

The Trinity

From Immanent to Economic

Lauds

Coming in at three a.m.
Sleep deprived,
but adrenaline alert to say prayers at the morgue.

After four months almost a full body is found
only missing everything from
both knees down,
lying on his left side.

O the intimacy of this position,
as if he were curled up tenderly
against his lover
and the beseeching aspect
of this man's body:

The white parietal bone of the skull
innocently visible against the black bag
and the black of charring
naked, vulnerable,

seeking to be held
just one more time.

The Pastoral Ethic of Love

Much pastoral theology focuses on pastoral care as an expression of the divine rule to “love one another *as* we have been loved,” or, alternatively ministration *to* the other *in* whom we see Christ, catching God's image in others, loving God through loving the other. Much of it is grounded in the theology of the incarnation, the

movement of God to and for us in the person of Jesus, and in an understanding of humanity as *imago Dei*—*imago Dei*, the image of God, who is love. Here, pastoral care as a “ministry of presence” becomes less about one’s own presence, and more about the presence of the divine. A chaplain describes this well:

... I don’t know if this is the essence of [the T. Mort. chaplaincy], but I think it was “the presence.” ... I think it was first when people were talking about “the ministry of presence,” when that became kind of a term that was being used. So I was like, “A ministry of what?” Because I always associated it with clergy who just were there and never really did anything. I didn’t understand what that was, but of course after this experience, I not only understood it, but used it. I would say the essence of it was *being God’s presence*.

Who is this God who is present? Christian theology posits the trinitarian nature of the One God of Judaism due to belief in the incarnation—that Jesus of Nazareth was God incarnate. Gospel accounts describe Jesus’ experience and teachings of God the Father and he promises them the gift of the Spirit. In John’s Gospel he makes such claims as “I and the Father are one,” “If you have seen me you have seen the Father,” and he says that wherever two or three are gathered together he is there. Through Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and the experience of the early church, Christians came to believe in a God that is not only a unity of being but also a “unity in community”: God as three in one—Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Hence, for Christians, the Trinity is a way of describing the being of God in both God’s unity and multiplicity.

Through the incarnation God takes on what is not God, crossing the “gap” between *Creator* and *created* in the person of Jesus. In this unique person, existentially, humanity takes into itself the being of God, where God in Jesus is fully human and divine, “truly God and truly man,” with all the bio-psycho-social manifestations of such, “like us in all respects apart from sin.”² Thus, we are encouraged in incarnational theology not simply to see the hypostatic union of divine and human in the Son, as a one-to-one correlation, but to see the Trinity, the three-in-one, in the divinity. Incarnation takes us to Trinity, and perhaps back again.³ In the incarnation and resurrection, God takes ontologically into Godself the being of humanity in the second person of the Trinity—the Son, Jesus. God is not only psychologically relevant because of the person of Jesus, a man with a psyche, but God is relevant to us from what we know of God in *Godself*, not simply in the tri-unity of being but the unity of the three persons of the Trinity *as love*, a state of being that we as humans experience in a way not shared by the animal kingdom.

Here the Trinity lends itself to a pastoral model for reasons arising from the nature of Trinity itself. These reasons relate to what is called in theological language the *immanent* and the *economic* Trinity. The immanent Trinity speaks of who *God is—theologia*, the relation of God as Trinity as God is to *Godself*. The economic

Trinity speaks of *what God does* in the world, the economy of salvation—*oikonomia*, of the relation of God as Trinity as God is *to us*. More will be said about these distinctions later. However, where psychology intersects with this theological distinction is through both the nature and the action of God where we are called to minister not only from the “how” of God, but the “who” of God, the God who not only calls us “to love as God loves us” but who *is* love itself.

God as Love

One of the most foundational figures writing both on the Trinity and its connection to human personhood is the great fifth-century *theologian* Augustine of Hippo. He writes in his treatise *Deus Trinitatis* (On the Trinity):

For it is our contention that God is called love for this reason, that love itself is a substance worthy of the name of God, and not merely because it is a gift of God, such as where it said to God: “For thou art my patience” [cf. Ps. 71:5]; for it is not, therefore, said that the substance of God is our patience, but that it comes to us from Him, as it is read elsewhere: “For from him is my patience” [cf. Ps.62:5]. The speech itself of the Scriptures easily refutes any other interpretation. For such a sentence as “Thou, O Lord, art my patience” is said in the same sense as: “Thou, O Lord, art my hope” [cf. Ps. 91:9], and “My God, my mercy” [Ps. 59:17], and many similar texts. But it was not said: “O lord, my love,” or “Thou art my love,” or “God, my love”; but it was said: “God is love” in the same sense as it was said: “God is spirit” [John 4:24].⁴

As a species distinctive for our ability to love, the understanding of God as love takes us not only to the heart of God but to the heart of the human person for whom love may be both a psychological and spiritual reality. If the love of God is not simply something that God does, but who God is, then the human ability to love may say something about the nature of God in us.

