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In Saint Augustine's *De Trinitate*, the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* was used in the development of his trinitarian metaphysics.[1] In this major work Augustine deliberately attempted to show the reasonableness of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity over against pagan derision of the idea of three-in-one.[2] He did this while making a polemic against the Arians. This polemic was carried through without falling into the trinitarian metaphysics of either Eunomius or Sabellius.[3] In this difficult pastoral task of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* gave precision to the arguments used against these various alternatives concerning the doctrine of God.[4] Nevertheless, in recent years there have been some who have suggested that this distinction in Augustine's trinitarian thinking is one of the root causes for the doctrine of the Trinity's irrelevance in the Western world. For instance, Colin Gunton has noted that while trinitarian categories remain paramount in the theology and worship of Eastern Orthodoxy, in the West the doctrine of he Trinity has come under question.[5] Gunton also points to the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* as being instrumental in the profound suspicion that has arisen in the intellectual leadership of our times concerning the existence and knowability of God.[6]

One important moment in the discussion concerning Augustine's use of this distinction occurs in the work of Karl Rahner. Rahner, who asserts that proper theological talk concerning the Trinity must begin and end with the revealed God *pro nobis,* points back to Augustine as the one who ensured that the Western tradition would "begin with the one God, the one divine essence as a whole, and only *afterwards* does it see God as three in persons."[7] According to Rahner, the result of this focus on God *in se* over against God *pro*

nobis is that the treatise of the Trinity loses its interest for the "religious mind" and talk about God is now primarily centred "on the one divinity":

> As a result the treatise becomes quite philosophical and abstract and refers hardly at all to salvation history. It speaks of the necessary metaphysical properties of God, and not very explicitly of God as experienced in salvation history in his free relations to his creatures.[8]

Rahner's solution to this trend is to equate the economic Trinity with the immanent Trinity.[9]

This solution has engendered a great deal of discussion quite apart from Augustine's role in these developments. There are those who judge "Rahner's rule" as a necessary corrective that brings Western Christianity's talk about God back to the biblically revealed plan of salvation in history. Others conclude that this solution sacrifices God's freedom and makes God dependent on creation. William J. Hill, while applauding Rahner's attempt to ground the doctrine of God in the Missions of the Persons of the Trinity, concludes that the necessary analogical nature of language when applied to God ensures that equating God *pro nobis* with God *in se* will always remain conceptually problematic.[10]

Rahner's comments about Augustine's role in making God *pro nobis* become secondary in the Western doctrine of God have generated negative reactions. Edmund Hill is one scholar who disagrees with Rahner. Hill judges that Augustine did, in fact, begin his reflections on the Trinity with the temporal Missions of the divine Persons. Edmund Hill claims:

> (i) that the early books of the *De Trinitate* are developed entirely from the New Testament; (ii) that there is a persistence throughout the whole work of the doctrine of the temporal missions; and (iii) that the doctrine of "appropriation" is far more subtle than Rahner allows.[11]

In another place, Edmund Hill states that the "sublime irrelevance which has afflicted the doctrine of the Trinity" is not caused by Augustine's alleged emphasis on the immanent Trinity at the expense of the economic. Rather, it is caused by subsequent generations who ignored Augustine's discussion of the divine Missions in books II-IV of his *De Trinitate*.[12] According to Hill, these particular books of the *De Trinitate* could have provided a bridge between the dominant

immanent theology that was fashionable after Augustine and the economic theology that was dominant in the theology of the ante-Nicene fathers from Justin to Tertullian.[13] Augustine attempted to correct the subordinationism that was inherent in these older economic models of God while conceptually giving priority to the connection of God with the divine missions in time.[14] In light of Edmund Hill's comments, this paper will focus its analysis on Books II-IV of Augustine's *De Trinitate*.

Faith and Truth in Time and Eternity

In the preface to book IV of *De Trinitate*, Augustine makes a distinction between knowledge of earthly and celestial things and knowledge of oneself:

> But they are certainly better who prefer the knowledge of themselves to this knowledge; and a mind to which even its own weakness is known, is more deserving of praise than one which, knowing nothing of this, searches out the courses of the stars in order to learn them, or to retain the knowledge of them it has already acquired, but is itself ignorant of the course by which it must proceed to reach its own true health and strength.[15]

Augustine's purpose for making this distinction between the knowledge of the external world and the knowledge of the self is a pastoral one.[16] Augustine is concerned for the "health and strength" of the reader. The reason why knowledge of one's self, even one's weakness, is superior to knowing the "walls of the world, the foundations of the earth, and the heights of the heavens" is that, by this knowledge, one acquires sorrow; "the sorrow arising from his wandering away from the desire of his own true country, and its founder, his own blessed God."[17] The inward gaze that gains knowledge of the self ideally arrives at the realization that the self is in need. The self needs God.

