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From an Inquiry into Moltmann's Trinitarian Theology to a Teaching Model of the Trinity for Children

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Introduction

 One may say that because Jesus had gained victory over sin and that is why He can save sinners like us.   From this implication, God should not be suffered in order to help sufferers like us.   Traditional Christian theology declared divine impassibility. [1]   If God does not gain victory over sufferings, He cannot save people who suffer.
As a matter of fact, Moltmann does not agree
with
this notion and he emphasizes that an authentically Christian view of God includes divine passibility.
[2]

 For a long time, people have been asking the question: Is God just? It comes in a three-folded inquiry by Epicurus repeated by Hume regarding God and evil.
 [3]
First, is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?
(then he is impotent) Second, is he able, but not willing?
(then he is malevolent)
Third,
is he both able and willing?
(then he is evil)
 [4]
These inquir
ies
are s
temmed

from God's omnipotence, God's goodness and the reality of evil and suffering.
McWilliams terms these three descriptions as 'truths'.
I argue if McWilliams has already termed them as 'truths', what is the significance of discussing those presuppositions or raising questions towards those issues?
According to Augustine's faith seeking understanding,
one gets to know about God in faith.
Faith comes first before one may understand.
Therefore, if one
presupposes that God is omnipotent and good, the above questions
by Epicurus
are declared void.
Then, the only part which one needs to deal with is evil and suffering.
In McWilliam's article, he agrees with Moltmann and proposes that the intent to respond to the question 'Is God Just?' is to start from a Trinitarian theology.
 [5]
Our interest is not on answering the above question but to inquire into the meaning of Moltmann's Trinitarian theology and its relation to suffering.
This paper will focus on this aspect and its implication.
Before looking at the Moltmann's Trinitarian Theology, let us investigate into the problems raised by some scholars in respond to his
assertions
first.

Hofheinz's Arguments

 Hofheinz has recently written an essay concerning about Trinitarian Theology of Moltmann. [6]
He raises certain refutations regarding Moltmann's Trinitarian Theology.
His complaints mainly fall into two groups: the theological terms and the effect on the Jews which the theology has elicited.
For the discussion here, the emphasis will be put on the former
with reference to the book, '
The Trinity and the Kingdom'
.

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1. No Generic Use of Terms in Doctrine of Trinity

 First, Hofheinz claims that Moltmann does not establish an overall or total theological system and so leaves his doctrines fragmented in a dictatorship kind of loci-method.   Besides, Moltmann argues that no use of headings like, hypostasis, person and modes of being to show the homogeneity and equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 [8]
Moltmann explains that these terms do not exactly represent or describe the objects, which are Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Hofheinz complains that while Moltmann is refuting the use of generic terms, he himself is manipulating a great deal of the same logic by using the terms like 'immanent and economic trinity' or the 'opus ad extra' in explaining the Trinitarian doctrine.
I first question the reason of the rejection of generic terms.
Does Moltmann literally state that terms are not to be used?
What 'kind' of terms one should not be used to describe the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?
When discussing the proper usage of a term, one has to pay attention to its 'nature': does the term tell a mechanism or does the term give a
defined
meaning?
Does Moltmann mean that one has to be refrained from using term which only gives a specific meaning
as it does not do more but distorts the real accent of the 'entity' which the term is intending to describe?
Therefore,
a term which delineates
the inner significance
is preferred
?

2. Uneven Emphases on New Testament

 Hofheinz complains that Moltmann refers to the doctrine of the Shekinah but misses the biblical motif of God's representations through the ark, the messenger, the fact and the Glory of God.   I t is contradictory as the event of God's self-differentiation as witnessed in the Old Testament represents the true root of the doctrine of the Trinity.
 [9]

Notwithstanding the miss, the Trinitarian concept in the New Testament represents a significant portion in his theology of
T
rinity.
I would ask if there is a reason why Moltmann or even most of the scholars are concentrating on the New Testament in locating the Trinitarian presence.
[10]

3. Monotheism and Monarchism

According to Hofheinz, Moltmann does not agree with religious, political and clerical monotheism as monotheism supports monarchism.   Moltmann asserts that monotheism legitimated the rule and power of earthly monarchs as well as absolutism and despotism.
The idea of unity in God therefore provokes both the idea of the universal, unified church, and the idea of the universal unified state: one God, one emperor, one church, one empire.
[11]
According to Moltmann, the monarchism is particularly apparent in the Roman times.
Religion and politics are quite interdependent during those days.
He emphasizes that monotheism is always a political problem as well.
[12]
When Moltmann raises the above issues in his book, does he aim at bringing our attention to the threats of monarchism, which might be brought up by monotheism?
Or is he refuting monotheism and supporting tritheism?

4. A Small Portion On the Holy Spirit

Hofheinz complains that Moltmann's theology contributes a small portion of discussion to Holy Spirit which can hardly convince a high incarnational Christology that presupposes Christ's pre-existence. Does Moltmann have a special reason why he puts less proportion on the Holy Spirit?   Is there anything else which Moltmann may want to address?