[John,] in the following verses after speaking of the love of God, not that by which we love Him, but that “by which he first loved us, and sent his son as a propitiation for our sins”; and, hence, exhorts us to love one another, *so that God might abide in us*, then, because he had said in unmistakable terms that God is love, he wanted to speak more plainly on this subject at once: “In this,” he said, “we know that *we abide* in him and he is us, because he has given us of his Spirit.” Therefore the Holy Spirit, of whom he has given us, causes us to remain in God, and God in us. But love does this. He is, therefore, the God who is love.⁵

However, this abiding of God in us is reflective of the *unity* of God, God as love, rather than a trinitarian expression of God’s comm-unity,⁶ although *theologians*

such as Jürgen Moltmann argue that only the trinitarian nature of God can philosophically justify the God whom we see on the cross that loves, suffers, and can change.⁷

It is of note, however, that Augustine, in his reflections upon the Trinity, seeks to retain the love of God as reflective of God's unity but through it to see the trinity of God shining through, particularly in the *hypostasis* (person) of the Holy Spirit: "One may object: 'I see love and I conceive it in my mind as best I can, and I believe the Scripture when it says: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God," but when I see it I do not see the Trinity in it.' But as a matter of fact you do see the Trinity if you see love."⁸

Augustine sees that love has a triune character but seeks to make clear that even though we can understand love in this way we must be careful to see love as reflective of God rather than God imposed upon our human idea of love.

But what is love or charity, which the Divine Scripture praises and proclaims so highly, if not love of the good? Now love is of someone who loves, and something is loved with love. So then, there are three: the loved, the beloved, and love.⁹

With regard to the question at hand, therefore, let us believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, the Creator, and the ruler of all creation; that the Father is not the Son, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son, but that there is a Trinity of inter-related persons, and the unity of an equal substance. . . . We are now most eager to see whether this most excellent love is proper to the Holy Spirit, and if it is not so, whether the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit itself is love, since we cannot contradict the most certain faith and the most weighty authority of Scripture which says: "God is love" [*1 John 4:16*]. Nevertheless, we should not be guilty of the sacrilegious error of attributing to the Trinity that which does not belong to the Creator, but rather to the creature, or is imagined by mere empty thought.¹⁰

In Augustine's argument about the Trinity as love, it is helpful to note several points about the Trinity itself that are pertinent to our discussion. These are:

- Substance and relationship
- Distinction and connection between immanent and economic Trinity
- *Hypostasis*—personhood and appropriation of identity and function in the Trinity
- *Perichoresis*—mutual indwelling of the hypostases in the Trinity

Augustine does see the Trinity as unity and community, "being" in relationship. Indeed, Augustine gives primacy of thought to God as unity, the "one God, the Creator, and the ruler of all creation."¹¹ Although he is most confident of appropriating love to the Holy Spirit, rather than the Father or the Son, at other times he sees love as the property of God in unity.

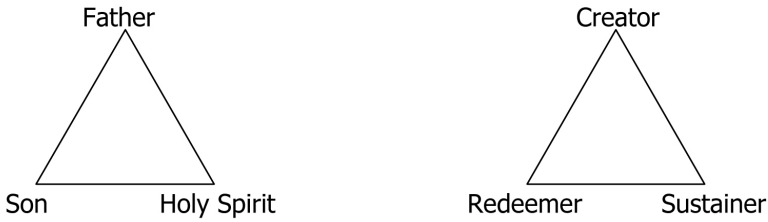


Fig. 1: The Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity

Augustine names the *immanent* Trinity in the scriptural terms as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” a description of *who* God is. The economic Trinity, however, God as God is *for us*, is commonly named with terms such as “Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,” what God *does* in the world in—the economy of salvation.

It is important to remember that for Augustine the immanent Trinity *does not* map onto the economic Trinity as a one-to-one correlation, the equation of Father with creation, Son with redemption, and Spirit with sustaining. For Augustine, God as Creator is reflective of God’s unity and does not appropriate the act of creating to a particular *hypostasis* (person) of the Trinity. This also serves to retain an understanding of God’s freedom from the world in God’s essential being rather than God being bound to the world. Therefore, for Augustine immanent is not economic Trinity as regards parallel functions, yet immanent is economic Trinity as regards the unity of God.

The temptation to appropriate a specific function to a particular *hypostasis*, or person, of the Trinity is corrected by the understanding of the *perichoresis*, the mutual indwelling of each in the other, as unity in the Trinity. Therefore, each *hypostasis* of the immanent Trinity acts in ways that are creating, redeeming, and sustaining. Although the term *perichoresis* was attributed to Pseudo-Cyril, and fully explicated by John of Damascus some three centuries later, this mutual indwelling is constantly implied in Augustine’s work. He therefore can move freely, it seems, between appropriating love to one *hypostasis* of the Trinity and claiming it as a reflection of the unity of God.

These concepts that relate to unity and community within the Trinity, though seemingly technical issues, all have a relationship to the pastoral field. People are more inclined to report experiencing God’s presence (the unity of God), both in terms of felt presence and in the experience of community and less likely to say, “I experienced the Spirit here in the community, God the Father here in my prayer, Christ here in the brokenness of the bodies.” They will speak, rather, of the presence of God, feeling of holiness, essence of love, as does the following chaplain:

My remembrance is that most of the time I was there, I was experiencing the sense of the presence of God in that place. . . , And that is what I was more aware of than feelings of sadness. . . . There was a real sense of holiness in

that place. Destruction, yes, and all of that. But there was the way everybody was working together and cooperating with each other and supporting each other. There was a real sense of community and holiness. And that is what I remember rather than sadness or despair or anything like that. . . .

For the most part, it was a very powerfully moving and uplifting experience for me. When I think back on it, I was impressed with the holiness of it all. And some of the experience of the closeness of God that I had there. That's, as I think about it, the overwhelming thing about it, not sadness, not fear or anything—the sense of holiness.

