intercessions are made to the Father. Zizioulas describes the liturgy as 'a journey, a parade of the whole world before the altar. Bring the world as it is with them, the faithful receive a foretaste of paradise, an eschatological glimpse of the world as it will be, and then are called again to "go in peace" back into the world'[815]. The liturgy demonstrates a dialectic between God and creation in that it presents an image of creation's eschaton in communion with the Father. This liturgical vision is what Zizioulas terms, somewhat romantically, 'the lost consciousness of the primitive Church'[816].

Zizioulas' thesis, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (1965)[817] is an answer to the questions and problems Zizioulas identifies with an institutional view of the Church purported by a confessionalist and neo-scholastic approach to theology. A neopatristic synthesis is a turn away from an exclusively institutional perception of the church, and a propositional approach to truth, towards a shift in a perception based upon the union between the Eucharist and eschaton as the revelation of the truth of the immanent God, in which the Church, as the body of Christ, exists as a union between the created and uncreated. Zizioulas does so by establishing the centrality of the Eucharist to the early

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[813] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 19.
[814] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[815] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 125.
[816] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.
[817] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries.*

Church, a 'eucharistic consciousness'[818]. This union between the eschaton and the Eucharist is possible because the Church is the risen body of Christ, the eschatological Christ.

The return to the Eucharistic consciousness in theology, and in ecclesiology generally, is built on the celebration of the Eucharist as participation in the risen Christ, in the *totus Christus*. This is significant for the nature of Zizioulas' theology in that it is primarily liturgical, and it is from this liturgical perspective that Zizioulas reflects on the nature of divine and human ontology.

9.1.2 *Truth in relation to the Incarnation and Eucharist*

Zizioulas has stated that he objects to a propositional approach to truth[819]. For Zizioulas, truth is implicit to the liturgy, which enables the person to participate in Christ thereby reckoning a complete transformation of the person into the image and likeness of God[820]. The epiclesis of the Spirit in the liturgy realises the eschaton as divine-human communion in Christ, and as such, the liturgy is *iconic* of the final recapitulation of creation in Christ. The liturgy has truth because it is a vision of the eschaton as divine-human communion which is revealed in the person of Christ.

However, the question arises, as Paul Molnar maintains of Zizioulas[821], does a Eucharistic approach to truth make the Eucharist a distinct revelation to that in Christ? What is the relationship between Christ and the Eucharist in terms of truth? In answering this question, we find that Zizioulas roots the concept of truth in Christ. In doing so, Zizioulas ties together a number of themes which we have discussed. First, in Christ is the realised eschaton since Christ unites creation with the Father. Second, that historical events do not in themselves possess truth and are not the cause of communion. Finally, Christ is himself the content of revelation and the means of

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[818] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 146.
[819] See chapter 'Principle Questions posed by Zizioulas'
[820] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 127.
[821] Paul Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 445.

revelation since in Christ God the Father makes apparent the purposes of history as the event of communion between creation and the Father.

In our evaluation, the answer to the question whether the Eucharist is a distinct mode of revelation external to revealed word in Christ can be found in Zizioulas' objection to the notion of a '*heilgeschichte*'[822]. Zizioulas objects to this understanding of history because it compromises the absolute creative freedom of God[823] to act in creation, and act for its redemption. There is no suggestion that history itself acts as a driving principle (*logos*) for the revelation of truth since this would compromise absolute divine freedom. A similar problem occurs in the identification of the Eucharist with truth. The Eucharist is not an object produced by the Church, any more than the Church can pronounce on truth as though it took the form of an epistemology. Nor does Zizioulas attribute truth in the Eucharist in connection to the life of communion that reflects divine being[824].

The Eucharist in itself is not the *logos* through which God is revealed. In his discussion on Origen, Zizioulas believes that Origen aligns himself closely with Greek ontology in positing an unbreakable bond in the form of a synergy between 'the *logos* of God and the *logoi* of creation'[825]. Origen and a Greek approach to truth are negated by a neopatristic synthesis which places an emphasis on the absolute freedom of God from ontological necessity by asserting the *creatio ex nihilo* as an articulation of the essential otherness between God and creation[826]. To attribute the Eucharist as revelation in itself is to introduce a natural synergy of being[827] which Zizioulas objects to in Origen. In these arguments, we can detect Zizioulas' objection to any suggestion that revelation occurs other than by the divine *will*[828].

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[822] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 180.
[823] See the section on Christian Hellenism in chapter 6. Florovsky was also firm in his negation of compromising the creative freedom of God, and thus abjured any sense of necessity in God's salvific acts in creation.
[824] See chapter 2, 'The Church as Image of the Trinity'
[825] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 75.
[826] See chapter 6 on Creatio ex nihilo. Here it is apparent that Florovsky made the argument that creatio ex nihilo was vital in the Christianisation of Hellenic thought. Zizioulas adopted this point to claim that the Christian doctrine of creation challenged the ontological necessity of Hellenic philosophy.
[827] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 74.
[828] See Molnar's objection to Zizioulas on the basis of equating revelation and communion, chapter three.

In our estimation, Zizioulas, in his Trinitarian theology, asserts the difference between *substance* (ousia) and *person* (hypostasis) in order to demonstrate that truth exists only in connection with divine *will* and not by ontological necessity. Zizioulas emphasises the total otherness of God to creation. The otherness of God is maintained in his chapter on 'Truth and Communion'[829]. Thus, rather than discussing the *imminence* between God and creation that could be implied by the concept of communion, Zizioulas emphasises God's *transcendence* in order to give greater depth to the uniqueness of God's *immanence* in Christ.

Zizioulas in this sense affirms *apophaticism* in that 'God has a simple unknowable existence, inaccessible to all things and completely unexplainable, *for He is beyond affirmation and negation*'[830]. God cannot be known in substance, nor can knowledge of God can be compelled by any creaturely reality. There is no synergy of being between the divine and creation since God's being is totally other and transcendent to creation. Since God exists in absolute freedom, it is only through divine *will* that God reveals himself. In Zizioulas' view, a Greek notion of truth saw truth to lie within a closed ontology, as denoted by the prefix '*αυτο-*'[831]. Patristic theology broke with the closed ontology of the Greeks in that truth lies *beyond* created being, hence the apophatic theologian's tendency to denote concepts by the prefix, 'υπερ-'[832]. God is *beyond* truth in creation and is absolutely *other* to creation. Created being can only participate in truth through transcending itself. This is not achieved by its own nature, but through the ecstatic love of God that exists in Christ's incarnation.

Zizioulas turns to Maximus the Confessor and draws out from him the concept of *ekstasis*[833]. Zizioulas juxtaposes the Neoplatonists, where God is related to the world by way of an

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[829] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 67–122. In a chapter written especially for *Communion and Otherness* (2006) entitled, '*On Being Other*' (2006, pp.13-88), Zizioulas fleshes out the importance of the otherness of God to creation as a condition for communion. *Communion and Otherness* was compiled to counter the criticisms following *Being as Communion,* and for this reason the chapter is shaped by its apologetic character.
[830] Maximus Conf. *Myst. Praef.* cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 90.
[831] 'In itself' Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 89.
[832] 'Beyond' Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 89.
[833] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 91.

emanation, and Maximus, for whom God is related to the world through an immanent relationship of love in which God reaches beyond himself[834]. This movement *beyond* is called *ekstasis*. The implicit *otherness* between God and creation exists so that God and creation can exist in an ecstatic movement of communion. In the response to the gift of God's love creation responds to its principle cause. To explain, Zizioulas cites Maximus:

> God moves inasmuch as He implants an immanent relationship of eros and love in those capable of receiving it; he moves in attracting naturally the desire of those who are moved towards him[835].

This notion of eros which Zizioulas expounds from Maximus the Confessor is built on '*logoi*'[836]. Zizioulas sees in Maximus a transformation of the concept of *logoi* in relation to eros from the use of *logoi* in Origen[837]. In Zizioulas' view, the *logoi* in Origen constitute an eternal dimension to creation since they are the implanted divine thoughts in all beings which are drawn back to God through the *logos* (Son). It is not our task in this thesis to determine the veracity of Zizioulas' reading of Origen but to understand Zizioulas' reading of Origen to construct his vision for Christ as truth. However, it is worth noting that Florovsky takes a similar view of Origen, 'he was, from the outset, strongly inhibited by the "Hellenistic" habits of his mind … in Origen's conception, the Cosmos is a kind of eternal companion of God'[838]. There is a strong similarity between

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[834] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 91.
[835] Maximus, Amb.23 cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 91.
[836] John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. by Knight Douglas (London: T&T Clark, 2008), p. 86.
[837] It is not our task in this thesis to determine the veracity of Zizioulas' reading of Origen but to understand Zizioulas' reading of Origen to construct his vision for Christ as truth. However, it is worth noting that Florovsky takes a similar view of Origen, 'he was, from the outset, strongly inhibited by the "Hellenistic" habits of his mind … in Origen's conception, the Cosmos is a kind of eternal companion of God' (Florovsky, 1989, *Aspects,* p.71). There is a strong similarity between Zizioulas and Florovsky's regard for Origen.
[838] George Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History*, ed. by Richard Haugh (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1989), IV, p. 71.

Zizioulas and Florovsky's regard for Origen because they perceive him to embody the Hellenist ontology which they believed was ameliorated by *creatio ex nihilo*.

There are two problems with this view of *logoi* for Zizioulas. First, Origen assumes a theological anthropology based upon a duality between the soul and the body. Decline in creation consists of the soul being incarcerated in the material body. Salvation consists in the purification of the soul through its release from the material. In Origen's view, humans can approach God only as incorporeal beings. The second problem is that an eternal dimension to creation makes God dependent upon creation for divine existence; as Zizioulas writes: 'if God creates eternally, beside or within God there is something else, a second self of God, which determines God's existence'[839]. If the *logoi* exist as eternal divine thoughts, then creation always exists in the mind of God, this makes creation eternal. If this is the case, *creatio ex nihilo* is invalid.

According to Zizioulas, Maximus the Confessor instigated a revolutionary interpretation of *logoi*. In the *Ad Thalassium*[840] the *logoi* are not eternal divine thoughts but are the *wills* of God[841]. Zizioulas claims that the move from *thoughts* to *will* means that God has willed eternally creation to exist, but will is not the same as a thought's existence. Will does not mean that something has to exist, rather it can be intended to exist from eternity out of the exercise of God's freedom. The existence of creation is due to God's will, not the necessity of an eternal existence as a thought. The significance of this for Zizioulas is that creation exists as a matter of the freedom which belongs to communion and love rather than the ontological necessity of a synergy of nature[842].

Zizioulas draws attention to Maximus in order to argue that the gulf between created and uncreated being is bridged not by nature, that is to say an emanation between divine and created

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[839] Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 86.
[840] Maximus the Confessor.*Ad Thalassium* 60 cited in Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 87.
[841] Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 87.
[842] Zizioulas makes the same point in his discussion of substance and will in relation to the thought of Athanasius in chapter 2, 'Truth and Communion', pp.83-86.

being, but by the love of God for creation. The apophatic division between the *energy* and *essence*[843] is a safeguard for the ontological distinction, indeed total otherness, between the creator and creation[844]. God's *ekstatic* movement with creation does not occur by nature but through the gift of love. This occurs at a personal level rather than the level of substance. In this sense, Zizioulas believes that apophatic theology is integral to the patristic conversion of Greek ontology since God's relationship with creation is one based on a total distinction between creator and creation rather than a closed ontology. This distinction is bridged ultimately in the gift of divine love in the person of Christ.