This universal human need for God is described by means of categories that combine certain existential themes with metaphysical motifs. Augustine writes: "For the essence of God...has nothing changeable, neither in eternity, nor in truth nor in will: because there the truth is eternal, love is eternal; there the love is true, eternity true; and there eternity is loved, truth is loved."[18] When the human need

for God is spoken in these categories, it quickly becomes evident that there is a huge gulf separating human life from divine life. According to Augustine, without Christ this chasm is experienced either as despair or as hubris. God reveals his grace through his Son to avoid these two possibilities so that: "through despair we should not dare to be lifted up to Him"; and so that "lest being proud...of our own merits...and fail the more in our own strength."[19]

The solution for these two negative alternatives is found in God's *oikonomia*. Augustine locates the Christian resolution of these two alternatives by quoting St. Paul: "But God commends his charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, now that we are justified by his blood, shall we be saved through him from the wrath."[20] Augustine applies this "solution" in a way that resonates with the human problem that was previously established. There is a disjunction between present human life and the life of God. Human beings are separated from God by their nature and by their sinful lives. The chasm between the human and the divine is bridged by the Incarnation of Jesus which impacts on the human situation in ways that address this particular human problem: "...by nature we are men, and by sin we are not just. God, therefore, having been made a just man, intercedes for sinful man...and having been made a sharer of our mortality, He has made us a sharer of His divinity."[21]

In the anthropology which arises in this part of *De Trinitate*, Augustine locates and defines the nature of humanity as belonging to the outer part of an individual and places sin in the realm of the inner. Both, however, are symptomatic of the gulf between God and humanity. Augustine then invests a large amount of literary energy outlining the soteriological implications of this differentiation between the inner and the outer parts of the human being. This distinction leads Augustine to conclude eventually that while there is one death and resurrection for Jesus, there are two deaths and two resurrections for Christian saints.[22] There is a death of the soul that can be distinguished from physical death, and there is a resurrection of the inner person that is different from the final resurrection.

The differentiation between the soul and the body gives a particular character to the language of sin and salvation as applied to each: "But the death of the soul is godlessness, and the death of the

body corruptibility...For just as the soul dies when God abandons it, so too does the body when the soul abandons it...."[23] In this way, Augustine sets up a conceptual analogy between God and the soul. A soul without God is analogous to a body without a soul. The distinction between the inner and the outer person is an important consideration when Augustine compares the place of saints in eternity with their situation in time. In the resurrection "we shall be like Him, since we shall see Him as He is."[24] In the meantime, "as long as the corruptible body is a load upon the soul...the soul is brought back to life by penance, and in the body that is still mortal, the renewal of life begins by faith...."[25] When Augustine contemplated the Christian life he distinguished between the inner and the outer, between time and eternity, and as we shall see, he also made a distinction between faith and truth. This is different from the Greek fathers who examined being and life in relation to death and decay.[26]

In the disjunction between time and eternity, Augustine recognizes that a Mediator is necessary who conforms to the human situation in time:

> Since we were...incapable of grasping eternal things, and the stains of sin, contracted by our love of earthly things...from the root of our mortality, pressed heavily upon us; it was necessary for us to be cleansed. But we could not be cleansed so as to be tempered with eternal things...For there is an immense distance between health and disease, and unless the healing process...is adapted to the disease, it does not lead to perfect health.[27]

The Mission of God is directed to our lives in time which is existentially appropriated through faith.

However, in the demarcation between time and eternity, faith is given a role that fits these differentiations. In Book IV, Augustine describes faith by beginning and ending with a quotation from "one of those who were formerly regarded as wise men by the Greeks": "As eternity is to that which has a beginning, so truth is to faith."[28] It thus becomes a major conceptual problem for Augustine to relate faith which begins in time and is mutable with eternity which is immutable.[29] Since eternity is conceptualized in terms of immutability and faith is something that begins and changes, Augustine needs to make an analogy to explain the place of faith in relation to eternal things: "as the truth follows the faith, so may eternity follow mortal-

ity."[30]   This analogy, however, is one that establishes an hierarchical relationship between faith and truth: "...we adapt the faith of our belief to the things which have a beginning, just as we hope for the truth of contemplation in eternal things...."[31]

One effect of this analogy is that it lessens the relative importance given to the *oikonomia*. Keeping in mind the aforementioned gulf between mortality and eternity a question arises concerning the quality which separates faith and truth. Augustine is aware of the dangers of having too great a rift between faith and truth. Although he is content to set up an hierarchy between faith and truth, Augustine quickly disavows any discordant relationship between the two.[32] The importance of this proviso is illustrated by the fact that he repeats this thought almost immediately:

> We had to be cleansed, therefore, in order that we might come to the beginning which would last forever, so that there would not be one beginning for us in faith and another in truth. Nor would we be able to pass from the condition of having a beginning to eternal things, if He who is eternal had not brought us over to His eternity by becoming one with us through our own beginning.[33]

The reason why faith and truth are not discordant with one another is grounded in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In the above quotation, Augustine adds that just as the gulf between mortality and eternity is bridged by the Mediator, so is the difference between faith and truth. Once again, the pastoral problem tackled by Augustine is answered via the *oikonomia* and once again the particular shape of the answer is determined by the assumptions set up in the question itself. Thus, while the difference between faith and truth is bridged through the Incarnation of the Son, there still remains an hierarchical relationship between faith and truth. This relationship is of the same nature as the hierarchy between that which has a beginning and that which is eternal.