Metzler's Arguments

Metzler's reflections on the social Trinity are of exploratory in nature. First, he acknowledges that the rediscovery of Trinity reveals a new dynamic perspective in looking at God in Bible comparing to a traditional static explications of God.

Second, it is pertinent to learn that we can only know God through His revealing of Himself in time and space.

Third, the inextricability of the immanent Trinity from the economic Trinity bears considerable practical as well as theological weight.

Lastly, God is indeed relational, who relates to real people in a real world.

He understands human from within.

[13]

Nonetheless, Metzler presents many challenges to this doctrine. He first questions whether the church fathers' claims in the creeds regarding the Trinitarian formulations are planned to propose the modern social relation of the three subjectivities economically and eternally are mutually interrelating.   [14] In addition, the Holy Spirit is one distinct persona or personal divine ousia or essence.

He is the ongoing presence and power of the personal God in the world and its history.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit is apparently not of the identical 'personal' character as the Father and the Son.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit does not share the same relationship as the Father and the Son and to one and other.

Nevertheless, stating in the creed clearly, the church fathers declare that Holy Spirit is a distinct persona which is parallel to the other two personae.

Therefore, Metzler says that the term 'persona' being utilized by the church fathers and the modern theologians are not leveled.

[15]

Does Moltmann share similar thoughts and that is why he says that one should not use terms to describe Trinity?

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Then, Metzler asserts that the relationality embedded in the immanently Trinity has a tritheistic understanding of divinity.   The Cappadocians' stance apparently shines on the fact that the Trinity as one indivisible Godhead, one of identity of nature operating in the three modes of being.   Metzler reckons that the self-differentiation in the Godhead implies tritheism and he reinforces that the church fathers would not have the above intent.
[16]

Metzler suggests that to understand the relationship of the economic to the immanent Trinity is to regard the immanent
T
rinity as the eschatological
T
rinity and the economic trinity the prolepsis of the eschatological
T
rinity.
He says that if God had not done what He in fact did-create a universe and a unique humanity within it, incarnate Himself for our eschatological salvation, work in us to give us faith, hope and love, if He had not done what He did, He would not be who He is...He would not be who He will be, Yahweh.
[17]
From this logic, Metzler comes up with his suggestion of the eschatological
T
rinity from 'what God did, is doing and will be doing'.
Does eschatological concept connotes a unidirectional hope or punishment from God or Metzler has missed the critical part of the relationality of God (multi-directional) whereas the social
T
rinity is in fact emphasizing?
My question to Metzler is that the eschatological Trinity might be relevant but is it a complete concept of the Trinitarian theology?

To respond to the above inquiries, one may first look at the above inquiries from two perspectives: the methodology of theological presentation and the doctrinal itself. Let us

explore the theological presentation first and then a detail discussion on Moltmann's Trinitarian theology will be followed.

For the theological presentation, it is pertinent to take note that the Trinity has long been considered as an analogical understanding rather than a solid biblical doctrinal teaching. To inject meaning to the examination of the Trinity, known as an analogy, I reckon that one must first explore into the Bible.
If Bible has clearly stated the doctrine, it is not necessary to use analogy to understand the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Even if an analogy is needed, a more precise and accurate model is more probable to be formulated
as
an apparent
doctrine is present.
If Bible does not have a clear discussion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the usage of an analogy is valid.

Trinity in the Bible

Many scholars have proposed different approaches on how to look at the Trinity in the Bible. Jenson employs a metaphoric approach while Rowe adopts a New Testament approach.
[18]

1. Jenson's Approach

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Jenson states some plausible concepts about certain people's responses to the Trinity in Bible. They all stem from historicism and modern

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iblicism.

First, Jenson announces that any approach to a doctrine of Trinity in Bible is only a stretch of history.

Different doctrine is formulated in different stretch of history in Bible.

Historicism is the belief that understanding something's history and understanding the thing itself are the same.

[19]

Second, Jenson says that modern

B

iblicism might either disagree with the doctrine to prevent the rise of heresy or passively accept the fact that it is not in Scripture so one may leave it as it is difficult to understand.

[20]

Therefore, Jenson thinks that the above followers do not believe that the doctrine of Trinity is in Bible and these paths are both misleading.

As a matter of fact, it is through history, one might get to know more about the Trinity.

This history is included in Bible. Trinity is truly a difficult concept to understand and here, Jenson encourages Christians not to remain on the difficulty but actively investigate into Bible to look for an answer.

Jenson's encouragement regarding tracing the Biblical history for the Trinity is a wise move.

In spite of the above, Jenson introduces a term of 'divine drama' which is developed from Tertullian's language.   [21]   He believes that the Old Testament is to tell the drama of God with his people, showing three personae of the drama, each of them is different from the other two and is the same God as the other two.

I reckon that the proposal of divine drama displays many questions.   First, drama connotes roles and characters which are entitled to different actors.

Roles and characters do not have a constituent of eternal value.

Therefore, it is not an accurate representation to the

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rinity.