The significance of apophatic theology in Maximus the Confessor is that the truth is found within divine love and communion. But this does not mean that communion is a revelation of God's truth outside of Christ[845].

When we examine truth in Zizioulas' theology we see that the communion which exists between God and creation can only exist in Christ, hence Zizioulas' Johannine reading of Christ as truth[846]. Indeed, for Zizioulas, 'Christology is the sole starting point for a Christian understanding of truth'[847]. Truth is not a matter of mere *knowing*, or the possession of knowledge

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[843] Zizioulas claims that the origin of the distinction between energy and essence has its origins in Gregory of Nazianzus Or. 38:7 cited in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 83–86. (The significance of this is that apophatic theology belongs to Patristic tradition, and is retained by Orthodoxy.

[844] We have identified that this distinction between creator and creation is necessary to maintain the absolute freedom of God, and in return the capacity for freedom in creation. See section on Christian Hellenism in On the Person (1).

[845] Paul Molnar criticises Zizioulas for advocating this concept of truth in relation to communion, cf. Molnar, 2017, 'persons in communion and God as the mystery of the world' ch.9 in *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*. pp.429-464. See chapter 5 for a discussion on truth and communion in Molnar's objections to Zizioulas.

[846] John 14:6 in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 67. See also Zizioulas claim, 'Christ is "truth itself" (αὐτοαληθεια) (John VI.6)' (Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p.76). The further implication this has for creation and humanity is exposited below in 6.II.3. Namely, that if humanity had not fallen Christ would have become incarnate as humanity, and is through humanity that creation is brought into communion with the Father.

[847] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 67. There is definite nod here to Florovsky who also maintained that Christology is the basis for truth and the Church. Zizioulas writes that Florovsky sought to correct the emphasis which Khomiakov's *sobornost* placed on pneumatology by placing his own emphasis upon the Church as a, 'chapter of Christology' (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* p.124). However, Zizioulas holds that Florovsky did not give a sufficient synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* p.124), and so the anamnesis of the Eucharist in Florovsky's ecclesiology looks back to the last supper, and is

as holding to propositions, truth is related to the true way of being for creation in relation to the divine. Christ is truth in the way that as divine Son, Christ exists in relation to the Father, and as incarnate as a human being Christ brings creation into communion with the Father. The point which Zizioulas makes in his discussion about *logoi* is that Maximus conveys Christ as truth as the outpouring of God's ecstatic love for creation, and that through Christ as *logos,* the Father recapitulates creation unto himself:

> Christ, the incarnate Christ, is the truth, for he represents the ultimate, unceasing will of the ecstatic love of God, who intends to lead created being into communion with His own life, to know Him and itself within this communion-event[848].

This is a point about truth which we want to emphasise because for Zizioulas the revelation of God, and the purposes of history, are rooted in the incarnate Christ as God's revelation of himself and as the basis for communion. As Zizioulas writes: 'the incarnate Christ is so identical to the ultimate will of God's love, that the meaning of created being and the purpose of history are simply the incarnate Christ'[849]. Revelation is not rooted in the experience of communion in itself, but lies in the gift of the divine Son to the world, through whom creation and creator are reconciled. All authority for truth is rooted in Christ, through whom the eschaton is revealed as is the very Trinitarian nature of God.

Christology is the axiom for Zizioulas out of which he extrapolates his Trinitarian theology, human ontology, and the nature of the Church. All these disparate themes are grounded in Christ as the revelation of God and the basis for creation. The content of God's revelation is that creation was made for communion with the Father, and that this occurs in Christ. Zizioulas is so emphatic

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historically unified with that moment, rather than being a remembrance of the eschaton that is realised in the Church's participation in Christ.

[848] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 97–98.

[849] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 97.

on this point that he writes: 'all things were made with Christ in mind, or rather at heart, and for this reason *irrespective of the fall of man, the incarnation would have occurred*'[850]. The truth of creation is found in the realisation of the love of God for creation which occurs in the incarnation, and as such the incarnation is the revelation of the divine will. Thus, in Christ it is revealed that the divine will is the gift of divine love for creation and Christ is the place where that divine-human communion occurs. Christ's actions are a realisation of this divine economy.

9.1.3 Zizioulas ties truth to the Eucharist.

This being the case, the question arises why does Zizioulas tie truth to the Eucharist? Zizioulas seeks to avoid a 'logo-centric' conception of Christ, that is simply a synergy of being or as an intellectual communication. Rather, from the Church Fathers, in particular Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Maximus, Zizioulas connects truth with the life which is gifted in Christ. Zizioulas sees in Irenaeus a move away from truth being rooted in 'mind' (nous)[851], especially as it existed in Greek ontology, and toward the Johannine and Ignatian connection of truth with life. The true life is found in Christ' recapitulation of creation unto himself. Zizioulas explains this further:

> Christ is the truth not because he is an epistemological principle which explains the universe, but because he is life and the universe of being finds its meaning in its incorruptible existence in Christ (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer,* III, 36:7), who takes up into Himself (ἀνακεφαλωσις) the whole of creation and history[852].

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[850] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 97.
[851] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 80.
[852] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 80.

We have already established that Zizioulas identifies Christ with the Eucharist, and with the Church as the singular mystery of Christ constituting his incarnate mystical body within the world. The Eucharistic consciousness of the Church Fathers was to root this revelation of Christ in their participation in the body of the Christ in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the gift of Christ himself to humanity, so that humanity may participate in the Christ's 'sonship' with the Father. According to Zizioulas, both Ignatius and Irenaeus stressed the absolute reality of the Eucharist as Christ 'if the eucharist is not truly Christ in the historical and material sense of the word "truth", then truth is not life and existence at the same time, since for both men the eucharist imparts life'[853]. The Eucharist is the basis for truth because it is identical with Christ, and enables 'the life of communion with God, such as exists within the Trinity and is actualized with the members of the eucharistic community'[854]. The content of the revelation is the Son's relation to the Father, which Christ gifts to humanity by allowing humanity to participate in his body in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is not in itself truth, but is truth only in as far as it participates in Christ, who is the content of the Father's revelation of the divine in Christ. This is the source of the Church's authority to truth, namely the divine-human communion that occurs in and through Christ and the Spirit[855].

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[853] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 81.
[854] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 81.
[855] In chapter 5, we draw out the significance of this basis for truth in order to counter John Behr's and Paul Molnar's criticism of truth in Zizioulas works.

9.2 Zizioulas' Ecclesiology and Ecumenism

9.2.1 *'The Eucharist Makes the Church and the Church Constitutes the Eucharist'[856]: An Eschatological understanding of the Church's catholicity and truth.*

This chapter has identified that for Zizioulas the Eucharist provides a Catholic consciousness from which he approaches questions relating to ecclesiology. However, we have not yet identified what Zizioulas believes the Church to be, and how this understanding of the Church provides the foundation for truth. This is particularly important for our question in relating Zizioulas' notion of *koinônia* to the criticisms put to Zizioulas; in particular the criticism that Zizioulas constructs a relational reality in the Church which exists as a parallel reality to the Trinity and which images the Trinitarian mode of existence. Rather, Zizioulas emphasises the Church as both an historical and eschatological reality which is constituted in the Eucharist as the *totus Christus*. It therefore does not image the triune schesis but participates in the life of the Trinity through participation in the Son by the Spirit; Christ is himself constituted by the Spirit as both *one* and *many*.

The last chapter considered Zizioulas' questions and it was demonstrated that Zizioulas provides a historical genealogy in which the Church became separated from the Eucharist. This separation had a series of implications upon the Church's conception of truth and the Church's understanding of itself. It is Zizioulas' claim that the separation of the Church from the Eucharist resulted in the Eucharist being treated as an object. Building on De Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum*, Zizioulas claims that in medieval scholastic theology the terms 'body of Christ", "body of the Church" and "body of the Eucharist" ceased to be identical'[857]. Christology and Ecclesiology were treated as distinct subjects from the sacraments: 'the Eucharist remained a sacrament *produced by*

[856] John Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 61–74 (p. 67).
[857] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 64.

the Church and not *constitutive* of her being'[858]. Since the Eucharist no longer manifested the Church, the Eucharist became an *object* 'produced by the Church'[859]. The Church was an institution endowed with the *'potestas'*[860] to consecrate the Eucharist by its Bishops and Priests, due to the 'indelibility of the seal'[861].

The problem with a purely institutional view of the Church, as opposed to a eucharistic ecclesiology, is that it exists as a parallel reality to God, whose truth is transmitted by this institution. The accompanying view of the Church is that of 'pre-conceived structure'[862] which transmits certain potencies, such as authority, because it possesses that apostolic potency from a past apostolic institution[863]. The *anamnesis* of the Eucharist is retrospective in that it looks back to the last supper as a singular historical event. The problem with this is that it neglects a pneumatological view of the Church in which Christ is present[864].

There is an implicit relation between the loss of this Eucharistic consciousness which existed in Patristic theology, and the rise of objectification of the Church and the sacraments. With the separation of the Body of Christ from the Eucharist, and the distinction of the Church from the Eucharist, the Church is perceived as an object in itself, the source of its own actions, which Zizioulas terms, 'ecclesiological ontologism'[865]. Zizioulas believes that contemporary ecumenical dialogue tends to succumb to this ecclesiological ontologism in advocating a 'unity in

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[858] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.
[859] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.
[860] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 65.
[861] Robin Ward, *On Christian Priesthood* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 97. Robin Ward objects to Zizioulas' challenge to the 'character indelibilis' bestowed through ordination in his work. '… it is difficult to recognise in this analysis either the canonical practice or the dogmatic tradition of the Orthodox Churches themselves: Zizioulas admits that a preponderance of Orthodox authorities acknowledge the indelible character of ordination…' Ward, p. 91.
[862] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 179.
[863] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 178.
[864] We shall explore this further in Zizioulas' eschatological understanding of the Church. Zizioulas objects to Florovsky's historical view of Christology for the same reason: 'Florovsky indirectly raised the problem of a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology, without however offering any solution to it. In fact there are reasons to believe that far from suggesting a synthesis, he leaned towards a Christological approach in his ecclesiology' (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p,182).
[865] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 217.

collectivity'[866]; where the Church is merely considered to be a collection of 'parts' which can be added to the whole. If truth is tied *exclusively* to historical and geographical claims to apostolic succession, and the '*potestas*' to consecrate the Eucharist, then it only enforces an approach to ecumenism which adheres to denominational otherness and assumes the acceptability of a broken communion:

> the ecumenical movement understands itself basically in terms of bringing together these three worlds (namely first, second and third world) in an attempt to advance their unity as far as Christianity and the Church are concerned[867].

But the problem is deeper than denominational tribalism, and a misplaced solution through inter-denominational dialogue, since an adherence to an exclusively historical perception of truth detracts from the true nature of the Church.

Zizioulas' solution to this problem is by appealing to the shared sources of the 'West' and 'East':

> the two theologies, Eastern and Western, need to meet in depth, to recover the authentic patristic synthesis which will protect them from the above dangers. Ecclesial being must never separate itself from the absolute demands of the being of God - that is, its eschatological nature - nor from history[868].

Through a neopatristic synthesis, a vision of the Church as participation in the mystical body of Christ is recovered. Thus, unity in ecumenism, 'brings together historical identities and

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[866] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 158, n.66.
[867] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 127.
[868] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 20.

traditions so that they may be transcended in the unity of the Body of Christ'[869]. The solution to the problems inherent to ecumenism lie in the recovery of the Church's participation in the Body of Christ, which *transcends* denominational loyalties.