Yet at the same time there is manifest in many of the chaplains' reflections a sense that God was not simply out there, or even over there, but that God was with them and in what they were doing, in the prayers they prayed and the pastoral relationships that developed. "But when I was afraid [before beginning the ministry], and I went into St. Paul's Chapel . . . and prayed and I just felt the Holy Spirit reaching out to me and saying 'You can do this. We'll do this together.' *That was a relational thing.*" When this chaplain went on to speak of the end of his ministry at the T. Mort., he came back to a similar relational point in discussing love. He noted that "a primary function of clergy and one of our most laudable goals is just [being] real. If it isn't real, you can't love it. Love is not hypothetical. You can only embrace reality, there's nothing else there."

Image of God as Love in the Human Person

For Augustine, Christ is not only the exemplar *par excellence* of how to love but he asserts that in the human psyche there is an image of the Triune God, who is love incarnate. However, this image is not a static "picture" of God but of a dynamic way of being and relating. Through the action of the Spirit we are drawn into the *renewal* of that image as we remember, understand, and choose to love God and each other.

Augustine reflects on many triads or trinities in the human person, inward and outward,¹² but he is clear that our relatedness to God is not about threeness or any superficial similarity but about the essence of God in Godself. "Certainly, not everything in creatures that is in some way similar to God is also to be called His image, but to that alone to which he himself is superior; for the image is only then an expression of God in the full sense, when no other nature lies between it and God."¹³ He makes a distinction between what is a *likeness* to God in the human person and what is the *image* of God.

Augustine argues that the image of God in the human person must indeed be a trinitarian image. Reflecting upon the first creation story in Genesis, Augustine says, "If the Father did not make in His own image but in to that of the Son, why

did he not say: 'Let us make man according to thy image and likeness,' but did say 'according to our image'—unless it be the image of the Trinity was made in man, so that man should in this way be the image of the one true God, because the Trinity itself is the one true God?"¹⁴ The plural language used by God in the first Genesis creation story substantiates for Augustine that the image of God is a trinitarian image.

Augustine's eventual analysis of inward and outward trinitaries in the human person is a constant reflection on the analogies between human personhood and the Triune God, yet he is constantly careful to say that observant trinitaries *do not* constitute the image of God. He does, however, come to affirm that there is one trinity in the human person that is the image of God—the rational mind's *memory*, *understanding*, and *will*—that which can know God, which can understand God, and which can freely love God, even in God's unknownness. Augustine's conception of this threefold self that is an image of God arises from his questions of "Who loves that which he does not know?"¹⁵ and "By what likeness or comparison with known things can we believe, so that we may also love the God who is not yet known?"¹⁶ It is extremely important, therefore, when contemplating Augustine's conception of the person, to realize that it is *not* memory, understanding, and will as a deification of the rational mind that is the image of God, but that these are relational functions in the person which give the ability to love God. As such, even though Augustine's image can be read as self-contained and oriented to itself only, it is in essence relational, its object being God. This trinitarian image in the human person is grounded in the love of God and lived out in love of the "neighbor."

Wherefore, this is the best known and principal commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God" [Deut. 6:5]. Human nature, therefore, has been so formed that never does it not remember itself, never does it not understand itself, never does it not love itself. . . .

Hence, *he who knows how to love himself loves God*; on the other hand, he who does not love God, even though he loves himself, insofar as that is naturally implanted within him, is not unfittingly said to hate himself, since he does that which is opposed to himself, and pursues himself as if he were his own enemy. . . .

But when the mind loves God and by consequence, as we have said, remembers and understands Him, then *with respect to its neighbor* it is rightly commanded *to love him as it loves itself*. For it no longer loves itself perversely but rightly when it loves God, by partaking of whom that image not only exists, but is also renewed so as not to grow old, reformed so as not to be disfigured, and beatified so as not to be unhappy.¹⁷

The human person's ability to hate oneself, and to love that which is not God or for God, is not a negation of the image of God for Augustine. However, for Augustine the image of God that is reflected in the human psyche is an image that is distorted through the fall, in the second creation narrative in Genesis where

humans freely choose to disobey the God who created them (see Gen. 2:4b—3:24). Therefore, his Christian anthropology of the psyche as the image of God that we are all endowed with is not a static fact but has to be *restored* or *renewed* through the dynamic action of the self *in response* to the action of God. This can easily sound like a theology of works, that we become one with God by loving God through our own effort and energy, aside from the life and works of Christ. Yet, Augustine is careful to give primacy both to Christ's effectiveness, the work of the Spirit and grace, even as he charges us with the work of making progress ourselves in this renewal of the image of God in us.

Whoever, then, is being renewed in the knowledge of God, and in justice and holiness of truth, by making progress day by day, transfers his love from temporal to eternal things, from visible to intelligible things, from carnal to spiritual things, and constantly endeavors to restrain and lessen the desire for the former, and to bind himself by love to the latter. But he does so in proportion to the divine help he receives, for the saying of God is "Without me you can do nothing" [John 15:5].¹⁸

This renewal of God's image, the Triune God of love, is that task to which we are called day by day, a task we effect both through the gift of grace and our own endeavors. One chaplain noted the power of such an understanding: "To recognize that who I am is really kept in the mind of God [was transformational]. If that's true and you're created in God's image, and we all are, then as you recall who anybody else is, the reality of that person is only in your mind—the mind of God." For Augustine, drawing on Paul's theology in 1 and 2 Corinthians, as beings who are a reflection of God we see this image reflected in ourselves "as through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). This description for Augustine is that of the image of God in the human person as a mirror of God whose likeness is currently obscured. "'We see now through a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face' (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12). If we inquire what this mirror is, and of what sort it is, the first thing that naturally comes to mind is that nothing else is seen in a mirror except an image. We have, therefore, tried to do this in order that through this image, which we are, we might see Him by whom we have been made in some manner or other, as through a mirror."¹⁹ This mirror, therefore, is not a two-dimensional glass, but a relational picture that reflects the Triune God whose image is not so much a likeness but a reflection of the personhood of one being in the face of another.