Secondly, when Jenson tries to explain the Son representation in Bible, he describes a few encounters of angels and men.

 [22]

Those illustrations are far-fetched and they can hardly be accepted.

Jenson has confused the term Son

with

the messenger who speaks for God before men. Later he even announces that Ephraim is God's firstborn.

So, what/who is the Son?

 Shekinah is a rabbinic concept of the 'settlement of God within the life of His people'. Jenson says that the Shekinah and the angel and the Name and whatever other similar narrative patterns one may find in the Old Testament display God as persona in Israel's story.

 [23]

I reckon that 'Shekinah' is a term to describe a condition that God is indewlling in His people's lives.

It is definitely not a 'persona'

in nature of a term

.

Jenson seems to equate Shekinah to names and roles in the Bible.

He is announcing a metaphor with confused terms.

 In spite of the above perplexity, Jenson has proposed an interesting statement saying that the triune God is Creator not as the Father but as the Father with the Son in the Spirit, and is redeemer not as the Son but as the Son before the Father in the Spirit, and is Sanctifier not as the Spirit but as the Spirit uniting the Father and the Son.   [24]   This statement connotes that only when there is a relation, the trinity becomes valid and one may understand them as the same God. The entities in the Trinity work together in a relation.

Jenson says that the concept of the Father as the unoriginate origin and the Son and the Spirit are distinct hypostases in Him does not fully reflect the actual plot of the biblical drama of God. He declares that the Bible's drama of God is an eschatological drama which echoes Metzler's idea of

eschatological

Trinity.

However

, which Trinity does Jenson is referring the eschatological nature to is not obvious.

Is it economic, immanent or both?

I suppose that when Jenson talks about the drama, bible stories and roles, he should be referring to the economic Trinity.

Jenson claims that the eschatological drama is not obvious in the traditional doctrine of Trinitarian relations.

[25]

As stated before, Metzler reckons that apparently the immanent

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rinity should be understood as an eschatological one.

A discussion on this will be laid out in the Moltmann's Trinit

arian theology

later in this paper.

2. Rowe's Approach

Rowe states that the doctrine of the Trinity would never have arisen on the basis of the Old or the New Testament taken in isolation.   He emphasizes the use of language in the two testaments of the Bible.   The Lord and Redeemer of Israel was the one and only God of the World.

He is not part of the world.

True worship should be limited to the creator, the 'One God'.

It leads to monotheism. The name of the creator of the world is YHWH and is corresponding to 'kyrios' in the New Testament.

After notifying the importance of the two testaments and clarifying the use of names of the Creator in the two testaments, Rowe depicts five scriptures to illustrate the presence of the Trinity in Bible.

The first two are about God and Son and the last three are on God, Son and Spirit.

[26]

These verses are mostly extracted from the New Testament and he locates the presence of the Trinity by equating the use of names. The name which is the god of Israel alone (kyrios in Joel 3:5) is now the name which is Jesus (kyrios, in Romans 10:13)

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Rowe then concludes that there is a necessary and essential linkage between the Old and the New Testaments and at least, economic Trinitarian doctrine. [27] The fact that Rowe uses the word 'at least' has a connotation that this connection established is not 'good' enough.
I reckon that it is because the linkage is established by the 'names' solely
but
the actions and relations outside and inside the Trinity are not
being
addressed.
Then he introduces a concept of 'pressure' that the two-testament canon read as one book pressures its interpreters to make ontological judgments about the Trinitarian nature of the one God ad intra on the basis of its narration of the act and identity of the biblical God ad extra.
[28]
Rowe agrees that the connection between the Old Testament and the
T
rinitarian doctrin
e
is not sufficiently demonstrated.
Therefore, he introduces 'pressure'.
Nonetheless, Rowe stresses that a positive interpretation from Bible to the Trinity does not necessary validate the result of a Trinitarian interpretation from of the Bible.
He reinforces that the Scripture imposes a pressure upon its interpreters to understand the God of the entire Bible as the Trinity and this pressure also exerts the same effect when interpreter moves from the New to the Old.
He emphasizes that the pressure necessitates the Trinitarian interpretation of the Bible such that the reality to whom the words YHWH, Elohim, Kyrios and Theos are in fact referring to the triune God.
The pressure of the Bible operates at an ontological level within history through God's presence in his Word.
[29]
Therefore, it is concluded that no matter whether one interprets the Trinity from the Bible or the Bible from the Trinity, the 'name' is the first thing to be considered.
Rowe equates 'God's word' to 'names of Himself'.
Names of God are words of God but not all God's words are names of God.
I would argue that if other words of God (non-names) also represent the triune God?

Solution to the Equivocal Presentation of the Trinity in the Bible

The arguments from Jenson and Rowe regarding the Trinity in the Bible are negotiable. Inasm uch as the ambiguous presence in the Bible, the Trinity should be spoken in the language of analogy.
[30]
Johnson strongly believes that one should speak of God at the most fundamental standard, which is the adoption of the language of analogy.
He adds that both Augustine and Aquinas employed this approach.
[31]
He believes that analogical language does illuminate the meaning of religious discourse.