Zizioulas does not advocate a universal perception of the Church above that of the local gatherings of each denomination. Instead, Zizioulas' logic is that in the local celebration of the Eucharist the entire Catholic Church is embodied in Christ, the Church and the Eucharist are united together as the Body of Christ, and thus a divided communion is inconsistent with the catholicity of the Eucharist. Zizioulas argues that if there is a unity between the Eucharist, the Church, and Christ then truth ceases to be a system of ideas 'as the Tubingen School conceived of it'[870], and becomes identified with Christ. Rather than Church unity being prescribed through a unity of doctrine by agreed propositions, unity is instead postulated as unity in Christ. This is because the Church 'is the very person of Christ'[871]. To maintain this position, Zizioulas argues for a conceptual unity between Christology and Pneumatology.

Christ is the foundation for truth and the Church because they participate in one mystery which is Christ. Zizioulas adopts the view from Florovsky that 'ecclesiology ceases to be a separate chapter for theology and becomes an organic *chapter of Christology*'[872]. For Zizioulas, the Church is the risen and mystical body of Christ.

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[869] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 128.
[870] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 15.
[871] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 15.
[872] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 15.

9.2.2 The Church's catholicity: Afanasiev and the Eucharist

Zizioulas claims that the work of the ressourcement, in its study of liturgy, biblical studies, and patristics, 'recovered the ancient link between Church and the Eucharist which was obscured, if not lost, during the middle ages'[873]. Zizioulas claims that the Orthodox theologians are indebted to this ressourcement and from this work was launched 'eucharistic ecclesiology'[874]. In particular, Zizioulas makes a qualified adoption of the eucharistic ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev, who claimed that 'wherever there is the Eucharist there is the Church'[875].

Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology ties the nature of the Church with the Eucharist because this was the ecclesiology of the early Church. Indeed, Zizioulas claims that for the Apostle Paul the Eucharist and the Church were inseparably linked. This claim constituted the thesis of his doctoral work, in which he writes, 'in the thought of Paul and the Churches which read his epistles, *the terms "coming together" or "coming together in the same place" (epi to auto), "the Lord's supper" (i.e. Divine Eucharist) and "the Church" (ekklesia) or "the Church of God" mean the same thing*'[876]. The assembly was called a Church by virtue of it coming together to celebrate the Eucharist 'so from an examination of the oldest texts of primitive Christianity, the Epistles of Paul, it transpires that, *the eucharistic assembly was identified with the Church of God herself*'[877].

As there is an implicit unity between the Eucharist and the Church, there is an implicit unity between the Eucharist and the body of Christ. It is Zizioulas' claim that for the early Christians the Eucharist was the unity of the many, i.e. the gathered people of God, in the body of Christ, and he cites

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[873] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[874] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[875] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 66.
[876] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, pp. 48–49.
[877] Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, p. 52.

> the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing (koinônia) in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, it is not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we are who many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread[878].

Zizioulas argues that Paul used the term, body of Christ, interchangeably to denote: (a) that the body of Christ refers to the risen Christ[879], (b) the Church as the body of Christ[880], and (c) 'the body of Christ that is broken, shared, and communicated in the Eucharist'[881]. The body of Christ is a synthesis between the ecclesiological, the Eucharistic and the Christological.

In this synthesis between the threefold reading of the body of Christ in the early Church, Zizioulas sees a negation of the notion that the Church first exists, and then institutes the Eucharist. The Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation and the sacraments are participative of the one mystery of Christ[882], as the Church, the Eucharist, and Christ coincide with each other:

> the Eucharist is essentially an event, an act of the whole Church and not an individual action. We often consider the Eucharist as one sacrament among others (e.g. among the seven). The ancient Church had a conception of *single, unique sacrament,* the sacrament of Christ, as it is called in holy scripture (Rom.16:25, Eph.3:4, 5:32; Col.1:27; 2:2; 4:3). The only possible understanding of the Eucharist is Christological: it is the body of Christ himself, the *totus Christus*[883].

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[878] 1 Cor. 10:16-17 cited in John Zizioulas, 'Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. by Luke Ben Tallon (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 1–39 (pp. 12–13).
[879] John Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', in *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 286–306 (p. 289).
[880] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 289.
[881] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 289.
[882] Zizioulas, 'Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist', p. 114.
[883] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.

There is an overlap between Afanasiev and Zizioulas on the relationship between the Eucharist and the Church. However, Zizioulas only makes a qualified adoption of Afanasiev's Eucharistic ecclesiology. In the light of the reciprocity between the Church, the Eucharist and the Body of Christ, Zizioulas adapts Afanasiev's claim that the Eucharist makes the Church to argue, '*the Church constitutes the Eucharist whilst being constituted by it*'[884]. There is no priority of the Eucharist over the Church, and there is no priority of the Church over the Eucharist, precisely because they participate in the body of Christ. Zizioulas is critical of Afanasiev because in Zizioulas' regard Afanasiev's view that 'wherever there is the Eucharist, there is the Church'[885] risks the suggestion that the local Church constitutes the Catholic Church independently of other churches. There needs to be an assurance that the Eucharist of the local Church is valid, and for Zizioulas this lies in the ordination of the Bishop who celebrates the Eucharist in the local Church. He maintains that it is necessary for a Bishop to be consecrated by two neighbouring Bishops as a visible sign of Catholicity and Apostolicity as Bishops are an assurance that in the celebration of the Eucharist in the local Church the whole Catholic Church is present [886]. At the same time, Zizioulas avoids the view that local Churches merely constitute a part of a universal Church, and that it is with the universal Church that Catholicity lies.

9.2.2.1 Episcopacy

Zizioulas' case is that the whole Catholic Church is present at each Eucharistic liturgy because the *whole Christ* is present in the Eucharist. To argue this case, Zizioulas demonstrates the unity between the Church and the Bishop in Patristic ecclesiology. This Catholicity is signified by the presence of the Bishop who consecrates the Eucharist. As *totus Christus,* Christ is the Church,

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[884] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[885] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 25.
[886] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 202.

in whom the many are gathered into the one. This refers to persons who are gathered into the one Christ, but it also refers to how the many local Churches are part of the one, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The *totus Christus* provides Zizioulas with the key notion to substantiate his claim that the local Church gathered in one place to celebrate the Eucharist is the whole *Catholic Church*, because in the celebration of the Eucharist there is the presence of *the whole Christ*. In Zizioulas' view, Ignatius of Antioch provides a key example of how the implicit unity between the Eucharist and the Church provides the basis for Catholicity. For Ignatius, in the local Eucharistic gathering there is not simply the local Church but in the Eucharist that local gathering is the Catholic Church 'i.e. *the full and integral Body of Christ*'[887].

To maintain that the local Church has claim to be the Catholic and Apostolic Church, Zizioulas challenges a purely historical notion of apostolic succession, and argues for an eschatological basis for apostolic succession by using the ecclesiology of Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius takes an eschatological view of the Eucharist and its relation to *apostolic succession*. The Church according to Ignatius is the gathering of the people of God, the college of presbyters, around the Bishop who consecrates the Eucharist[888]. This image is evocative of the last supper in which he gathers his disciples around the table to make a gift of his body and blood, but Zizioulas also claims that in the last supper, as indeed in the Eucharist, that Christ gifts 'a real image of the Kingdom'[889].

In the gathering around the Bishop to celebrate the Eucharist, the local Church is iconic of the Kingdom. In the liturgy, the Bishop is the *alter apostolus* and *alter Christus*[890]. Just as the Bishop

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[887] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 62. This argument is the basis of his thesis, 'Eucharist, Bishop, Church' (2001). Zizioulas provides further elaboration on the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist by the Bishop in his essay, Zizioulas. 'ἐπισκοπή and ἐπίσκοπος in the Early Church' in *One and the Many*. pp.221-235

[888] John Zizioulas, 'Ἐπισκοπη and Ἐπισκοπος in the Early Church', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 221–33 (p. 224). Zizioulas cites, Ignatius. *Philad. 4: ἐπισκοπος αμα τω πρεσβυτεριω, Magn.* 6:1, *Eph* 1:3, *Tral.,* 1:1, *Sm.* 8, in Zizioulas. *Επισκοπή* and *Επίσκοπος in the Early Church*. pp.221-235.

[889] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 206.

[890] Zizioulas, 'Ἐπισκοπη and Ἐπισκοπος in the Early Church', p. 226.

gathers the people of God around the Eucharist, the Apostles gathered the local Church to celebrate the Eucharist in history just as Christ gathered his disciples to partake in the last supper, but it is an eschatological vision in which the twelve apostles are gathered around the lamb of God upon the throne. The vision of the liturgical existence of the Kingdom is illustrated by Zizioulas' use of the Book of Revelation, in which Zizioulas claims that the iconic language there is liturgical[891]. It is liturgical because there is the gathered Church in the twelve apostles gathered around the slaughtered lamb of God upon the throne, and where the twelve apostles gathered around Christ are themselves surrounded by the people of God[892]. Zizioulas maintains that wherever the local Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, the eschatological community of the Church is present there too, 'in its fullness'[893] through the Spirit. The Spirit manifests the eschatological community of the Church.

The gathered Church which celebrates the liturgy is not merely an image of the eschaton, but participates in the eschaton because through the Spirit they are gathered into the mystical body of Christ. This is manifested as an 'epiclesis' of the Spirit[894]. The Eucharist is not merely an *anamnesis* of the historical last supper, it is an *anamnesis* which remembers the future, '*the second coming*'[895]. That is the gathering of people in Christ in the Spirit. The last supper itself points forward to Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and the eventual recapitulation of creation in Christ. It therefore is a remembrance of the eschaton, and at the same time the descent of the eschaton into history:

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[891] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', pp. 130–31.
[892] Zizioulas, 'Eschatology and History', p. 132. The Ghent altar piece is a good visual representation of this eschatological vision.
[893] Zizioulas, 'Ἐπισκοπη and Ἐπισκοπος in the Early Church', p. 224.
[894] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 206.
[895] John Zizioulas, 'The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 75–91 (p. 79).

> when the eschata visit us, the Church's *anamnesis* acquires the eucharistic paradox which no historical consciousness can ever comprehend, i.e. the *memory of the future*, as we find it in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom…[896].

Eschatology for Zizioulas is not a matter of transcending the process of history, nor a matter of the last stage of a linear view of history. Eschatology is the realisation of divine-human communion, and this is realised in the Eucharist as that moment of the many becoming one in Christ by the Spirit into communion with the Father.

9.2.2.2 *The impact of eschatology on ecumenism*

Divine-human communion is realised in history, and it is on this basis that Zizioulas argues for a synthesis between history and eschatology in calling the Church, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Catholicity and Apostolicity are gifts which are given, '*epicletically*'[897]. The significance of this for Zizioulas' ecumenical discussion is that it avoids making Catholicity and Apostolicity dependent upon the institutionalization of the Church. Instead, they are determined by the Spirit and constituted within history because it is the Spirit who gathers all into the body of Christ as the Church. The Church is not dependent upon history, nor upon institution, but is charismatic as the body of the Christ is charismatic[898].

Zizioulas does not state this, and one cannot help but wonder whether this relates to the fractious nature of ecumenical discourse in which the Church is divided by deep historical differences. Rather than proceeding in ecumenical discourse through resolving historical differences, Zizioulas appeals to unity as a realised ontological reality in Christ and the Spirit which

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[896] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 180.
[897] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 185.
[898] See below on the synthesis between pneumatology and Christology.

occurs in the Eucharist. There is already an eschatological and mystical union in the body of Christ but which is not realised at an institutional level. The structure of the Church as pneumatologically conditioned Christology is a gift which has emerged in the Church's history, in which the Eucharist is celebrated by the charismatic ministry of the Bishop, but the fullness of the Church's Eucharistic existence is not yet realised throughout the Church. Therefore, the Church is forced to live with the paradox of a broken communion.