This reflection of God that is currently obscured but will eventually be perfected in God, is to God as Trinity. In one respect only does Augustine say that the likeness is to Christ solely, in "reference to the immortality of the body. For in this too, we shall be like God, but only the Son, because he alone in the Trinity took a body, in which he died, rose again, and which he brought to higher things."²⁰ In this we are to see that embodiment is not to be disconnected from our eternal destiny and the Son's embodiment is taken into the experience of the Trinity, but

that the love of Christ that was not a function of his embodiment is an expression of the Trinity as a whole. Yet it is through love manifest in the third hypostasis of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, in whom we are taken beyond the Incarnate One into communion with the Trinity. “Love, then, which is from God and is God, is properly the Holy Spirit, through whom the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, through which the whole Trinity dwells in us.”²¹ Here, although Augustine appears to concentrate on the immanent Trinity, his focus is on memory, understanding, and love as functions that need to be renewed and reoriented toward God rather than the nature of the psyche in itself. This shows us that the image of the Trinity in the human psyche is that of the *economy* of God, God as God is for us, as love is something that takes us beyond our own selves toward others. We can see this in one chaplain’s reflections:

It [blessing bodies and body parts] is what one does. And so what it’s like is to be able to be part of *more than oneself* doing [this]. It’s something of the same answer of what’s it like to preside at the altar. . . . *I’m there as God’s lightning rod*, so to speak, conducting God in the world, the world in God. And that, by the way, is a punning word, “conducting.” Both as a conduit and director. Please note the instrument that a conductor plays—answer, *none*. The conductor doesn’t play an instrument or sing or compose, at least, not in the act of conducting, and in that sense is the one least in charge. And in that sense, the less I’m in charge, the more I am.

This sense of being God’s lightning rod, as “conduit and director,” reflects on a place of self beyond self—“the less I’m in charge, the more I am.” Yet it is a self that is in relationship, both to God and to those others in the music of pastoral care.

Augustine’s focus on the inner self in seeming isolation from outer relationships may appear to show a disconnect in his theology between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, between nature and functioning the world, through a lack of translation of this image in relationship with others. But his interpretation of the great commandment to love, involves the threefold foci of God, others, and ourselves, yet grounded in the being of God. “Neither should we let this question disturb us, how much we ought to spend upon our brother, how much upon God—incomparably more upon God than upon ourselves, but as much upon our brother as upon ourselves—and we love ourselves so much more, the more we love God. We, therefore, love God and our neighbor from one and the same love, but we love God on account of God, but ourselves and our neighbor on account of God.”²²

Given Augustine’s explication of love as triune, and the image of God in the self likewise, we will next turn to a field that grounds its theory of formation of the self in relationships, that of Object Relations psychoanalysis and primarily the thought of Donald Winnicott, to explore how love is reflected in that theory in a way which enables us to examine further theologically how we can see this lived out in practice.

When we begin from a theological perspective, we begin with the love of God that created us, redeemed us, and sustains us. “Beloved, since God loved us so much we ought to love one another . . . if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:11-12). We loved because God “first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Jesus tells his disciples to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Here, love is a response to being loved. The formation of what it is to be a Christian person is grounded in the relational matrix of the love of God, and the God who is love. Augustine, as we have seen, grounds his understanding of the psyche in the capacity to know, understand, and love God. Are these theological suppositions about the formation of the self in response to love any different from those of Object Relations psychoanalytic theory? Can we see these theological principles reflected in psychoanalytic thought? The answer is both no and yes.

Love in Object Relations Thought

Object Relations theory is essentially about internal and external relationship with self and others and the structures of the psyche that support such. It sees the formation of our self in our response to another “object,” that is, an objective other. However, in this theory it is another person, not God, with whom the loving relationship is first established. Unlike theology, which can seem to focus on the “Father” God, even in trinitarian theology, Object Relations theory sees the genesis of love in the maternal relationship. According to Ronald Fairbairn, “The child’s oral relationship with his mother in the situation of suckling represents his first experience of a ‘love’ relationship, and is, therefore, the foundation upon which all his future relationships with love objects are based. It also represents his first experience of a social relationship; and it therefore forms the basis of his subsequent relationship to society.”²³

When we have the foundation of such a relationship from our infantile experience with a person who loves us *enough* to empathize accurately and respond to our infantile needs, to suffer our libidinal and aggressive impulses without retaliation, and to give us both a containing relationship and space to develop, we are enabled to be who we have the potential to be. This potential becomes realized as creative, spontaneous persons grounded in a sense of the real, with an ability to relate to others not simply as extensions of ourselves but as persons in their own right. We become able to be with others and also alone, with a capacity for concern for others, able to trust, to believe, and develop a moral relationship to the world that is not simply an application of law but an inner ethical compass which sees beyond our own needs and desires. We grow, in Winnicott’s words, a “True self” that is in relationship. Most often this relationship is first with our mothers, or with those that take the role of primary caregiver in our early lives, be they female or male. Whatever the family configuration, psychologically, we can see a reflection of the

theological assertion in the Christian Scriptures that we love because we are first loved, by God in Christ, and in psychoanalytic thought by our first relationship of care as we first come to being. In Object Relations theory, the creation of a human person is not a *fait d'accompli* of birth, but is absolutely dependent on a relationship of care, ideally of love, that will hold our selves not only in those first months of life, but will enable us to develop inner structures that we may hold ourselves together in the face of whatever life has to offer. Winnicott describes formation of the self in this way:

. . . there starts in the infant and continues in the child a tendency toward integration of the personality, the word *integration* tending to have a more and more complex meaning as time goes on and the child gets older. Also the infant tends to live in his or her own body and to build the self on the basis of bodily functioning to which belong imaginative collaborations that quickly become extremely complex and constitute the psychic reality specific to that infant. The infant becomes established as a unit, feels an I AM feeling, and bravely faces the world with which he or she is already becoming able to form relationships, affectionate relationships and (by contrast) a pattern of object-relationships based on the instinctual life. . . . Here is human nature unfolding itself. BUT, . . . maturational processes depend for their becoming actual in the child, and actual at appropriate moments, on a good enough environmental provision.²⁴

This “good enough environmental provision” is through the love of a mother, parent, or parent-substitute who creates an environment of care and relationship of love in which the self can form in its own unique way.

Ann Belford Ulanov, writing on the thought of Winnicott, sees a relationship between the living out of this “mother love,” and the *agape* of the theological or religious world. Using Winnicott’s own gender-related terms,²⁵ Ulanov sees this “female-element love” as a personally mediated “holy intent”:

Female-element love conducts us to the power of loving that the religious term *agape* represents. *Agape* possesses no agenda; it seeks to promote life in its individual idiosyncratic forms so that each living thing fully fills out its nature and recognizes the same in others. The feminine mediates this holy intent. The capacity for illusion changes into a capacity for creative exchange between subjects that exist objectively for each other. The mother or the mother in the male facilitates a love that includes hate, where quiet love and erotic and excited or aggressive love accomplish fusion. Then the child can find a personal transformation of its own destructiveness of what is loved into imaginative work and creative living.²⁶

Such facilitating love forms a space, or *spaces*, within the becoming self, that (1) enables the individual’s unique, “idiosyncratic,” creative nature to develop between their subjective experience and that which is objectively perceived, (2) contains and

transforms aggression and its effects, and (3) opens the way to creative living both internally and in relation to the world.

Gradually, through the mother's empathic attunement, constancy, and mirroring, the child comes to experience life in three "areas": an inner area, and outer area, both of which are relatively constant, and a third area—the area of experience—which Winnicott names variously as a "transitional space" or "playspace." We experience this area in highly variable ways, it being at the border of inner and outer. This space is the space between mother and infant initially, between child and environment, and later between individual and the world. It is the space of illusion where we in our creating discover that which is external to us, infusing it with our own meaning. It is in this space that Winnicott locates cultural experience for the individual—the space of the arts, religion, and scientific endeavor. It is in this area of experience that the infant comes initially to recognize the mother as a "not-me" object and relate to her as an object other than the self. Here the space-holding and space-affording mother can be experienced as an "other" and the infant can experience itself as a "self."

Such a relational formation of the self can sound as ideal as the earlier assertions about Christian community; however, Winnicott was realistic about this experience of love on behalf of the mother. Such a mother, in his eyes, did not have to be ideal, but "good enough"; creating an "average expectable environment,"²⁷ able to consistently and accurately attune well enough to the infant's needs and being that the infant can go on being who she or he is without interruption.

At a later developmental stage, however, such interruption is part of the opportunity for growth as the infant learns to recognize, own, and express his or her needs as a separate being rather than have them met already by a mother who is so attuned to be merged with the developing child and able to meet those needs before she or he expresses them. Like the important theological distinction between God and humanity, although the "mother" may be seen as largely responsible for the creation of the child, as it develops within her body for the nine or so months of its prenatal life and she provides an environment and relationship of care after birth, it is important that both the mother and the child come to realize that it is a separate being with its own unique self. The response to the primary love is thus also not a *fait d'accompli* but an achievement that encompasses, as Augustine seemed to know, the ability to hate as well as love the same person (object). Winnicott sees this achievement as key in the development of a sense of responsibility and, again, highly dependent on the relationship with the primary caregiver:

One stage in the child's development has especial importance. . . . At this stage to which I refer now there is a gradual build-up in the child of a capacity to feel a sense of responsibility, that which at base is a sense of guilt. The environmental essential here is the continued presence of mother or mother-figure over time in which the infant is accommodating the destructiveness which is part of his make-up. This destructiveness

becomes more and more a feature of his object relationships, and the phase of development to which I am referring lasts from about six months to two years, after which the child may have made a satisfactory integration of the idea of destroying the object and the fact of loving the same object. The mother is needed over this time and she is needed because of her survival value. She is an environment-mother and at the same time an object-mother, the object of excited loving. In this latter role she is repeatedly destroyed or damaged. The child gradually comes to integrate these two aspects of the mother and to be able to love and be affectionate with the surviving mother at the same time. This phase involves the child in a special kind of anxiety which is called a sense of guilt, guilt related to the idea of destruction where love is also operating. It is this anxiety that drives the child toward constructive or actively loving behaviour in his limited world, reviving the object, making the loved object better again, rebuilding the damaged thing.²⁸

Such ability to choose or respond in ways that are not loving, or even destructive, in the theological world is reflective of living as sinful persons in a world where we, as often as not, choose not to love our primary Other—God, other beings, or ourselves. In Winnicott's understanding, however, the infantile need for destruction in fantasy and its consequent desire for "reviving," "rebuilding," or "reparation" is important developmentally and something that serves a *positive* function in the psyche. This owning of human aggression and its contribution to the formation of an ethical self is seen as a vital component of what it is to be human and something that should not be denied or idealized. Perhaps a correlation between this dynamic in relation to the primary caregiver and the infant can be seen to be reflected in the religious relationship of repentance and forgiveness between the person and the God of mercy who calls them to live out of a relationship of responsibility, the one whose love does not depend on their actions, but nevertheless knows and calls them to account for themselves also. Yet, there is no escaping the difference between Winnicott's thought and theology here in its relation to destructiveness.