Methodology of Theological Presentation

Analogy is often being used in teaching. Teaching is mentioned here as it is detrimental and basic to explore an appropriate approach in teaching Trinity to the Christian believers.
Teachers often use analogy in teaching.
Teacher
s
bridge the new concepts with a familiar model for students.
According to Glynn, there are six steps:

1. introduce   the target concept
2. review the   analog concept
3. identify   relevant features of the target and analog
4. map   similarities
5. indicate   where the analogy breaks down
6. draw   conclusions [32]

One might be facing a difficulty in applying this model to teaching the Trinity as there is no way for step 1 to be ever completed.
The
Trinity is still under discussion in many theological agendas.
I conclude that the analogy will be less accurate when it is applied onto an unfinished concept.
I argue that the Trinitarian doctrine is still subjective given that the strongest support of Bible cannot supply enough objective evidence.
Analogy can be regarded as an approach to bring the Trinity towards

o
bjectivity.
Can one say that analogy is then worthless for us to get to 'understand' or 'know' the meaning of the Trinity?
Let us briefly look at how we can get to know God.

Scientific Theology

 Torrance makes his stance clearly in the first place that he supports the possibility of knowledge which can be raised in abstracto, a priori.   Torrance states that authentic subjectivity on the part of man is only possible when he collides with the objectivity of the divine Subject.   This is the experience of faith, 'the highest passion of subjectivity.
The very passion of faith is opening up of the knowing subject to the most objective of all realities as God Himself actively communicates Himself to human being in Jesus Christ.
[33]
The object of the theological knowledge is Truth in the form of personal being.
That is Truth as active Subject and must be known, must be an object of knowledge, in a way relevant to it nature as Subjectivity.
Then the knowing subject is in the truth in relation to it.
Truth is the truth and is Subjectivity.
[34]
I reckon that it is like a cycle: 1. Start from objectivity; 2. Reveal himself through divine subject (Jesus Christ); 3. Encounter with knowing subject; 4. Attain object of knowledge (Truth); 5. From objectivity…the cycle starts again.
I conclude that Truth is then also being understood as both objective and subjective.
Therefore, Jesus Christ in the form of human being, is one 'objective embedded in subjective.'
It is precisely says in the Bible: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
(Proverbs 9:10)
The Holy One is an objective and then is an active subjective in communicating himself to the nature.
To conclude from the above, human being is in the domain of the subjective truth in knowing the object God.
Torrance states that in scientific theology, one begins with the actual knowledge of God, and seeks to test and clarify this knowledge by inquiring carefully into the relation between our knowing of God and God Himself in His being and nature.
[35]

Therefore, through this purification, one becomes more ready to God by responding faithfully and truly to what God has revealed to us.

It is through our obedient mind that God let himself be known by us and then we promote in knowledge of Him.
 [36]

 Torrance reinstates what Tillich says that 'cognitive distance is the presupposition of cognitive union'.   If we fail to differentiate the object as a reality existing independently of our knowledge or confuse a subjective experience while it is in fact objective, we do not have true knowledge.
 [37]

Therefore, I conclude that when subjective experience is being tested and clarified, it is the Subjective of the Truth and this is the Truth of truth being known by us.

 The implication of the above to the manipulation of analogy to express Trinity is pertinent and valid. Analogies have been adopted to explain the function of the Trinity extensively throughout history.   The use of analogy complies with Torrance's scientific theology. Although there is no consensus of model use of Trinity, it has been tested and clarified through subjective experience over time.

Every time when it is in an analogical form, it is intended to be appeared as the Subjective of Truth of the objectivity.

When it is being challenged, it becomes a subjective experience again.

I therefore, conclude that the utilization of an analogy to understand the Trinity is rational.

 After confirming the validity of the usage of an analogy in explaining the Trinity, a detail investigation into Moltmann's   analogy of Trinity is laid out and the arguments and questions raised by the two specified scholars are discussed based on Moltmann's understanding on the relation between suffering and the
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rinity.

Moltmann's Trinitarian Theology

1. Where to Start?

Moltmann starts his Trinitarian theological understanding from experience. [38] I propose that while many scholars have been trying hard to explain suffering through Trinity
[39]
, Moltmann interprets Trinity from suffering.
That means the meaning of suffering is secondary but it is the understanding of the Triune God that counts.
Moltmann further explains that God suffers with us – God suffers from us – God suffers for us: it is this experience of God that reveals the Triune God.
[40]
Nonetheless, one has to pay attention that Moltmann's understanding of experience of God is bilateral and also they are not equal.
I also reckon this experience includes love, suffering and joy and they are
in fact,
clearly specified in the beginning of Moltmann's work.
[41]
Suffering is sandwiched in the middle which begins with love and ends with joy.
When scholars are judging Moltmann's Trinitarian understanding, they usually put emphasis on part of th
is
concern and therefore miss the whole picture.
Metzler suggests that to understand the relationship of the economic to the immanent
T
rinity is to regard the immanent
T
rinity as the eschatological
T
rinity.
On the account of this aspect, he only focuses on the 'joy' perspective.
Hofheinz complains that Moltmann's understanding of the Triune God should not be reduced to the cross.
It is true that one should not be focusing on the cross but Hofheinz's criticisms are mainly on 'suffering'.
I argue that Moltmann's experience in the Trinitarian theology is a package of 'love', 'suffering' and 'joy'.