9.3 ***The Doctrine of Adoption in Christ.***

Here we begin to approach a key question in determining whether Zizioulas uses the relationship between the Trinity and the Church in the same manner as Social Trinitarianism. Is the mirroring of the eschatological Church in the local an existence of two distinct realities, that in itself mirrors the life of communion which exists in the Trinity?[899]

This is not the case since the Church participates in Christ. For Zizioulas, the Kingdom is the communion between creation and God through the high priestly vocation of humanity that is fulfilled in Christ. Zizioulas writes that 'through her communion in the eternal life of the Trinity, the Church becomes "the body of Christ" … and by virtue of which the eschatological unity of all is offered as a promise for the entire world'[900].

Zizioulas' relation between the eucharist, the Church and the Body of Christ demonstrates that the Eucharist for Zizioulas is not a fellowship indicative of the life of the Trinity but is Trinitarian in its dynamics because the Church is constituted by the Spirit as participation in the *totus Christus* in the sacraments. It is through the Spirit and the Son that humanity is brought into communion with the Father. Hence its Trinitarian character.

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[899] This is Behr's and Holmes' objection to Zizioulas' communion. See chapter 2.
[900] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 206.

Zizioulas has never written an essay purely on the nature of God as Trinity, i.e. a work which explores the immanent Trinity as an exercise in pure *theologia*. This is not to claim that Zizioulas does not have a theology of the immanent Trinity; rather Zizioulas writes on the Trinity to illustrate its importance for understanding the nature of the Church, and to outline his ontological vision for human personhood for which the Church is necessary. Zizioulas follows Florovsky, in that the Fathers took an 'ecclesial approach'[901] of the foundational events and doctrines of the faith because the Fathers formulated doctrine and interpreted scriptures from the point of view of the Church. Zizioulas saw the value of explicating the Eucharistic consciousness of the Fathers to address questions facing the contemporary Church.

Zizioulas claims that the Church Fathers transformed the monistic nature of Greek ontology through a Christian Hellenism because it affirmed the transcendent God and *creatio ex nihilo*[902]. This Christian ontology emerged 'out of the Eucharistic experience of the Church'[903], that is the communion between God and humanity in the Church, and 'guided the Fathers in working out their doctrine of the being of God'[904].

In the liturgy the people of God participate in the body of Christ who is incarnate by the Spirit in the eucharist and are brought into communion with the Father. There is an intra-triune personal dynamic in the liturgy in which the persons of the Father, Son and Spirit act as one to exist in communion with humanity. This divine-human communion in the eucharist is the foundation for the Church's language about God, and in the formulation of that language the existing Greek monistic ontology was converted to articulate the mystery of the Trinity[905].

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[901] Nikolaos Asproulis, ""Totus Christus" or "Corporate Personality"? Church Identity and Theological Methodology: Some Critical Comments Georges Florovsky and J. Zizioulas in Dialogue', 2018, p. 2.
[902] Zizioulas, 'Fr. Florovsky the Ecumenical Teacher', p. 34. See chapter 'On the Person (2): The Importance of Freedom for Zizioulas' Trinitarian Theology' for a discussion on *creatio ex nihilo*.
[903] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17. See above, 'Rooting truth in the Eucharist'
[904] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.
[905] See chapter 6 'On the Person (1): A Consideration of the Charge That Zizioulas Projects a Philosophical Personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian Theology' for how Christian Hellenism transformed Greek ontology through creatio ex nihilo.

Zizioulas writes that 'the mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world, and to the very being of God'[906]. The *introduction* to *Being as Communion* (1985) is a mature synthesis of his ecumenical work and ecclesiology, and it represents a tightly written summary of his vision for the Church. However, this does mean that Zizioulas takes for granted his theological presuppositions, which he has explicated in other papers, on the nature of the Church and the eucharist in relation to the Trinity. What appears to be the presentation of the Church as a parallel image to the triune God, is rooted in his articulation of the Church as the place where the *theôsis* of human persons is realised.

Zizioulas is quite emphatic on the point that 'the Church is not a sort of Platonic "image" of the Trinity'[907]. The language of the mystery of the Trinity is rooted in the mystery of the Church precisely because the Church's identity is that of the spiritual body of Christ, in whom divine-human communion occurs. When Zizioulas claims that the Church 'must herself be an image of the way in which God exists. Her entire structure, her ministries etc, must expresses this way of existence'[908]. Zizioulas does not transpose the Trinitarian *tropos hyparxeos* onto the ecclesial structure of the Church. Rather, the Trinitarian persons act to draw creation, via humanity as the image and likeness of God, into communion with the Father, and the Church is the place where this occurs:

> ecclesiology which uses the notion of the "image of God" cannot be founded simply on triadology. The fact that man in the Church is the "image of God" is due to the *economy* of the Holy Trinity, that is, the work of Christ and the Spirit *in history*. This economy is the *basis* of ecclesiology, without being the *goal* of it. The Church is built by the historical work of the

[906] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.
[907] John Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 49–59 (p. 53).
[908] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.

divine economy but leads finally to the vision of God "as He is", to the vision of the Triune God in his eternal existence[909].

The divine economy realises the image of God in 'man', where the *imago dei* is a personal existence which is irreducible to nature and is fully realised when in communion with God. Zizioulas uses *theôsis* to claim that the Church cannot simply be an institution but is a 'way of being'[910] because it exists as communion. It is in this logic that Zizioulas argues for the necessity of Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology 'for we cannot expect of the Church anything less than a sign and a reflection of God's way of being in creation'[911]. Ecclesiology is necessary for articulating how humanity comes into communion with the Triune God.

The Church is the place where the eschatological destiny of human persons is realised *in Christ*. Zizioulas calls the 'Church of God, as St. Paul calls it'[912] an 'image or sign of the Trinity'[913] because the multiplicity of persons are sanctified in the Spirit and united *into the one person of Christ* as a deified humanity. This Trinitarian life is what Zizioulas means by catholicity; in which the many become one in the whole person of Christ, the *'total Christ'*[914].

Koinônia in the Church is conveyed by Zizioulas as a participation in the divine nature; for which the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology are vital 'the demand that we should become as God is (Luke 6:36 and parallels) or that we should be "partakers (koinônia) of divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) implies that the Church cannot exist and function without reference to the Holy Trinity'[915]. Communion in the Church is primarily a participation in Christ; this is because Christ

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[909] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 19.
[910] John Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), pp. 3–16 (p. 15).
[911] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 15.
[912] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 16.
[913] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 16.
[914] John Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 99–113 (p. 100).
[915] Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', p. 52.

has participated in human nature so that humanity may participate in the divine nature. Through the Spirit human persons participate in the mystical body of Christ, which is itself constituted by the Spirit[916]. In participating in Christ, humanity is drawn into communion with the Father and thus the filial relation the Son has with the Father. This communion becomes the foundation for establishing the ontology of created being which is called to exist in communion with the Father. It is true that

> what Zizioulas had to say about the Church was firmly anchored in a set of arguments about what we meant by the word "God", and how our understanding of being itself had to be wholly informed by our understanding of God[917].

However, divine-human communion does not mean that the Trinity *in se* is determined by the intra-Trinitarian dynamics of his ecclesiology; instead Zizioulas maintains the absolute freedom of God as undetermined and sovereign. The Trinity is immanent in Christ and the Spirit, both of whom constitute the Church. For human persons to exist in the 'image of God'[918] means that human beings are enhypostaticised as unique, unrepeatable and free persons by being in communion with the Father through Christ. For divine-human communion to occur, i.e. the communion between created and uncreated being, requires God to be wholly *other* to creation. Zizioulas argues 'Christ as the locus of salvation should not be understood as bringing about a *theôsis* in which God would cease to be totally other than creation'[919]. *Theôsis* is not the absorption of created being into the divine nature with the loss of the distinctiveness of created being[920].

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[916] See Zizioulas, 'Christ, the Spirit, and the Church' in *Being as Communion* (1985), p.126f.
[917] Rowan Williams, 'Foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury', in *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. xi–xiii (p. xi).
[918] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.
[919] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 37.
[920] Zizioulas objects to the bridge between the created and creator on the basis of the logos of as an 'intellectual principle' (Zizioulas, *On Being Other,* p.21), because it compromises divine freedom. If *logoi* are identified as God's thoughts, God is linked eternally with the existence of creation. Maximus the Confessor addressed this by distinguishing between, 'existence' and 'will'. Creation exists solely due to God's will, and Maximus the Confessor

9.3.1 Chalcedon and theôsis

The question to which Zizioulas attends is how the *logos* as a 'personal principle'[921] bridges the gulf between uncreated and created being. To answer this question, Zizioulas turns to Maximus the Confessor, in particular the distinction he makes between '*diaphora* (difference) and *diairesis* (division)'[922]. *Diaphora* is necessary to maintain the distinctiveness of beings from each other '*diaphora* is *constitutive* of beings'[923]. The communion between humanity and divinity is between distinctive beings (*diaphora*). An absorption or synergy of created and uncreated *nous* would eliminate this difference. From Maximus, Zizioulas derives that the *logos* through whom creation is united with God is not a *nous* but a *person* as the Son of the Father[924]. Divine-human communion does not occur through a natural quality in either creation or in divinity, but through the incarnation of the logos as a person in which 'the gulf of otherness between God and the world is bridged in a personal or hypostatic manner'[925]. The gulf between God and the world is bridged 'through a person (the Son of the Trinity), and not through nature'[926].

The Church is the body of Christ, and Christ is defined by Chalcedon as fully human and fully divine, so in Christ the created and divine natures are united but 'without division and without confusion'[927]. Christology shows that in the hypostatic union in the person of Christ there is an *otherness* between created and divine natures, there is unity and distinctiveness. *Theôsis* is the realisation of the full capacity of human persons to live in their full nature, to be the bearers of the

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identified *logoi* with the will of God rather than as created 'thoughts' in the divine *nous*. The significance of this is that creation relates to God not by synergy but through a personal relationship, will to will. See discussion on 'Truth in relation to the Incarnation and Eucharist' above. See also, Zizioulas, *Lectures,* p.87-88.

[921] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 22.

[922] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 22.

[923] Maximus, *Theol.Polem.*21 and *Amb.*67 cited by Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 22.fn.28.

[924] Zizioulas cites, Maximus '*Quaest.Thal.* 35 (PG 90, 377C); *Cap.Theol.econ.* 2,10 (PG 90, 1129A)' in Zizioulas. 2006. OBO. p.23.

[925] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 23.

[926] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 23.

[927] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 36.

totality of their nature, to be '*hypostatic*' [928], by being in communion with the Father, rather than be circumscribed by their mortality and their fallen nature[929]. Christ exists as fully human and fully divine so that *theôsis* maintains the *otherness* between created and divine being, as Zizioulas writes, 'Chalcedon safeguards divine and human otherness'[930]. The Church as the body of Christ is both human and divine, thereby the *otherness* between created and divine being is maintained whilst being united in the *hypostasis* of Christ. This is key for Zizioulas who claims that 'God and man remain other, and thus ontologically free, by virtue of the fact that they are united in a *hypostatic way*, that is, in and through the free person of the Logos'[931].

But the communion between God and the world does not occur at the level of a union of natures. Zizioulas advocates an ontology which conceives beings not according to their nature, but on how they are, and thus finds in Maximus a distinction between *logos physeos* and *tropos*[932]. In the incarnation, the *logos physeos* (nature) is immutable but the *tropos hyparxeos* changes since through Christ creation is brought into a new *tropos hyparxeos* with God[933].