Unlike theology, which can often appear to see response to God as a free choice, Object Relations theory sees our ability to be lovingly concerned and caring for others as highly dependent on our experiences of care. Arguably, however, this could also be asserted in Christian theology through the soteriological assertion that God in Christ saved us because, in the end, we cannot save ourselves. Hence, many theologies assert that Christian faith and love are not a choice but a gift of the Holy Spirit. This, of course, begs the questions, Why does God not gift everyone with the same faith? and, If it is a gift, why the so-often popular condemnation of those who do not seem to have been given this gift, and who perhaps even practice another faith?

A partial answer to this question comes from Winnicott's thought, and he muses "it might even turn out that religion could learn something from psychoanalysis,"²⁹ when he explores the formation of the "God concept":³⁰

It seems that although most religions have tended to recognize the importance of family life it fell to psycho-analysis to point out to the mothers of babies and to the parents of the very young the value—no, the essential nature—of their tendency to provide for each infant that which each infant needs by way of nurture . . .

To sum up this first stage of my simplified scheme for describing the developing human being: the infant and small child is usually cared for in a reliable way, and this being cared for well enough builds up in the infant to a belief in reliability; on to this a perception of the mother or father or grandmother or nurse can be added. To a child who has started life in this way the idea of goodness and of a reliable and personal parent or God can follow naturally.

The child who is not having good enough experiences in the early stages cannot be given the idea of a personal God *as a substitute for infant care*. . . . This is a first principle of moral education, that *moral education is no substitute for love*.³¹

Winnicott does not allow at this stage for an objective relationship with God, and could be argued to limit the freedom of God to the ability of the mother to love. At these early stages, love has to be concretely experienced in the care of the primary caregiver, the idea of goodness can follow, and later the connection of that to God. Otherwise, he appears to see God as an idea, a concept, the deity of a moral code with which the parents desire the child to comply but do not reflect in their own love and care of the child. Yet Winnicott locates the development of the belief in a *personal* God in that transitional space, the “third area,” between the mother and child as subject and object, and later between the self and other “objects.” Such space between what is imaginatively created, and what is found “lying around” in the world and takes on personal meaning, is the space in which the child, and later the adult, develops a sense of culture, art, and religion that is both objectively there but subjectively related to, rather than the compliant acceptance of a religion that provides a moral code but does not feel real. One chaplain reflected on this relationship between the real and the sacred when asked about what was life-giving about the ministry:

I guess the sense of *the holy is in the real*. . . . I don't think it's possible to separate the holy from the real. But there's a lot of effort to try and do that. To sort of say, “Well, this is a ‘religious experience’ and this is something other.” This whole business of the fear of secularism just drives me crazy. What are we afraid of? If we'd know more about what life is about really, then we wouldn't be so afraid of it.

It is worth noting that Winnicott's view of the life of “the healthy person” is a triad. Remembering that Augustine cautioned against assuming that triads were trinitarian, nevertheless, we can see some resonances. Winnicott notes:

My last word must be about the lives that healthy people live.

1. The life in the world, with interpersonal relationships as the key even to making use of the non-human environment.

2. The life of the personal (sometimes called inner) psychological reality. This is where one person is richer than another, and deeper, and more interesting when creative. It includes dreams (or what dream material springs out of). . . .

3. The area of cultural experience. Cultural experience starts as play, and leads on to the whole area of man's inheritance, including the arts, the myths of history, the slow march of philosophical thought and the mysteries of mathematics, and of group management and of religion.³²

Winnicott's understanding of the person as embracing these three areas of life is something of a reflection of the unity and community in humanity, which we reflected on theologically, that of shared reality but also of inner imaginative appropriation and relatedness. What Winnicott adds to this theological understanding is reflected in Augustine's question of how we can love that which we do not know. Augustine's answer focuses on the mind that can remember, understand, and will to be in relation with the Other. Winnicott shows us, however, the development of the individual that is more than simply the mind, but a *self* that can love and learns to do so in relationship with others, by being cared for by an other or others. Like the "ecclesial self," as Stanley Grenz says, it is "more than personal, it is shared identity."³³ It involves both a triadic multiplicity and an "indwelling," reminiscent of *perichoresis*. Here the person is both uniquely an individual and also a self constituted by being in relationship with others, and still yet includes that "third area" which Winnicott calls "cultural experience." Winnicott's healthy person is both integrated *and* differentiated, not an isolate but a self that is constituted by both inner and outer realities and the meaning formed by them which is not solely personal but communal and even cultural. His understanding of the self reflects both an Enlightenment focus on the individual but also answers postmodern critiques of "the individual" as a construct that fails to take into account the formation by others and the contextual interrelationship with the world in which the developing individual is located.

