

Although some may disagree with D'Costa on individual points or the enduring meaning of the Second Vatican Council, he forcefully and convincingly delineates the intentions of the Council Fathers regarding Judaism and Islam.

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Persons in Relation: An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology.

By NAJIB GEORGE AWAD. Pp. xii + 341. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014. ISBN 978 1 4514 8037 5 and 8425 0. Paper £25.99; e-book n.p.

THIS book is a robust study of how theology should engage other intellectual forms of inquiry, using the Trinitarian understanding of personhood and relationality as a basis. Najib Awad justifies his approach by explaining that 'the doctrine of the Trinity is the content and the foundation of any intellectual discourse or theological interpretation of Christian faith' (p. 7), and that the concepts of person and relation are of fundamental importance for theological and philosophical reflections, because 'in principle, every thought-form is expressive of someone making an intellectual, experiential, sensual, or physical connection with someone or something else' (p. 8).

The book is in three parts. The first discusses the challenge of modernity, the second the challenge of postmodernity, and in the last Awad presents his proposed model of correlation.

In the first part Awad notes the philological, philosophical, and theological difficulties of understanding 'person'. He argues that modernist thought-form unjustifiably shifted Boethius' famous definition into an invitation for centralizing 'individualism' and 'self-mastery', notes the denial of God's knowability made by Fichte's segregation of infinite divine essence from relational existence, and traces the reaction by existence-oriented theologians emphasizing relational personhood as the missing key element in these modernist thinkers. He criticizes Tillich for undermining the notion of divine self, and Barth for affirming that the criteria image of selfhood lies in God alone and for failing adequately to maintain the personal distinction of the three divine persons.

In the second part Awad argues that attempts to condition postmodernity by means of theological premisses (e.g. John Milbank)

are not a valid and productive approach. He maps the development of postmodernist philosophical hermeneutics of selfhood in the writings of Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida, and Levinas, objecting that the postmodernist excessive attention to relationship with 'the other' and its centralization of relationship in terms of 'personhood *is* relationality' instead of 'person *in* relation' threaten to swallow the self and its personal particularity into 'the other'; i.e. 'being totally immersed in the other's otherness and almost becoming part of it, so that the one's and the other's particularity and otherness (or even beyond-ness) would ultimately vanish... nullifies particularity by means of a new, post-communist-like fashion of neo-collectivism' (p. 132). Citing Miroslav Volf, he warns of the danger of self being smothered by the other and being manipulated or violated by the stronger side (p.194).

He also objects to some postmodernist theologians turning Trinity into mere symbol and linguistic expression, complaining that they take hold of some dominant human concepts and forcefully project them onto God. He objects to Jenson's identification of Father, Son, and Spirit as three identifying activities, and Fiddes's reduction of divine subjects to relations, arguing that freedom is an attribute of active agents and (citing Mark Heim) that a dissipation of being will eventually rule out the reality of 'relation' itself, with no distinctive persons or 'ones' to have a relation.

In the third part Awad calls for a dialogue between theology and secular inquiry from the standpoint of the doctrinal and confessional claims of the Christian faith. He criticizes the correlation model of David Tracy, Gordon Kaufman, and Mark Taylor for subordinating theology to the conditioning rules of postmodernity, and following Hans Frei and Francis Watson insists that theological inquiry should maintain its particular theological rules of rational inquiry when it engages in dialogues with other forms of intellectual inquiries, and should not succumb to the latter's own rules. He regards the distinction between theology and other disciplines not as an obstacle but as a foundation of their correlation.

On the Trinity he notes contemporary criticism of Rahner's Rule and argues that the only exit for the Trinitarian ontology of personhood is to reckon deeply with Pannenberg's view that the Father, Son, and Spirit are to be understood as distinct centres of action. Following Pannenberg, Awad argues that the relationship of obedience of the Son to the Father assumes that the Son as a self-conscious subject is related to another distinct self-conscious subject.