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It will be discussed in details as follow.

2. The Establishment of Trinitarian Theology

Presupposition

 Moltmann presupposes that the unity of God is not homogenous substance or as identical history. Then he starts with the Trinity of Persons to the unity instead of springing from God's unity to Trinity as the Western tradition.   [42]

 Moltmann introduces a new term, 'suffering of passionate love'. He proposes that if God were incapable of suffering in every respect which is supported in the patristic period, he would also be incapable of love.   [43] Thi
s infers that the condition behind 'suffering' is 'love'.
Metzler says that the god fathers would not like the concept of social
T
rinity.
However, Origen agrees that God's suffering is a suffering of love.
Origen had no problem of talking about God's passibility as opposite
to
most of the god fathers' stance but whether this God's suffering is understood on the Trinitarian level
as Moltmann
is negotiable.

Then Moltmann adopts Heschel's idea of 'self-humiliation' and asserts that God humiliates himself to the end of the world. He is high and has lowered himself to dwell in the needy. This echoes the rabbinic theology of Shekinah, which starts from 'the present indwelling of the Lord in Israel; the form assumed by condescension of the Eternal One; and the anticipations of the glory of the One who is to come.

[44]

God 'loves' his people and that is the reason He indwells in Israel.

He 'suffers' in so many ways when he condescends.

God's people will then be sharing 'joy' with Him in the age to come.

I argue that when Moltmann raises the theology of Shekinah, he wants to bring the attention to the package of experience again.

This package of love, suffering and joy enable us to understand His Trinitarian theology.

When Moltmann uses 'God is love' to conclude his first chapter

,

[45]

his notion of 'starting to explore Thrinitarian theology from experience'

embracing 'love, suffering and joy' is apparent.

This idea of relating love to the Trinity is originated from Augustine.

[46]

Moltmann's deduction is clear: Love is self-communication of the good; self-communication presupposes capacity for self-differentiation; God's revelation through self-communication. When God communicates himself, He suffers and He brings us eternal joy in His kingdom of glory.

Hofheinz complains that Moltmann only uses the New Testament in formulating his Trinitarian theology. Regarding the use of the Old Testament, Moltmann in fact, uses concepts like 'Shekinah' rather than specific Scriptures to delineate the Trinity.

In addition, Moltmann proposes to understand the Trinity relations of fellowship are open to world according to Scripture testimony. He says that this Trinitarian hermeneutics leads people to think in terms of relationships and communities. [47
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his saying connotes that the Scripture does not clearly states that this linkage is valid but from deduction.

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Then, one may ask if the Trinity relation is already an 'analogy', is the implication made from the deduction of an analogy still reliable?
To put it concisely, is it desirable to have an analogy of an analogy?
This will be discussed again after highlighting Moltmann's Trinitarian theology.

Monotheism

Moltmann sees monotheism and monarchianism as the names for two sides of the same thing.
[48]
Moltmann accepts that the fundamental monotheistic monarchical idea serves an important tool to solve many problems in Rome mainly on the political side.
However, he reinforces that the One God makes the theological Christology impossible.
Therefore, Hofheinz complains about Moltmann's assertion regarding the alignment of monotheism to monarchism worsening the relationship with the Jews.
This complaint is somehow unavoidable.
Moltmann announces that he is hoping to induce dialogues with the Jews in order to over come
the schism through this book.
The influence seems to be working in the opposite way according to Hofheinz.
[49]
People think in this way only read part of Moltmann's work.
His focus is on the difficulty in explaining Christ when talking about God and vice versa.

Hofheinz does not understand why Moltmann would criticize Barth in how Barth interprets God's self–differentiation and his modalism. In responding to this, one may use these astonishing claims announced by Barth: It is through self-distinction and self-recollection that God shows Himself to be the absolute subject.   Thi
s reflection structure of absolute subjectivity has not necessarily anything whatsoever to do with the biblical testimony to the history of God.
Barth terms the action as 'reflexively' differentiated subjectivity.
[50]
Reflexive has a meaning of instinct without any enforced effort.
That connotes that Barth considers the importance of monotheism.
He understands the doctrine of God from the sovereignty of God in order to protect this as being the sovereignty of the One God by means of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Refuting monotheism is Moltmann's stance.

Moltmann's approach and Barth's thought are not the same as described by Hofhiez but is it a must for theologians to agree with each other's stance entirely all the time?

According to Torrance which is discussed before, subjectivity is being tested (challenged) through inquiring into the relations between the knowing subject and the knowledge being revealed by God.

I suppose that is the beauty of having an unlimited capacity of mind for unlimited 'tests'.