Theôsis is the adoption of Christ's own *tropos hyparxeos* by humanity. The person is baptised 'in the Spirit and into Christ'[934]. Humanity must be understood within 'anthropology of Chalcedon'[935]; Christ's own hypostatic union of human and divine natures as a corporate person in the Spirit. Humanity is realised by putting on Christ so that personhood is understood as

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[928] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 213.
[929] Cf. Discussion on dichotomy between nature and person in chapter 'On the Person (1): A Consideration of the Charge that Zizioulas projects Philosophical Personalism onto Cappadocian Trinity'
[930] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 37.
[931] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 37.
[932] Zizioulas, 'On Being Other', p. 24.
[933] Maximus the Confessor, according to Zizioulas, shows that in the incarnation, the divine Son takes on a second mode of existence. The Chalcedonian Creed indicates this second mode of existence as both perfect God and perfect human, through whom created and uncreated being are brought into communion. Cf. Zizioulas, *On Being Other*, p.24, fn.31 citing Amb.5 (PG 91, 1056), 41 (PG 91, 1308C, esp. 1313C), *Jacob* 52 (PG 94, 1464A).
[934] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 244.
[935] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 248.

> the mode in which nature exists in its ekstatic movement of communion in which it is hypostasized in its catholicity. This, I have also said, is what has been realized in Christ as the man *par excellence* through the hypostatic union. This, I must now add, is what should happen to every man in order that he himself may *become Christ* (according to the Fathers) or 'put on Christ' (according to Paul). And this is what makes Christ the head of a new humanity (of creation) in that he is the first one both chronologically and ontologically to open up this possibility of personhood in which the distance of individuals is turned into a communion of persons[936].

When Zizioulas discusses the Church, and human beings, as the *imago trinitatis*[937] Zizioulas means that humanity adopts a new mode of being because it participates in the Trinitarian life through Christ and the Spirit. Christ is incarnate by the Spirit, and as a spiritual body is never merely an individual but a corporate personality in whom the disparate and different persons of humanity may participate as unique, particular and irreducible persons. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ as a synthesis between Christ and the Spirit. The body of Christ is the hypostatic union of created and divine nature. By being baptised in the Spirit into Christ the person participates in the hypostasis of Christ the 'ontological significance of Baptism' is that it is 'participation in the very being of Christ, in his 'body"[938], and thus participates in the 'very filial relation between the Son and the Father'[939].

This notion of adoption into Christ affects Zizioulas' theological anthropology; namely how human persons are understood as subjects no longer as isolated individuum but as ekstatic creatures created to exist in the *imago dei* as beings created for communion.

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[936] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[937] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 249.
[938] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[939] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245,fn.54.

9.3.2 Chalcedon and Church's Catholicity in relation to theôsis

The doctrine of adoption into Christ also lies at the foundation for Zizioulas' vision for the Church's catholicity. The Church is not defined in terms of an organisational institution but in terms of Christ's mystical body. Ecclesiology becomes a matter of ontology and the recapitulation of creation in Christ. Zizioulas writes that 'by being the initiator of personhood for humanity, Christ acquires *a body,* and not only that but can be only spoken of in terms of this body'[940]. The realisation of personhood occurs of relating to Christ in communion through the Spirit because 'the restoration of personhood in Christ thus inevitably leads to the communion of the Church'[941]. Thus, ecclesiology is conceived in terms of theôsis which 'makes the Church *eucharistic* in its very nature, and man God by participation in God'[942].

The Church participates in the hypostasis of the incarnate Christ, and participates in the divine relationship the Son has with the Father. In '*The Church as the 'Mystical' Body of Christ*'[943]Zizioulas clarifies his position on communion as participation in the body of Christ because of the hypostatic union expounded at Chalcedon, and thus participation in the divine communion between Father, Son, and Spirit. The relation which God has in himself is realised in the Church; Zizioulas writes that, 'the knowledge that God the Father has of himself *is the Son and the Spirit:* the Son is the ἀληθεια of God, the mirror in which he sees himself'[944]. Personhood is not reducible to consciousness but is perceived in terms of 'relationship'[945], and this forms the basis for the mystical union in the Church, the Church is the mystical body of Christ through whom humanity is united with God. This union is one of relation between unique and particular persons:

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[940] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[941] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[942] Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.
[943] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ'.
[944] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 306.
[945] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 306.

> This kind of mystical union presupposes the Christological ground laid down by Chalcedon, according to which union between man and God is realized in Christ without division but at the same time without confusion, that is, a perfect unity which does not destroy but affirms otherness. The Church as the 'mystical body' of Christ is the place where this Christologically understood 'mystical union' is realized[946].

The Church is not a parallel reality to the Trinity since it is through Christ that there is a union between the divine and the human, because that union of distinct natures, the created and uncreated, occurs in the *hypostatic union* in Christ. In terms of the Church, the hypostatic union in Christ acts as the basis for the union between God and creation in its liturgy where Christ acts as High Priest and sacrificial victim. In explicating this notion, Zizioulas negates the notion that the Church exists in a dialectic between the Church and the Christ as distinct realities. There is not first the Church which is then wedded to Christ, hence Zizioulas underplays nuptial ecclesiology in which the Church is the bride of Christ in the sense that there is a human community which is then joined with the divine person Christ[947]. The dialectic which does exist is that between the Father and the Son[948], which through Christ, humanity comes to participate. Christ acts as the bridge between creation and the divine, because through Christ humanity comes to stand in his place as the Son of the Father.

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[946] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 307.
[947] See a discussion of this problematic in Paul McPartlan, 'Who Is the Church? Zizioulas and von Balthasar on the Church's Identity?', *Ecclesiology*, 4 (2008), 271–88.
[948] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 139.

9.3.3 Identification of Church with the Trinitarian hypostasis of the Son

An important discussion of Christ's mediatorial role is expounded by Zizioulas, when he considers the question 'when the Church prays who is it that prays?'[949]. Humanity was created to embody the union between creation and the Creator and the fall prevented humanity from fulfilling its vocation to be the 'priests of creation'[950]. In his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, Christ, as fully divine and fully human, fulfils humanity's vocation to act as the place where creation is unified with the uncreated Father.

Zizioulas claims that when the Church prays it is Christ who prays to the Father, 'it is Christ who prays for us and with us'[951]. The Eucharist is offered to the Father by the Son, and all prayers offered to the Father are brought to the Father through the Son. Thus, Christ acts as the mediatorial High Priest, unifying the prayers of humanity with his own in Himself. Zizioulas is emphatic in denying that in this role Christ acts as a mediator in a 'trilectic'[952], that is between Christ and the Church, Church-Father, and Christ to the Father. Here Chalcedon plays its part. Christ is both fully divine and fully human. Christ can offer the prayers of humanity because Christ is incarnate as a human being. As fully divine, Christ is also the Trinitarian Son of the Father. There is no division between these two natures of Christ because they exist in a hypostatic union in Christ[953]. In the *person* of Christ the distinct *otherness* of creation and the divine is maintained without collapsing into each other, yet in their unity in Christ, Christ brings creation into communion with the Father. Christ exists as the Son of the Father 'the One who receives the prayers, sitting next to the Father'[954] and offers those prayers to the Father in that reciprocal action of love which exists

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[949] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 139.
[950] John Zizioulas, 'Proprietors or Priests of Creation?', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. by Luke Ben Tallon (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 133–40 (p. 137).
[951] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 139.
[952] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 139.
[953] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 293.
[954] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 140.

between Father and Son. Zizioulas argues that the 'Son-Christ'[955] can only offer the prayers of the Church to the Father if 'the Son-Christ has *identified Himself so much with the ecclesial community* that any separation, any distinction in this particular case, would render these prayers meaningless or fruitless'[956]. There is no dialectic between Christ and the Church as distinct realities because Christ is identified with the Church. But neither is there a dialectic between the Church-Trinity because Christ participates in the Trinity as the hypostasis of the Son.

This raises a question on the relationship between human participation in the divine and human natures in Christ, namely whether humanity participates in the deified human nature in Christ. Zizioulas' emphasis is not on participation in nature, that is nature as substance, but in the 'identification of the person of Christ with the hypostasis of the Son of the Holy Trinity'[957]. The approach of humanity's participation in Christ is not through Christ's duality of natures but, citing Cyril of Alexandria, 'the starting point of Christology is the hypostasis, the person'[958]. Christ is, 'perfect man'[959] because Christ possesses a mode of existence that is in perfect communion with God where 'precisely the manner in which God also subsists in being'[960] is translated in human existence. Thus, human existence is no longer dependent upon nature but upon relation with God. The key doctrine which Zizioulas uses here is adoption, human persons receive the gift of eternal life 'on the basis of a relationship with God which is identified with what Christ in freedom and love possesses as Son of God with the Father'[961].

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[955] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 140.
[956] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 140.
[957] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 54.
[958] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 55.
[959] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 55.
[960] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 55.
[961] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56.

9.3.4 Adoption by baptism

By baptism in the Spirit, human persons participate in the spiritual body of Christ and are adopted in the filial relation that the Son has with the Father as the adopted children of God[962]. Human persons are by baptism incorporated into the filial relation the Son has with the Father, as Zizioulas argues, in baptism the words

> this is my beloved [or: only-begotten[Son in whom I am well pleased', uttered by the Father with the reference to the Son of the Trinity in the presence of the Spirit, are pronounced at baptism with reference to the person being baptised[963].

The 'structure of the Trinity is made the structure of the hypostasis of the person being baptized'[964]. In this argument Zizioulas cites Romans 8:15 to claim that baptism is the 'spirit of adoption in which we cry Abba, Father'.[965] Baptism is participation in the hypostasis of the incarnate Christ 'this adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism'.[966] Through Baptism the Father in heaven becomes the father of each person rather than persons being defined by familial ties, Zizioulas writes that in Baptism the terminology used is of the Church becoming the new family where the, 'father was not the physical progenitor but He "who is in heaven", and "brothers" were the members of the Church…'.[967]

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[962] 'The salvation of creation will take place in the Son, and then be presented to the Father by the Son. The Holy Spirit has his own contribution to this plan. He makes the incorporation of creation in the Son possible by enabling creation to open to its incorporation in the Son' Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, p. 132.
[963] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56, fn.50.
[964] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56, fn.50.
[965] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56, fn.50.
[966] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56.
[967] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 57.

Human persons by baptism participate in the spiritual body of Christ, the Church. Zizioulas identifies the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist with the mystery of Christ[968]. In terms of relating the Trinity to the Church, Zizioulas establishes the identity of the Church, namely the answer to the question, 'what is the Church?'[969], by arguing that 'the intra-Trinitarian dialectic removes ecclesiology from the dialectic Christ-Church and leads to an identification of Christ with the Church'[970]. Humanity's deification occurs in the Church, and Zizioulas notes that the patristic tendency to call the Church mother Church is employed because, 'in the Church a birth is brought about; man is born as "hypostasis" as person'[971].