In Winnicott's triad of life, between the individual's inner world and society and the world, this third area is the space of experience, which has important implications in our later exploration of disaster and trauma. Such space is highly variable, as it "depends on experience which leads to trust. It can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living."³⁴ Developed from the experience of a "good-enough" mothering relationship, the ability to engage creatively with whatever life has to offer (in a world that is not as constant as Winnicott would like to believe), is done through what Winnicott describes as "play." Rather than seeing this as a frivolous action, it becomes the

deeply creative ability to be and do in relation to external circumstances and inner reactions. In a situation of trauma, however, it may be that what is needed is (an) other relationship(s) that provides the same sort of reliable empathy and care, to make a space for this third area of creative growth even in the face of immense suffering.

It is here that Winnicott as doctor and psychoanalyst sees a relationship between ministry and medicine, though he notes, “I do not deal with the religion of inner experience, which is not my special line, but I deal with the philosophy of our work as medical practitioners, a kind of religion of external relationship.”³⁵ He sees a common denominator in religion and medicine pointed to by the word *cure*, believing that cure “at its roots means care,” not simply the later understanding of remedy. Of the role of the doctor he says that “at the first of these two extreme positions the doctor is the social worker and is almost fishing in the pools that provide proper angling for the curate, the minister of religion. At the other extreme position the doctor is a technician, both in making a diagnosis and in treating.”³⁶ Like his theory on infant and childhood development with the focus on the role of the mother, his understanding of cure is grounded in relationality, noting that what is required of the practitioner is a reliability which leads to trust. In listing the various qualities that such a relationship of care requires—being “non-moralistic,” “dead-honest, truthful,” reliable, accepting “the patient’s love and hate” without provoking either, “not being cruel for the sake of being cruel”—Winnicott states that, “There is one thing especially that needs to feed back into medical practice. . . . It is that *care-cure is an extension of the concept of holding*.”³⁷ He continues,

I suggest that we find in the care-cure aspect of our professional work a setting for the application of principles that we learned at the beginning of our lives, when as immature persons we were given good-enough care, and cure, so to speak, in advance (the best kind of preventative medicine) by our “good-enough” mothers, and by our parents. It is always a steadying thing to find that one’s work links with entirely natural phenomena, and with the universals, and with what we expect to find in the best of poetry, philosophy and religion.³⁸

Although Winnicott was not explicit about the connections while speaking to an audience of medics rather than clergy, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Winnicott’s understanding of the practice of care, if applied with the same principles of a holding relationship and environment that he applies to medicine and social work, can be seen to be present in the “care of souls”—that of the pastoral care. Further, when we explore the trinitarian model of care—Earth-making/Pain-bearing/Life-giving—we will begin to see that the qualities of each are both reflected and enhanced by Winnicott’s understanding of the triadic self and its formation. Winnicott’s psychoanalytic thought can offer to this trinitarian model of pastoral care a deeper reflection on the human psyche, grounded in the relationality

that begins with concepts from early life that show us reliable constants necessary for adult creative *living*, rather than simply *surviving* in the world.

Although always affirming a gap between psychoanalysis and religion, Ulanov also sees a parallel, or even a mirror, in the relation to Winnicott's understanding of the self and its relations and the internal relations of the Triune God.

The parallel in religious imagery to this incommunicable yet ever communicating self is the inner life of God imagined in the Trinity. There, never-ending communication flows out and back between what we might call God's inner object relations. The Father ceaselessly gives forth to the Son, who gives back again to the giver; this communication exists so intensely that its immediacy manifests itself as the living Spirit between them, stemming from both, expressing both, overflowing into the world, communicating being to us. The mysterious core of the self that we find and create in the space between us and others, in some tiny way, speaks, participates in, and mirrors the huge spaces among the three persons in one God.

The excitement and inward gladness of being, the energy and freshness of instinct, the spontaneous gestures to communicate that arise from this core of ourselves in some tiny way reflect the unspeakable energy of God that only the word *love* captures. Jesus says he comes to give us abundant life, that in loving God with our whole heart, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves, we will find this precious all-out living, the pearl for which we gladly sell all else, the true life for which we easily lose everything else. One's true life mirrors the "True God from True God" words used in the Nicene Creed to describe the Son's relation to the Father.³⁹

In the three chapters that follow this one, we will reflect on both theology and Winnicott's psychoanalytic thought to explore the following trinitarian model of pastoral care grounded in the pastoral practice of the chaplains at Ground Zero. In doing so, we will examine those psychic and relational spaces in pastoral practice and selfhood that mirror in some tiny way the *love* of the one true God.

A Functional Model of the Economic Trinity

Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven.

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts that we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.⁴⁰

This contemporary rewrite of the Lord's Prayer, by the English Anglican priest and devotional writer Jim Cotter, offers a trinitarian model that is simply descriptive, yet alludes to a deeper understanding of what love lived out may look like in all its triune possibilities. In addition to its formal and everyday liturgical and devotional use, this prayer has received acclamation in both popular and more scholarly arenas.

However, the editors of *A New Zealand Prayer Book—He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, from which it is best known, made a minor but significant rewrite to Cotter's original version. Cotter's original text uses the phrase "Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Love-maker" rather than "Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver." Cotter himself prefers the original version, seeing it as more of "a trinitarian dance."⁴¹ Whether or not the editors thought the term *Love-maker* was too controversial, Cotter's original version locates, as Augustine seems to, much of the time, love as a function of one hypostasis in the Trinity. The prayerbook version has a stronger explicit emphasis on creation in its description of "Earth-maker," as is appropriate for its context in a bicultural country strongly influenced by the depth of Maori spirituality, with its strong focus on creation and relationship to the earth. This reorientation makes "Life-giving," however, something that is not limited to creation but part of the ongoing dynamic of a resurrection reality. The deletion of "love" from the specifics of this trinitarian description leaves open the possibility of seeing love as reflective of the unity of God and not one part of God's being in the world.