3. Love-Suffering-Joy Social Trinity

Why Two Trinities?

Moltmann supports the approach of starting the doctrine of God from the three Persons and enquire into their unity in complying with the biblical testimony. [51] Once again, from this assertion of Moltmann, he is not aligned with Barth's approach.

To put it concisely, the three Persons are not homogenous (then, it cannot be monotheism) otherwise, there is no need for communication.

It is convinced that the unitedness is not brought about but their single substance of the fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

This fellowship falls in the background and the threeness of the Persons are in the foreground.
[52]

The Trinity in the foreground is called economic Trinity and the Trinity in the background is termed immanent Trinity.

Moltmann agrees with Rahner that the economic and the immanent are the same.

He then stresses that the theology of the cross can only be made sense through Trinitarian terms.

God creates salvation outwardly to the world on the cross and suffers the disaster of world inwardly in Himself.

Here, Moltmann reinstates that there is one Trinity.
[53]

The relationship of the triune God to Himself and the relationship of the triune God to His world is not unidirectional and the relationships are not equal.

This echoes what he emphasizes in the beginning of the book: God does not suffer in the same level as us.

Molthmann says that the growth of the immanent Trinity from the accumulated experience of the cross of Christ.

Therefore, I conclude that although economic Trinity is the same as the
i
mmanent Trinity
as suggested by Moltmann
, human being gets to know the economic Trinity before they get to know about the immanent
one.
How can they happen like that?
According to the science theology suggested by Torrance, I reckon that the economic Trinity
can be termed as the subjective experience.
The immanent Trinity is the divine objective.
Using this explanation, it seems that the assertion of the economic Trinity is the same as the
immanent Trinity by Moltmann is valid but still there should be a time lapse.
The existence of divine objective should precede subjective experience.
Therefore, the economic Trinity precedes the immanent Trinity.
That means they are different.
However, I reckon that when Moltmann declares the equation, it is eternal.
In eternality, the economic and immanent Trinities are the same.

 Then, Moltmann states that if the pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God
from eternity to eternity, the joy of responsive love in glorification through the Spirit determines
the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity as well. Immanent Trinity is part of
eschatology.   The economic
completes the immanent Trinity.
I argue that if this is workable the other way round: does immanent Trinity complete the
economic Trinity if economic is immanent and immanent is economic?
Then an active cycle is formed.
Nevertheless, I reckon that when Moltmann says that economic is immanent Trinity, it means
that economic is an ongoing process which is aiming to end at immanent Trinity.
Regardless of this,
one has to note that
Moltmann's emphasis on the whole Trinitarian theology is based on love, suffering and joy.
They are not supposed to be separated.
He also adds that because of the love of the Father, it brings forward the Son in eternity and it
becomes creative love.
The Father loves the Son with the fatherly love.
The Son loves the Father with responsive, self-giving love.
The creation responds through the Son with love brings joy and bliss to the Father.
The Son's suffering and sacrifice of boundless love on the cross is part of the eternal obedience
which he renders to the Father in his while being through the Spirit.
[54]

If anyone who only fix their eyes on the eschatological immament Trinity, they have missed a large portion of Molmann's work.

Low Pneumatology?

John 15:26 clearly says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father but not from the Son. Moltmann states that God as Father breathes out the Holy Spirit, therefore the Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son.
The Son is the presupposition of the procession of the Spirit of the Father but he is not the Spirit's origin.
The Father is the origin.
The procession of the Spirit from the Father must be differentiated from the generation of the Son through the Father.
This kind of generation is linked in the nature of relationality.
Moltmann raises an interesting issue that if the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Father only because he is the source of the Godhead, but because he is the Father of the only begotten Son, then he does after all issue from the fatherhood of God, which is to say from the Father's relationship to the son.
[55]
Here, Moltmann refers that God and Father are the same in nature.
I may conclude that although the two processions are happening at the same time, they are not present in the same 'space'.
One is eternal (immanent) while the other is relational (economic).
I argue that Moltmann suggests to conferring meaning to the Trinity through 'love, suffering and joy', therefore the idea of social
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rinity comes up.

In addition, Moltmann uses the same idea to explain the 'procession' of the Spirit is far-fetching.   [56] Procession should be discussed in the 'eternal' and it seems to be meaningless to extend it to the relational domain.   Moltmann stretches the implication too much to include the procession of the Spirit in the economic Trinity.
Gabriel stresses that the successes of Moltmann's Christological approach to reforming the doctrine of God warrants a pneumatological approach.
[57]
More detail discussion is needed to make this statement valid.

Perhaps Moltmann has refined this in his other works but apparently not in thi
s book

.