Awad concludes that (1) theology should acknowledge the importance of interacting with other disciplines in a way that maintains its own distinctive identity; (2) this interaction should not be limited to exclusive self-communication, but should reach an interdisciplinary level, in which both disciplines follow a 'unity-in-distinction' form of correspondence, the logic of which is similar to the logic that underlies the 'unity-in-differentiation' paradigm of the Trinitarian ontology of personhood (p. 291). 'It is a correlation where both theology and postmodernity ask questions and offer answers in a way that pinpoints areas wherein each can uniquely contribute to the development of the other, without losing its own distinction and unique identity' (p. 304).

This book is rich in theological content. Awad's criticisms of a wide range of modernist and postmodernist theologians—in particular, his exposition of the inadequacies of their understanding of personhood and relationality—are compelling, and I am sympathetic to his view that the Triune Persons should be understood as distinct centres of consciousness. Nevertheless, one might question the thesis that the logic of a 'unity-in-distinction' form of correspondence between theology and other disciplines is similar to the logic that underlies the 'unity-in-differentiation' paradigm of trinitarian personhood. This thesis depends on an adequate analogy between discipline and person, but while disciplines are distinguished epistemologically (as distinctive ways of studying and knowing various aspects of reality), persons are distinguished ontologically (as distinct centres of consciousness). In an email correspondence, Awad replied that he is not opting for 'similarity' as a foundational notion, but rather he is trying to derive from the 'unity-in-differentiation' paradigm certain balanced and worth-pondering elements of relationality that can be used to reform and balance the connection between theology and other disciplines. He helpfully points out that what justifies this derivation is that the 'unity-in-differentiation' in the Trinity is not just an ontological notion but is also functional and relational and involves particularity (i.e. of the persons). Nevertheless, while the relationship between the Triune Persons is characterized by a unity and by a functional subordination of the Son to the Father, the relationships between theology and other disciplines are often perceived (rightly or wrongly) to be characterized by conflict as well as resistance rather than subordination. It is perhaps beyond the scope of this book to discuss cases of interdisciplinary engagement such as that concerning Darwinian evolution, where we see different models of engagement being utilized to resolve the apparent

conflict. Nevertheless, whether one should accept Awad's model depends crucially on a demonstration that a correlation like the one he proposes is practically possible in various important cases, and one would need to review the attempts which have been made by others. There is indication in this book (p. 307) that Awad would be involved in such an attempt as well in the future.

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The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission. By WALTER KASPER. Translated by THOMAS HOEBEL. Edited by R. DAVID NELSON. Pp. xviii + 463. London and New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015. ISBN 978 1 411 8709 3, 1754 0, and 4908 4. Paper £35; e-book n.p.; e-pub n.p.

MANY years ago Walter Kasper set himself to write a trilogy: first a Christology, *Jesus the Christ* (German original 1974), then a study of the Trinity, *The God of Jesus Christ* (German original 1982), and finally an ecclesiology. He had not yet completed the third work when in 1989 he was appointed bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart. After leading that German diocese for ten years, he was called to Rome and spent eleven years with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (1999–2010), as its cardinal prefect from 2001. Finally, in 2008, he published *Die Kirche Jesu Christi*, now happily translated into English with a more informative title and subtitle.

The long delay that Kasper faced in producing this ecclesiology was providential; it nuanced and broadened his understanding and interpretation of the Catholic Church. In 1985 he was appointed theological secretary of the Extraordinary Synod that met in Rome, 20 years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, to reflect on its teaching. His work for that synod made *communio* a decisive principle in his ecclesiology (pp. 20–3). He learned from his ten years as a diocesan bishop, and not least through pastoral care for civilly remarried divorcees (pp. 351–2), and contacts with the Catholic Church in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. (On behalf of the other German bishops, he was responsible for such charities as *Misereor*, *Adveniat*, and *Caritas International*.) He also served as co-chairperson of the