It is this exposition of the economic Trinity, that of *Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, and Life-giver*, that we will expound in functional terms as a psycho-theological model that will be useful to the pastoral caregiver working in the face of a trauma. It is a simple and powerful model of the *economic* Trinity that addresses current concerns about the use of language and its impact, the connection to the contexts where people find themselves and choose to be, and faithfulness to trinitarian theology, while departing from ecclesiastical language.

In using a model of the economic rather than immanent Trinity for pastoral practice, we have the opportunity to move beyond the paternal relations expressed

in the language of the immanent Trinity, “Father, Son,” which, though true to the witness of the life of Christ in Scripture and the history of the church, has a problematic overtone of patriarchy so difficult for many women and men. In acknowledging, however, the connection between immanent and economic trinity, the use of economic language can be seen not to critique or change the traditional formulation of the immanent “Trinity, which Cotter does later in the prayer, noting God as “Father and Mother of us all,” but to offer an alternative that is a complement to other models of the *economic* Trinity such as “Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.” As such, its language is not gender-inclusive but gender-neutral, which can be accessible to those that find gender-inclusive versions problematic even if they agree with the concerns about patriarchal contextualization.

This model of the Trinity also offers language that is able to be interpreted in relation to many different contexts and yet also that renders it, as trinitarian theologian David Cunningham could hope, “more intelligible, to both Christians and non-Christians (while recognizing the differences between these two audiences).”⁴² The terms *Earth-making*, *Pain-bearing*, *Life-giving* are more connected to everyday language and psychological understanding than traditional renderings of the economic Trinity (“Creating, Redeeming, Sustaining”), while still retaining the religious economy of salvation. They are, if you will excuse the pun, “down to earth.” Although we do not commonly speak of “earth-making,” being *grounded* in something, being earthy, and speaking of “the place where you stand” are common understandings. We speak of “painful” experience more often in common parlance than the more theological “redemptive” suffering. Finally, the term “life-giving” speaks of a greater movement than “sustaining,” which could be interpreted as speaking more of a return to adaptive functioning in the face of trauma than to someplace new. In recognizing the difference between “these two audiences,” two further steps need to be taken.

Reinterpreting the Trinity for Pastoral Practice

Methodologically, we move from the divine Trinity to the reflection of such as the image of God in humanity as seen through the window, or “mirror,” of theology. However, as we are *not* God, not the “Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver” but only a reflection of such, then this trinitarian image needs to be reframed into active relational functions, into how we are in relationship that expresses who we are in our being and doing. As such, this reframing is a reflection of the relationship between immanent and economic Trinity. We need to reframe “Earth-maker” into the dynamic term “Earth-making,” “Pain-bearer” into “Pain-bearing,” “Life-giver” into “Life-giving.” “Earth-making, Pain-bearing, Life-giving” can then become an active reflection of our participation in salvation history as an outworking of God’s love in the world. These terms intimate relationship, even if not directly descriptive

as are the terms in the immanent Trinity. Yet they preserve that sense of both interpersonal and intrapsychic that characterizes our relationships, and, as we will see, suggest a mutuality and creative engagement that is transformative.

To be able to explore how “Earth-making, Pain-bearing, Life-giving” is reflected not only in theology but in psychoanalytic theory, we must explore in depth each of these elements. What are the essential characteristics of each? How do they relate to each other? This mirrors the former reflections on *hypostasis* and *perichoresis* as regards the immanent Trinity. Such exploration lead us to a model that has a consistency, connection, and integrity that can be seen in light of essential relationship rather than an arbitrary choosing of what is either popular or personal. The next three chapters will seek to explore both the depths of each element of this interpretation of the economic Trinity, and to see how this is contributed to by the thought of Winnicott, leading us to an additional parallel model of “Holding/Suffering/Transforming.” Our explorations will lead us to explore both the community or multiplicity of the elements and their unity in love.

The question arises: Is “Earth-making, Pain-bearing, Life-giving” a trinitarian description of love grounded in the realities of pastoral ministry? John Milbank, when writing on Augustine, asks a similar question: “God has been revealed as love, and, therefore, one must ask, is love itself triune?”⁴³ Milbank says that for Augustine the answer is yes and consists, as we have seen, “of lover, beloved, and the love that flows between them. Thus,” says Milbank, “the prime analogue for the Trinity is relational, which is to say, neither psychic nor political.”⁴⁴ Catherine La Cugna states the question in this way: “According to the doctrine of the Trinity, God lives as the mystery of love among persons. If we are created in the image of this God, and if our destiny is to live forever with this God and with God’s beloved creatures, then what forms of life best enable us to live as Christ lived, to show forth the Spirit of God, and ultimately to be deified?”⁴⁵ But what does the mystery of love mean, which goes beyond a feeling to a way of being in the daily lives of those in ministry?

This book asserts that, as an image of the triune God, an economic trinity in the self of Earth-making/Pain-bearing/Life-giving is the way we live out the love of God in our daily lives in relation to others and that the fullness of this leads to growth and health, even in the midst of trauma. To explore this thesis we will look in depth at each of these three spaces and see how they are manifest in the pastoral care of others (and of those caregivers), through the exploration of the experience of the ministry of the 9/11 T. Mort. chaplains.