That might be the reason why Hofheinz complains that Moltmann's doctrine of Trinity is full of methodological implications.
 [58]
Hofheinz says that Moltmann's oeuvre is low in pneumatological Christology.
I reckon that this notion raises two issues: 1. Moltmann has not discussed enough on the Holy Spirit; 2. Moltmann's discussion on the Holy Spirit is not good enough.
Judging from the above discussion on Holy Spirit, Hofheinz is correct.
However, this judgement should only restricted to this book solely.
Moltmann's oeuvre falls two stages.
From 1980 to present signifies the second stage in which he has published seven pieces of work.
One of them is
the Spirit of Life
which has it focus on pneumatology.
 [59]

 Besides using God and Father in a mixed manner in describing the Holy Spirit, Moltmann does similar thing again in talking about the kingdom of freedom. God acted in Jesus, the Son of God: in that men betrayed him, handed Him over and delivered Him up to death, God Himself delivered him up.   Father suffers
the pains of abandonment in the passion of the Son.
Death comes upon God himself in the death of the Son.
Then Father suffers the death of his Son in his love for forsaken man.
Therefore, what happens on the cross is between God and the Son of God.
 [60]
Here again, Moltmann uses the term God and Son in his previous work instead of Father and Son.
I would ask if he is referring the God and Son relationship as imminent or economic.
'The Trinity and the Kingdom' is a more recent book and in which Moltmann has depicted a fuller picture.
In the book of 'the Crucified God', I consider that he deliberately using the terms in a mixed manner in order to signify the one being crucified is God.

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Gabriel mentions a few issues regarding Moltmann's concerns on the Spirit in two books. All of them involve the Holy Spirit acting as a link joining the Father and the Son.
[61]
Gabriel is not satisfied with the speaking of distinctiveness of the divine person in respect to the abandonment of the Son on the cross.
The death of the Son can be considered as a threat to break the relationship between the Father and the Son but not the breakdown of the relationship.
[62]
Gabriel concludes that Moltmann is denying the eternity of the Trinity.
[63]
He suggests that one has to move beyond the cross and look more into pneumatology to confer meaning to the doctrine God.
[64]
That is an obvious lack in
the Trinity and the Kingdom
.

The Kingdom

The kingdom of the Father comprises a world which is open to the future of the kingdom of glory. Moltmann understands that as the glorification of the triune God and it is because of love, God keeps the world's future open. Therefore, the kingdom of the Father is not a kingdom of power. It is self-limitation, self-emptying and the patience of love which begins the creation of the world.
[65]
In addition, Moltmann states that only the passionate God who realizes the kingdom of his glory in the history of creation, liberation and glorification wants human freedom.
Therefore, he concludes that Trinitarian doctrine of the kingdom is the theological doctrine of freedom.
[66]
In the last paragraph, Moltmann emphasizes that only in the glory of the triune God, the complete freedom can be achieved and the bliss can be perfected.
[67]
I would conclude that this again echoes the focus of the experience of Moltmann's Trinitarian theology: love (subject), suffering (revelation) and joy(eschatological).

4. Love, Suffering and Joy in the Bible

It is convinced that Moltmann has worked out the Trinitarian theology basing on the theological understandings of 'love, suffering and joy'. This understanding comes in a package and no elements are to be quoted out of the context.   Now, let us look at what it says in different episodes of the crucifixion in the Bible.

Love Episode – God is Love

McIlroy says that the relational model of the Trinity signifies a pertinent Biblical picture of God's love and our relationship with Him. [68] He stresses that 1 John 4:16 is the basic. Besides, when looking at the crucifixion, one will notice this love thoroughly when Jesus says , 'Father, forgive then, for they do not know what they are doing.'
Romans 5:8 says that God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Suffering Episode – God is Crucified

Mark 15:34 and Psalm 22 are parallel. Thatcher says that the early church tends to read the Old Testament Christologically.   [69] Regardless of the author's attention, I reckon the use of Scripture in Psalm indicates that this saying has a double weight of stress.   '

My God my god, why have you forsaken me?' is known to be a sheer suffering for God.
The Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son.
 [70]

Joyful Episode - God's Bliss

 Jesus says in Luke 23:43 to one of the criminals, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.' Paradise is an eschatological thinking which signifies islands of bliss and pleasure in Hades.   Hades are places where the righteous deaths await the final consumation.   When Jesus mentions today, he asserts that the criminal does not need to wait any more.   [71] The joy is not in the future and it is already.
This means that God's bliss is already as well.

 To conclude from the above three episodes, the presence of love, suffering and joy forming the foundation of Moltmann's Trinitarian theology is apparent in the Biblical terms.

Conclusion and Implication

 I suggest that when one tries to make sense of Moltmann's Trinitarian theology, he has to start clarifying the focus of his model first. When Moltmann starts his theology from experience, he includes love, suffering and joy.   Moltmann equates the outward economic Trinity to the inward immanent Trinity.
Whether the experience of love, suffering and joy are in the immanent Trinity is not addressed

here.

When he refutes the use of the terms to describe the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, he is in fact referring to the use of a restricted meaning.

Therefore, he suggests using the terms which depict the mechanism.

Moltmann adopts Rhner's economic and immanent

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rinities.

I argue that they do not happen simultaneously.

Subjective experience precedes subjective truth of the objective knowledge.

At the same time, one has to note that true knowledge is the subjective truth under test and clarification.