The dialectic between the Church and Christ is abjured because Christ, in his *corporate personality*[972], is the Church. In Zizioulas' notion *corporate personality*[973] is to be found another dimension about the Trinity's relation to the Church, where the economy of the Son and the Spirit are in unity in order for the Church to exist as the spiritual body of Christ[974]. Zizioulas affirms an interpretation of Augustine's later work to describe this communion 'who spoke of union in terms of the bond that knits all believers into the One Body of Christ, not the union of the individual soul with God'[975]. Mystical union is an experience not of the individual, but of the whole body of the Church. Zizioulas maintains that it is for this reason that Cyril of Jerusalem and Maximus the

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[968] John Zizioulas, 'Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist', in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 113–19 (p. 113).
[969] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.
[970] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 140.
[971] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56.
[972] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 68.
[973] In the essay, 'The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ' (2006), Zizioulas expounds a genealogy of the use of the phrase, *Corpus Mysticum,* which bears resemblance to that he has written elsewhere in which the Church became separated from the Eucharist in scholastic theology. Zizioulas cites a restoration of the corporate sense of the term, *Le Corps mystique du Christ* in the work of Emile Mensch. Zizioulas also refers to the concept of corporate personality being found in Biblical scholarship and he cites, H.Wheeler Robinson. 1936. *The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality.* T&T Clark: Edinburgh. A.R.Johnson. 1942. *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God.* University of Wales Press: Cardiff. That the phrase *The One and the Many* is important to Zizioulas suggests that these works by Robinson and Johnson have impressed themselves upon Zizioulas' conception of the corporate personality of Christ.
[974] Zizioulas distinguishes between two interpretations of Augustine. In the first interpretation, mysticism is understood to be the subjective experience of the individual (Zizioulas,, *Church as Mystical Body of Christ,* p.287). The second interpretation is later expressed by Augustine as mystical union as the unity of believers in the body of Christ (Zizioulas, *Church as Mystical Body of Christ,* p.287, fn.6).
[975] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 287, fn.6.

Confessor used the term *mysterion* for the Sacraments, and eucharistic liturgy[976]. Zizioulas makes the argument that the term *musticos* (*μυστικός*) was used in the early Church not to refer to an extraordinary individual experience but 'the experience of the *whole* body of the Church'[977] that whole body participating in the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist. For Zizioulas it is through the sacraments that every member of the Church can experience a mystical union with the divine because the sacraments participate in the body of Christ.[978]

9.3.5 The synthesis between pneumatology and Christology for understanding the Church

The Trinitarian persons of the incarnate Son and the Spirit 'are necessary components of ecclesiology'[979]. *Koinônia* is Trinitarian because the persons of the Son and the Spirit constitute the Church. This synthesis between pneumatology and Christology is integral to Zizioulas' perception of ecclesiology, as he writes, 'the question, however, remains still open as to *how* pneumatology and Christology can be brought together in to a full and organic synthesis. It is probably one of the most important questions facing Orthodox theology in our time'[980].

Zizioulas opposes the representation of a reified *communion* as the *essence* of the Church united in the Spirit, where the Church is seen primarily as '*communio Spiritus sancti in cordibus'*[981]. In contrast to this role of pneumatology in ecclesiology, Zizioulas identifies that Lossky is right to claim the reciprocity between pneumatology and Christology in ecclesiology.

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[976] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 288. For further discussion on Zizioulas' criticism of Lossky's energies, see Aristotle Papanikolaou. 'Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God' in *Modern Theology,* 19:3. (July 2003). pp.357-385.

[977] Zizioulas, 'The Church as the "Mystical" Body of Christ', p. 287.

[978] Zizioulas opposes the emphasis that Lossky and Yannaras place upon apophaticism, that is as a participation in the energies of God in the individual. See Zizioulas' discussion of apophaticism and ontology in 'Being of God and the Being of Man' in *One and the Many* (2010), pp.36-30.

[979] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 15.

[980] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 126.

[981] Zizioulas, 'Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity', p. 216. See above, Chapter 8 *'Scholastic Captivity': Problem with Propositional Approach to Truth'*

Zizioulas mentions that Lossky[982] was crucial for the integration of both Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology[983]. Lossky achieved a synthesis between an emphasis on Christology on one hand, and pneumatology on the other. However, Zizioulas objects to the distinction Lossky makes between the economies of the Son and the Spirit[984]. Lossky relates the two economies in a problematic 'schematization'[985], Christology is seen to belong to the objective Church, whilst the inward spiritual participation and sanctification of the individual belongs to the economy of the Spirit.

Zizioulas amends Lossky through the identification of the Church with the hypostasis of the incarnate Christ as a full synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology. The act of incarnation of the divine Son is in the Spirit, and this act is the central event of the God's economic action in history, through whom is manifested the eschaton. Zizioulas links this to the incarnation and resurrection of Christ[986]. There is no dual economy, but the Spirit and Christ have a single economy in which the Spirit is essential for the incarnation of Christ and for Christ's resurrection. The Son, he claims, becomes history in his human nature. However due to Christ's union with the Spirit, who acts *beyond* history, he is not subject to the 'bondage of history'[987]. Therefore, Christ can liberate from the circumscription of mortality. The Spirt manifests Christ as the *eschaton*, the centrality of the economy as the place where divine-human communion is fulfilled because 'the Spirt makes of Christ an eschatological being, the "last Adam"'[988].

If Christ is individual then his union with the Spirit in his incarnation and the resurrection only applies to himself, but if Christ is a corporate personality in the Spirit then all created nature is unified with his own liberation from death. Zizioulas never communicates that point explicitly and this is odd, especially considering the synthesis Zizioulas creates between ecclesiology, Christology,

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982 Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, pp. 153, 156, 174.
983 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.
984 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.
985 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 125.
986 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 130.
987 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 130.
988 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 130.

and human personhood. However, it does seem to be implicit to the synthesis between communion being rooted in the Spirit, and the corporate personality of Christ, who is the last Adam, and into whom human persons are baptised.

9.4 ***Conclusion: The Church as totus Christus***

In this chapter, it has been argued that the pivotal image for Zizioulas' understanding of baptism is the 'corporate Christ'[989], reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 12, where the *one* body of Christ is comprised of *many* members, Christ cannot 'be conceived without the many (the Body)'[990]. The sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are not objective signs which bestow grace[991], instead, 'the ancient Church had a conception of a *single, unique, sacrament:* the sacrament of Christ'[992]. Both the sacraments and the Church are identified with the body of Christ, 'the *totus Christus*'[993]. The mystery of Christ is the mystery of the Church as 'corporate personality'[994]. Persons are adopted by the Father through their participation in the *hypostasis* of the Son, 'this adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism'[995]. In the synthesis of the corporate person of Christ, and its unity to the sacraments and the Church, Zizioulas articulates *theôsis* as Christification, in which 'the Church becomes Christ Himself in human existence, but also every member of the Church becomes Christ'[996].

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[989] Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', p. 51.
[990] Zizioulas, 'The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 71. This is a key principle in Zizioulas' thought, he does not derive the Church from the Trinitarian schesis but an important motif is that the Father does not exist without the Son and the Spirit, nor does Christ exist without the Church, and 'so also the bishop is inconceivable without his community' (Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p.71). A hypothetical argument was made by Ignatius of Antioch when he argues that, 'the bishop is the "type of God"' (*Magn.61* cited in Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p.71, fn.35) but eventually the predominating image which prevailed was the Christological image where the Bishop as *persona Christi*[990]. The Bishop represents the many, in the same way that Christ represents the many in himself, by presenting them in prayer to the Father.
[991] Zizioulas, 'Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist', p. 102.
[992] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[993] Zizioulas, 'The Eucharistic Vision of the World', p. 124.
[994] Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 142.
[995] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 56.
[996] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 58.

Although Zizioulas affirms that Christology is starting in ecclesiology, he does emphasise that pneumatology is the *since qua non* for its proper articulation since he maintains a total synthesis between Christ and the Spirit. The synthesis between the Church, Christ, and the eucharist are constituted in the Spirit. But implicit to this unity of themes is an inherent transfiguration of humanity through its participation in Christ. This is congruent with Zizioulas' eschatological vision as a controlling paradigm for his ecclesiology and forms the basis of his ontology of human personhood. Zizioulas' Trinitarian ontology matures the synthesis between Christology and pneumatology and forms the foundation for the realisation of human personhood, who come to exist in communion with the Father in the persons of the Spirit and the Son thereby becoming *hypostatic* being, which is intrinsic to Zizioulas' ontology of personhood. His ecclesiology is founded upon a synthesis between pneumatology and Christology so that the Church exists to realise the hypostatic nature of human beings through their participation in Christ. Therefore, in this chapter, it has been argued that the Church as the whole Christ, as a synthesis between pneumatology and Christology, is an essential axiom to Zizioulas' work. This understanding of Christology demonstrates the link between the Trinity and the realisation of the human person with his conception of the Church as the *totus Christus*.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to argue for a reparative reading of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology from its reception as Social Trinitarianism. To this end, in the third part of the thesis, I have attempted to place Zizioulas' ecclesiology within his own history. That is, rather than making a theological evaluation based upon his concepts as propositional claims I have attempted to discern the issues, the problems, and the questions which gave rise to Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology; and to which his Trinitarian theology and ontology of personhood are implicit. The following chapter then delignated how Zizioulas constructed his ecclesiology to address those problems. It is an attempt to apply my own line of questioning to the issues that Zizioulas considers in his texts and how Zizioulas constructs his ecclesiology and ontology of personhood to address those issues. This thesis has sought to correlate the core concepts of a theologian with the questions and problems that they consider. It is an approach based on the argument that if we are to do justice to a theologian it is important to take the step to consider what a theologian is attempting to do in their work before ascribing a particular theological position to them. This approach requires a patient historical analysis of the underlying, and often undeclared, questions behind the formulation of a theologian's work. The benefit of this approach is that it has impacted my perception on the discussion surrounding Zizioulas' ecclesiology and has also contributed significantly to the findings of this thesis.

Upon embarking on this thesis, I was going to relegate the ecumenical dimensions of Zizioulas' work to a second order of priority and focus on the issues which relate to Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology. This is because the way I had encountered Zizioulas' work was framed by the reception of his work by Social Trinitarianism. The initial line of argument I was going to take assumed that Zizioulas does indeed argue for a social analogy of the Trinity drawn from Cappadocian theology and uses it to criticise a psychological analogy of the Trinity allegedly attributed to Augustine. Increasingly, this line of argument became untenable because the arguments against a social

doctrine of the Trinity are convincing. Social Trinitarians must take account of the method used to correspond creaturely with triune existence; and the usage of analogy, whether strong or weak, is deeply problematic[997]. After examining the Social Trinitarian method, there are questions as to why the Trinity must be utilised as a representational source of analogies for creaturely existence.

Moreover, in applying a logic of question and answer to Zizioulas' work, it became apparent that Zizioulas does not argue for a Social Trinitarian method. Rather I found that Zizioulas' theology is structured around the problems related to his pivotal ecumenical question, 'what is the Church?'[998]. The centrality of this question in his work casts his Trinitarian theology into a new light; in that Trinitarian theology serves the purpose of illuminating the implicit relation between human personhood and ecclesiology by providing the ontological foundation for human transformation; and it became apparent that this ontological perception of the Church was the basis for Zizioulas' unique approach to ecumenical dialogue. This is apparent in the reception of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology in ecumenical dialogue. For Zizioulas, the communion between Church and Trinity becomes the foundation for the identity of the Church, in that the Church exists in order for humanity to be realised as the image and likeness of God by existing in communion with the Trinity. This divine-human communion becomes the foundation for Zizioulas' approach to ecumenical dialogue.

The ecumenical document produced by the International Commission of Anglican-Orthodox dialogue, Church as the Triune God[999], reflects Zizioulas' ecclesiological theology and this was because Zizioulas was co-chair of the International Commission of Anglican-Orthodox dialogue that produced the Cyprus Statement. This is important because it demonstrates the impact of

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997 See chapter 4 'On the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1): The Monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis' for a discussion on the limitations of a social analogy of the Trinity.