People may get to understand the triune God through the analogy of the economic Trinity.

The adoption of analogy is validated in the previous sections. The difficulty of assuming an analogy in examining Trinity falls on the fact that the non-existence of the target concept. Therefore, when Moltmann assumes that the Trinitarian relation can be extended to communities

, I

highly suggest

that this assertion needs more substantiation as I wonder how far for an analogy of an analogy can go?

Trinitarian Theology for Children

Theologians from different cultural groups have been looking at the Trinity from different perspectives. Feminist, liberal and ecological have contributed differently and significantly to the Trinitarian doctrine. [72] The Trinity in Asian perspective from Lee is one of them. [73] Lee uses I Ching to explain the relation in the Trinity. First he has similar idea as Moltmann by refuting using terms to describe the Trinity. [74]
In addition, he says that to replace one with unity and three with diversity still elicits confusion.

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Therefore, Lee concludes that one must deal with numbers when attempting to define Trinitarian thinking.
 [75]
He emphasizes that the yin-yang thinking can be used to understand the Christian Trinitarian thinking.
Yin and yang are relational symbols of the process of change.
Change is the ultimate principle of understanding the cosmic process, including the human life.
Lee emphasizes that if one understands the idea of Change, he may understand the relation of one in three and three in one more accurately.
I argue that this is once again an analogy of an analogy.
According to the principle of analogy in teaching, it is more desirable to use a daily and common illustration to explain an abstract idea.
What is the significance of using a more abstract idea to illustrate an abstraction?
I appreciate Lee's effort on bringing people's attention to cultural based theology and searching a new way of looking at the Trinity but what it creates is confusion for lay believers more than clarification.
Lee's suggestion is not actually a new analogical method but a creative way of understanding the Trinity.
Then, how should the Trinity being taught especially to the children when their ability of handling abstraction is less?
I would say that a new analogy should be formulated.

 Meyer suggests that one may start from the Athanasian Creed for teaching purpose. He emphasizes that it is not the logical consistency that counts but completeness and soundness in reflecting the biblical witness.
 [76]
This notion expresses clearly that: 1. There is no exact Biblical explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity. 2. There is no absolute representation of a model / analogy for the doctrine of Trinity.
Montgomery declares that the doctrine of the Trinity is not irrational.
The purpose of the model is to help people to take into account all of the facts.
 [77]
On the account of the above facts, I will propose the following analogy in a Chinese context in teaching the Trinity to children.

Torrance says that in scientific theology, one starts with the actual knowledge of God and through inquiring intensively into the relation between the knowledge of God and His revelation in the reality, he may seek to test and refine this knowledge. I believe that children have their own understanding of God and through constant revisiting the issues or models, the children may develop their own way of understanding Christian theology.

Children can develop their own theology through asking and experiencing.

Story approach to Integrated Learning starts with a curriculum written by children and teachers through experiences, history, culture, story and voice.
[78]
For the formulation of a Trinitarian analogy for children, I will adopt Li's Story approach.
I have initially run a class and the following is what I have found so far.

I have begun by teaching some basic concepts to children at the practicum church about some Bible narratives like how the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and what they did during the baptism of Jesus. I have also talked about the crucifying God is on the basis of love, suffering and joy.   Children are being set in different situations so that they may experience love, suffering and joy.

Then I have invited the children to draw a picture which represents God.

(Appendix A)

The interesting episode which I would like to highlight is the conversation which the children have generated while they are drawing.

According to Vygotsky, children speak to themselves for self-guidance. Vygotsky considered language as the base for all higher cognitive processes, which includes controlled attention, problem solving and abstract reasoning etc. because it helps children think about their mental activities and behavior and select courses of action.
[79]
For a long time, the children at this practicum church are being encouraged to think outside the box
like: the addition of two hands is ten fingers.
Therefore, one can conclude that in some situations, one plus one can be ten but not two.
So the children keep asking each other tricky questions with the help from the teacher.
Then, finally a model has come up:
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and

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This is absolutely an analogy concerning Moltmann's Trinitarian theology. The three□s
represent the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
When teaching this to children, one might write the three Chinese ones on the board,
differentiate them
without saying that they are being added together
.
Usually the result of an addition gives people an image of more.
After putting the three horizontal strokes, tell the children that because God is love, He is
crucified (at the same time put a vertical stroke in the middle to signify the cross).
Tell the children that through the cross, we see the revelation of the Son of the Father.
□
is the kingdom (
□ □
) of glory in which we all will have joy in the future with God.
Arand says that is it easier to teach economic Trinity as it is more explicit.
It might not be the case in Chinese.
[80]
This model connotes both Trinities.

God is creative and I am sure He will welcome this kind of children theological construction. In
the meantime, this subjective truth seems quite understandable to the children.
This is not the best analogy which can represent the exact meaning of Trinity.
Nonetheless, it confers meaning to the Trinity and most importantly, in a child-
understandable-way.
This analogy welcomes challenges and I am sure that the children will love to share more
subjective funny ideas in constructing the subjective truth of the divine object.

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