998 Zizioulas, 'The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition', p. 146.

999 Wybrew, Scouteris, Harvey, and others.

Zizioulas' ecclesiology upon ecumenism; but it also articulates that divine-human communion is an axiomatic concept of Zizioulas' approach to ecclesiology:

> In the first place, it must be made clear that the ultimate purpose of the Church, and of the divine economy as a whole, is nothing less than to bring human beings into communion with the life of the Holy Trinity itself. This is what the Greek Fathers and the Orthodox tradition have called theôsis. This healing of humanity implies the healing of creation. We cannot understand the being, structure, mission, worship, and ministry of the Church apart from God's Trinitarian existence[1000].

The nature of divine-human communion is constituted by the Eucharist, and because the Eucharist is the basis for theology 'from the very origins of Christianity'[1001] divine-human communion serves as the source of Zizioulas' theological epistemology. In other words, in posing the centrality of divine-human communion, Zizioulas roots theological methodology in the ecclesial being of the Church. His project is centred on the implications of the Eucharist serving as a locus for his ecclesiology. Moreover, the Eucharist reveals the presence of the eschaton in history. In the eschaton the Church is in communion with God the Trinity, the source of being who draws creation unto Himself. Zizioulas writes that the Eucharistic experience of the Patristic 'pastoral theologians'[1002] was the guiding principle behind their Trinitarian and ontological theologies, as Zizioulas claims:

[1000] Wybrew, Scouteris, Harvey, and others, p. 18.
[1001] Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*, p. 31.
[1002] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 16.

> this ontology, which came out of the Eucharistic experience of the Church, guided the Fathers in working out their doctrine of the being of God… without which ecclesiology would lose its deep existential meaning[1003].

In Zizioulas' regard, for the patristic Church the Eucharist was the foundation for the Church. Zizioulas claims that the Eucharist serves as a *canon* for theology; which unites the doctrine of the Trinity to that of the Church, the Sacraments, Creation, Incarnation and Eschatology. The centrality of communion to ecclesiology is significant for the nature of ecumenism in that Zizioulas proposes that truth is not founded upon agreed and ratified propositions but is rooted in what the Church is as the body of Christ.

There are a few limitations in our approach. The focus of this thesis has been on the intersection between Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism; and due to the brevity required in a thesis I have not had the opportunity to place Zizioulas within a broader context of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century. In particular, the neopatristic synthesis arose from Florovsky and Lossky as an antithesis to Bulgakov's Sophiology. Bulgakov is noticeably absent from Zizioulas' work, and this was due to Florovsky's repudiation of Bulgakov. However, recent scholarship, in particular by Brandon Gallaher, has argued for a greater continuity between Sophiology and the neopatristic synthesis as part of a wider religious renaissance in Russian orthodox theology that has impacted on a wider Orthodox context[1004]. The research of Papanikolaou has argued for this continuity on the basis of divine-human communion; and there is the potential that evaluation of this research could strengthen the case for distinguishing between Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism, and it could further illuminate why Zizioulas emphasises the Eucharist rather than apophaticism as the basis for theôsis[1005]. I have not evaluated this research in this thesis because it would lead to a

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1003 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 17.

1004 Gallaher, 'The Sophiological Origins of Vladimir Lossky's Apophaticism'; Gallaher, '"Waiting for the Barbarians" Identity and Polemics in the Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky'.

1005 Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'From Sophia to Personhood: The Development of 20th Century Orthodox Trinitarian Theology', *Phronema*, 33.2 (2018), 1–20.

significant tangent from the main aim of this thesis as such an endeavour would involve an in-depth analysis of Lossky, Florovsky and Bulgakov. However, further work on the relationship between the Church and the Trinity in other Orthodox theologians in relation to Zizioulas could strengthen the case of this thesis.

Moreover, I have not considered the accuracy of Zizioulas' Patristic claims and claims made about classical Greek ontology. The thesis operates in the area of systematic theology, and my focus is on how and why Zizioulas constructs his argument rather than evaluating the historicity of his treatment of Patristic sources. Albeit, I have addressed what Zizioulas' method is when he utilises patristic sources and his regard of the place of patristic work in his project by evaluating his neopatristic synthesis, especially in the area of Christian Hellenism. However, Alexis Torrance in *Human Perfection in Byzantine Theology* (2020) and the polygraph 'Personhood in the Byzantine Christian Tradition' (2020) fulfils this task quite adequately[1006].

There is also a potential scope to examine the impact and future of Zizioulas' Eucharistic ecclesiology on ecumenical dialogue beyond Orthodox tradition; especially as Zizioulas challenges a propositional approach to ecumenical dialogue, or to ecclesiology, and to root the Church's identity in the person of Christ. However, this thesis has focussed on the reception of Zizioulas' ecclesiology by Social Trinitarianism and this is a significant area of theological engagement beyond Orthodoxy. The issue of whether Zizioulas is a Social Trinitarian needs to be addressed because the relationship between the Trinity and the Church in Eucharistic ecclesiology is not predicated in the same method as proposed by Social Trinitarianism. Thus, prior to any discussion on the future of eucharistic ecclesiology the issue of Social Trinitarianism needs to be addressed precisely because divine-human communion is axiomatic to such ecclesiology; and it is apparent that such work has been misunderstood.

1006 Alexis Torrance, *Human Perfection in Byzantine Theology: Attaining the Fullness of Christ. Personhood in the Byzantine Christian Tradition: Early, Medieval, and Modern Perspectives*, ed. by Alexis Torrance and Symeon Paschalidis (London: Routledge, 2020).

10.1 The problems identified with Zizioulas' communion

The centrality of divine-human communion to Zizioulas' conception of the Church, in the sense that humanity is brought into communion with the Trinity, is recognised almost universally. However, this thesis has identified a perennial controversy pertaining to the nature of that divine-human communion and a fundamental misunderstanding about what Zizioulas is attempting to do in his ecclesiology. Zizioulas is identified closely with Social Trinitarianism by the critics of Social Trinitarianism; and this is because there is a confusion surrounding the treatment of communion by Zizioulas in that Zizioulas is believed to construct the same method used by Social Trinitarian theologians in relating the Trinity to the Church.

10.1.1 Epistemology and Rahner's axiom

One problem for Zizioulas is that he is accused of reifying communion over revelation, so that the experience of communion itself becomes the mode of knowing God in that knowledge of God as Trinity is abstracted from communion. This thesis has discerned that the Social Trinitarian method for correlating divine and creaturely realities developed by those who postulate a social doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in Rahner's axiom; 'the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity'.[1007] The critics of Social Trinitarianism, especially Molnar, maintain that the focus on communion compromises the sovereignty of God and creates the condition where revelation is supplanted for experience:

> This of course is the major predicament that Rahner has bequeathed to contemporary Trinitarian theology, so that those theologians who have unequivocally accepted his axiom are

[1007] Rahner, *The Trinity*, p. 22.

led to shape God according to their experiences of faith rather than allowing God the freedom to determine what can and cannot be said about him[1008].

Social Trinitarian theologians 'make the experience of self the foundation, norm and source of understanding God, revelation and grace'[1009]. For the Social Trinitarians this is the precise strength of Rahner's axiom, it allows for a direct incorporation into the perichoretic life of the Trinity through its economic activity. Their argument reifies experience because it becomes the basis for knowledge of God, and the illumination of creaturely reality. The perichoretic economic procession of God, identified with the immanent Trinity, becomes an epistemic foundation. Gunton postulates his transcendentals on the basis of this method, and LaCugna argues for the unification between *oikonomia* and *theologia* so that *perichoresis* can be the way that God is experienced and known.

This thesis has argued that this epistemological conundrum is useful because it points to a significant difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarian theologians. Zizioulas is alleged to place a heavy emphasis upon communion and because of this it is alleged that he postulates a social doctrine of the Trinity. It is difficult to provide simple answer to this charge as there is no agreed definition or understanding of what constitutes a Social Trinity. Social Trinitarianism is not a school of theology nor a movement; nor is it an approach to doctrine with definable qualities. A definition of a social doctrine of the Trinity seems to allude a precise definition; indeed the Trinity itself is by nature relational. The question arises, is a social doctrine of the Trinity versus a 'classical' doctrine of the Trinity a mere matter of emphasis? Due to the vague nature of what constitutes a social doctrine of the Trinity, Zizioulas has been used to define the nature of a Social Trinity; and this is due to the influence he has had on theologians who postulate a social doctrine of the Trinity. This thesis has considered that the reception of Zizioulas' work by the critics of Social

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1008 Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 241.
1009 Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, p. 241.

Trinitarianism are framed by the encounters with Zizioulas' work in other Social Trinitarian projects.

However, this thesis has argued that rather than looking to specific qualities that constitute a Social Trinity, a different approach should be taken when considering the question whether Zizioulas postulates a social doctrine of the Trinity. What this thesis has done is to attempt to discern the questions and problems which are addressed by the construction of a social doctrine of the Trinity, and the questions and problems which are addressed by Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology and his accompanying Trinitarian doctrine.

This thesis has argued that the key to the difference between Zizioulas and the various proposals for a social doctrine of the Trinity hinges on the purpose and work expected from the doctrine of the Trinity. Namely, what were the problems that Zizioulas sought to address and what were the problems that Social Trinitarian theologians sought to address.

The problems considered by Social Trinitarian theologians are rooted in a Western historical context and specifically arose in the twentieth century. The diagnosis for the neglect of the Trinity is attributed by Social Trinitarian theologians, in particular by Moltmann, to be the result of the prevalence of a monarchical conception of God since the Nicene council. Both Moltmann and LaCugna argue that God as a self-revealing absolute subject, especially in Barth, was seen to perpetuate a monarchical conception of God[1010]. A social doctrine of the Trinity was postulated to ameliorate a monarchical conception of God.

This issue of *monarchia* is a pivotal issue of difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. Zizioulas' opposition to Rahner's axiom reveals competing priorities between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. Zizioulas' priority is the freedom of God to which the monarchy of the Father is axiomatic. Zizioulas seeks to defend the monarchy of the Father in order to maintain divine freedom. Thus, Zizioulas criticises those who utilise Rahner's axiom, such

[1010] See Chapters 5 &6 for a discussion on Moltmann's and LaCugna's approach to the Trinity.

as Moltmann, precisely because it compromises divine freedom. Zizioulas does not abstract his eucharistic ecclesiology from the experience of communion in itself, or from a perichoretic participation. Rather the eucharist for Zizioulas is the direct revelation of Christ in his own giftedness of himself, participation in the Son allows humanity to cry 'abba'. This is derived from the freedom of the immanent God because it is the transformation of human persons from being bound to the ontological necessity arising from sin towards participation in the hypostatic freedom which belongs to the person of the Father. Zizioulas sees Rahner's axiom as indicative of the problems in modern western theology; and opposes Rahner's axiom as it compromises the freedom of God and it confuses God's economic activity with the immanent Trinity. To confuse the two results in a loss of God's transcendence.

10.1.2 On the Monarchy of the Father.

The charge made against Zizioulas by the critics of Social Trinitarianism is that Zizioulas reifies communion in the Trinity to provide a paradigm for the Church. Thus, it is claimed that Zizioulas constructs a social analogy of the Trinity on the basis of communion as constituting divine unity in the place of substance[1011].

In answer to the criticisms that Zizioulas reifies person at the expense of nature, this thesis has demonstrated that to be hypostatic does not prioritise person over nature rather to be hypostatic means to bear the totality of nature[1012]. By examining the importance of Christian Hellenism to Zizioulas, this thesis has demonstrated that Zizioulas builds on the work of Florovsky to maintain that hypostatic freedom, in which there is a synthesis between person and nature, is found through maintaining the monarchy of the Father.

[1011] See chapter 4 'On the difference between a social doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology (1): Monarchy of the Father and Perichoresis'

[1012] See chapter 6 'On the person (1): A consideration of the charge that Zizioulas projects philosophical personalism onto Cappadocian Trinitarian theology'

By exploring the criticisms put to Zizioulas by the Social Trinitarians and its critics, this thesis has argued that there is a difference in terms of the questions between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. Social Trinitarians wish to abrogate Monarchianism in Trinitarian doctrine; and thus they construct a social doctrine of the Trinity to challenge the conception of God as absolute substance and absolute subject. A Social Trinity is an alternative to a monarchical conception of divinity. But this leads to a clash between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians, as they believe his adherence to the monarchy of the Father undermines the conception of God which is constituted by communion as monarchia. Likewise, Zizioulas criticises those who reify *communion,* or perichoresis, as ontologically constitutive because it reduces persons to their relations and thus relationality itself becomes another form of ontological necessity. Zizioulas is operating at the level of ontological freedom whilst the Social Trinitarians centre on the question of hierarchy and sociality.

10.1.3 *Does Zizioulas postulate the Trinity as a paradigm for the Church?*

This question is the result of a confusion between Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism. The problem regarding the reception of Zizioulas' Eucharistic ecclesiology by Social Trinitarianism is that Zizioulas is understood as conveying the Trinity as a paradigm for the communion of the Church, and that Zizioulas constructs a method in which the Church's communion comes to image the Trinitarian communion. Zizioulas' Trinitarian focus has been perceived by the critics of Social Trinitarianism as treating the doctrine of the Trinity as a paradigm which is then projected onto the Church's communion; as Holmes describes 'Social Trinitarians today use the doctrine of the Trinity to answer questions which the Fathers answered by means of Christology'[1013]. Indeed, it is alleged that Zizioulas derives his ecclesiological insights from the Trinity and because of this

[1013] Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', p. 77.

Holmes claims that Zizioulas' ecclesiology 'is clearly a species of Social Trinitarianism'[1014]. This thesis has identified the Social Trinitarian methodology; in which as the Trinity appears in the economy becomes the basis for a correlation for the Church's communion.

For many Social Trinitarian theologians, such as Volf and Gunton, Zizioulas emphasis on episcopacy is the imposition of hierarchy on the Church. For Volf the many being gathered into one is a form of dictated otherness and thus lacks full reciprocity in communion. For Volf the Eucharist is an embodiment of the perichoretic character of the Trinity. For the Social Trinitarians it is the implicit egalitarianism of participation in the perichoretic mode of triune being which is important for ecclesiology; and Zizioulas commitment to the episcopacy is perceived to hinder a reciprocal egalitarian relation.

However, successive critics of Social Trinitarianism[1015], identify Zizioulas with Social Trinitarianism because they believe that this difference between the Social Trinitarians and Zizioulas lies with his application of an 'asymmetric *monarchia* to the ecclesial structure' and that he shares the same flaws as other forms of Social Trinitarianism in that 'the *ordo* of the Church [is] an "over-realized" Trinitarian existence'[1016]. When it comes to evaluations of Zizioulas the debate has focused on the relationship between the monarchy of the Father and the episcopacy.

The argument to associate Zizioulas with Social Trinitarianism is weak because the critics of Social Trinitarianism, in their need to repudiate Social Trinitarianism, have not asked what Zizioulas is trying to do. It seems that the association is based on a surface resemblance based on the concept of communion. Taking an approach based on a nexus of question and answer it becomes apparent that Zizioulas not only has different priorities to the Social Trinitarians but that

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1014 Stephen Holmes, 'Three Versus One? Some Problems of Social Trinitarianism', *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 3 (2009), 77–89 (p. 80).

1015 Such as Tanner, *Christ the Key*, p. 236.

1016 Yik-Pui Au, *The Eucharist as a Countercultural Liturgy: An Examination of the Theologies of Henri de Lubac, John Zizioulas and Miroslav Volf.* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), p. 137.

he uses a different method altogether because he is not seeking to correlate Trinitarian existence with the Church.

This thesis has considered Holmes' and Behr's criticism that the Church exists as a parallel communion to that of the Trinity; and that Zizioulas shares a methodology in relating the Trinity to the Church as an embodiment of Trinitarian koinonia. In particular, Holmes alleges that the only difference between Zizioulas and other Social Trinitarians lies with Zizioulas' emphasis on *monarchia* in which the Church and the Eucharist should embody the *monarchia* of the Father and thus an asymmetric Trinitarian existence represented by the presidency of the Bishop. But this thesis has identified that such an argument mistakes what Zizioulas is doing in his ecclesiology. It may be the case that such a method of analogy is utilised by Social Trinitarian theologians. However, it is the position of this thesis that Christology plays a greater role in Zizioulas' ecclesiology than he has been given credit for in the reception of his ecclesiology as Social Trinitarianism. This thesis has argued that the Social Trinitarian method of correlation is different to the conception of theôsis as Christification.

A key concept for Zizioulas' ecclesiology is *one* and the *many*; and this has made Zizioulas' theology vulnerable to accusations of imitating the Trinity. But when it comes to ecclesiology the theme of one and many exists in a synthesis between Christology and pneumatology. In the examination of Zizioulas' ecclesiology in this thesis, it is apparent that Zizioulas regards the Church as the *whole Christ*, the *totus Christus*. Thus, in any evaluation of Zizioulas, especially in relation to Social Trinitarianism, it should be remembered that the Church's identity is ontologically united with that of the body of Christ in multiplicity. The Bishop is not an imitation of the monarchy of the Father. Through participation in the Spirit the people of God are made *one* in Christ. This is represented in the liturgy where the Bishop acts as *alter Christus* who gathers the college of presbyters and the laity around himself.

It is possible that because this thesis has emphasised the role that Christology plays in Zizioulas' ecclesiology that it has succumbed to the temptation to place too much emphasis on

Christology at the expense of the importance Zizioulas places on the Trinitarian dimensions of the Church. Thus, it is important to identify that Zizioulas has a Trinitarian focus in his ecclesiology and theological anthropology.

There is an implicit Trinitarian focus in Zizioulas' ecclesiology and theological anthropology. Alexis Torrance identifies that, unlike other Orthodox theologians of the neopatristic synthesis, such as Florovsky, Zizioulas places a greater emphasis on the Trinitarian dimensions of the Church and that 'this is not to say that a strong Christocentric element is missing from [his] work, but simply to highlight that the entry point in both cases is not explicitly Christ'[1017].

However, whilst this is the case, this thesis argues that caution needs to be exercised in considering the Trinitarian nature of Zizioulas' ecclesiology; and that such caution is exercised by rooting the Trinitarian dynamics of his ecclesiology in the historical problems that Zizioulas addresses.

Although Zizioulas develops the neopatristic synthesis of Florovsky, Zizioulas also amends a problem he perceives in ecclesiology in relation to Florovsky and Lossky. He seeks to challenge a 'Christo-monism'[1018] in ecclesiology by emphasising the importance of the Spirit and participation in the Trinity. As argued in chapter 3, Zizioulas objects to the schematization of the economy of Christ and the economy of the Spirit in Lossky, and he objects to the derivation of ecclesiology from a historical Christ in Florovsky's ecclesiology. Florovsky argues that the historical person of Jesus Christ, 'the paschal mystery on the horizon of the biblical history of salvation'[1019], is the head of the Church without associating Christ with the body of the Church, Florovsky speaks of Christ and His Church. The problem is that Zizioulas believes that Florovsky did not integrate the Spirit into Christology:

[1017] Alexis Torrance, *Human Perfection in Byzantine Theology: Attaining the Fullness of Christ*, p. 8.
[1018] Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today', p. 6.
[1019] Nikolaos Asproulis, '"Totus Christus" or "Corporate Personality"? Church Identity and Theological Methodology: Some Critical Comments Georges Florovsky and J. Zizioulas in Dialogue', 2018, p. 5.

> Florovsky indirectly raised the problem of the synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology, without however offering any solution to it. In fact there are reasons to believe that far from suggesting a synthesis, he leaned towards a Christological approach in his ecclesiology[1020].

To address this problem, Zizioulas has an eschatological perception of Christ in which Christ is a 'corporate personality'[1021] and not an individual in his incarnation. Zizioulas presents the Church as the body of Christ because there is a synthesis between Christ and the Spirit which makes Christ's incarnate person a pneumatological entity. Rowan Williams writes in his recent work 'Looking East in Winter' (2021) that for Zizioulas 'the eschatological consummation is a final and comprehensive 'saturation' of creation by divine act, without annihilating creation or absorbing it into the creator (which would be the same thing as annihilation). The Christological logic of this should be clear'[1022].

Therefore, the Church is Trinitarian in its dimensions precisely because of the Christological and pneumatological dimensions in Zizioulas' ecclesiology that allows Zizioulas to conceive of theôsis as divine-human communion. It is true that, for Zizioulas, Christology, and the Christological dimensions of the Church, cannot be considered without considering the doctrine of the Trinity. However, it is also true that for Zizioulas, the Trinitarian dimensions of the Church cannot be considered without Christology.

As argued in chapter 9, Zizioulas maintains the Chalcedonian dynamics of the Church as the incarnate Christ, which is both human and divine, in which humanity may participate in Christ's own hypostasis; humanity becomes the image of the living Father because it '*becomes Christ*'[1023]. By

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1020 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 124.

1021 Asproulis, '"Totus Christus" or "Corporate Personality"? Church Identity and Theological Methodology: Some Critical Comments Georges Florovsky and J. Zizioulas in Dialogue', p. 6.

1022 Rowan Williams, *Looking East in Winter: Contemporary Thought and the Eastern Christian Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2021), p. 245.

1023 Zizioulas, 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity', p. 245.

participation in Christ's own hypostasis humanity is adopted into the filial relation between the Son and the Father. The insights of Zizioulas' ontology of human personhood demonstrate that by being drawn into communion with the Father, far from being absorbed into the Trinity, or becoming what it is not through a superficial imitation of Trinitarian communion, humanity becomes more itself because it is freed from the bounds of sin and death and is affirmed by God in its unique and irreducible otherness into eternity.

The benefit of taking a historical approach to Zizioulas' nexus of question and answer is that it demonstrates that the Church is Trinitarian in its dimensions but not because it exists as a parallel communion to the Trinity. If the Church is Christ's own hypostasis, and that the hypostasis of Christ is identified with the triune Son, then the criticism that Zizioulas presents the Trinity as a paradigm for the Church's communion as a parallel entity does not make sense. Zizioulas discusses a vertical participation into the life of the Trinity by participation in the filial relation that the triune Son has with the Father; and this changes the nature of a horizontal communion because humans are the adopted children of God and siblings in Christ to each other. This is possible because the Church is Trinitarian in its dimensions, not as a parallel communion, but that the Spirit makes Christ history, and in being born in the Spirit humanity comes to participate in Christ's own hypostasis.

This is the key methodological difference between Zizioulas and the Social Trinitarians. The Social Trinitarians establish an analogy between the Trinity and the Church; and thus relational categories, such as communion and perichoresis, carry the burden in correlating the Trinity to creaturely realities. By contrast, for Zizioulas, it is Christology and Pneumatology that does the work to enable incorporation into the relationship between the Trinitarian persons of the Son and the Father. Zizioulas' method relies on theôsis as Christification rather than on establishing an analogy through communion as the basis for the realisation of humanity as the image of God.

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