A clearer understanding of how Augustine perceived faith will arise from how Augustine relates faith to other elements of his theology.[34] Truth and the eternity that awaits believers have their own characteristic shape in Augustine's description. The truth that supercedes faith in eternity is distinguished from and is derived from the Truth that is eternity.[35] This truth that stems from the Truth is described through the categories of correct knowing or correct see-

ing. Using Scripture, Augustine explains that our faith will be changed into truth when, by sight, we will know the Truth: "Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ. When our faith by seeing shall be transformed into truth...."[36] By placing the discussion of truth in terms of the categories seeing and knowing and then by placing truth and faith in an hierarchical relationship to one another, Augustine gives faith a particular character. It follows, therefore, that faith is also in an hierarchical relationship with seeing and knowing.[37] This, however, does not mean faith is somehow in opposition to knowledge.[38]

The existential and pastoral concerns of Augustine's time and place were of such a nature that he sought a way to express the Christian faith within the distinctions between the inner and outer, and between time and eternity.[39] Jesus Christ was descibed as the Mediator between these various distinctions. However, when Augustine attempted to describe the solution to the problems caused by these distinctions, he used language which was in keeping with the language that expressed the problem in the first place.

This caused a problem when Augustine attempted to describe the relationship between the concepts of faith and truth. As we have already noted, he himself recognized the necessity to lessen the distance he had already established between faith and truth. These dynamics illustrate the problem that is being addressed in this paper. On the one hand, the evidence seems to bear the assertion that Augustine does indeed stress the *oikonomia*. This is especially the case when he looks for a solution to the problem of how to describe the relationship between human beings and God. However, when he expresses this solution he does so by using categories that appear to set up an inherent distance from the *oikonomia*. Therefore, the evidence also hints at the possibility that Augustine might, in some way, be sacrificing the *oikonomia* for considerations of the *theologia*. These issues can be further clarified by examining another pastoral concern of Augustine's day.

Contra Arius

How does one make sense of one's life within the contingencies of time and space? One way is to search for a coherence that is able

somehow to bring these together within a meaningful whole. This existential question and search dominated the energies of Augustine's contemporaries. Related to this search was the fear that perhaps the only power which gave life any coherence or unity was that which could be found in *chronos*. *Chronos*, however, eventually devours all her own children.

The Hellenic answer to these existential concerns was found in the "oneness" of God who dwells in eternity, outside the realm of *chronos*. This answer, for it to be existentially comforting, is one that calls for a mediator between the realm of eternity and the realm of *chronos*. While God might be coherent, unified and safe from the vicissitudes of time, creation is not. In Greek thought, the Logos was often identified as such a mediator. For example, Philo of Alexandria saw the Logos fulfilling this mediating function through the prophets of the Old Testament. For Philo, the unity of God was conceptually maintained through the view that the Logos, like the matter of the world, was created by God out of nothing.[40]

Arius was also primarily concerned to "protect" the "oneness" and simplicity of God and to "maintain" God's separation from creation. Arius has a very similar conception of the Logos that was exhibited in Philo. The one exception was that Arius identified the preëxistent Logos with the preëxistent Christ.[41] Arius conceptually kept God's unity safe by asserting that the existence of the Logos began when:

> prior to the creation of the world, God created it, like the creation of anything else in the world, by will (*thelēsei*), out of things nonexistent (*ex ouk ontōn*), admitting, however...that, prior to its entrance upon its second stage of existence, the Logos had coexisted with God from eternity as a property of His essence.[42]

One of the implications of this theory for the doctrine of God can be found in what has been accorded to Arius' pen. According to Athanasius, Arius wrote in his *Thalia* that "God was not always Father, but there was [a time] when God was alone (*monon*) and was not yet Father, but afterwards He became Father."[43] Arianism abolishes the unity in the doctrine of the Trinity by declaring that the Son is a creature of God and the Holy Spirit is a creature of the Son. Unity is upheld in the one God by eliminating the Son and the Holy Spirit from the equation.

Augustine shared in the existential concerns of the Arians. The doctrine of God should necessarily be one that stresses God's unity, unchangeability and distance from the contingencies of time. However, unlike Arius, Augustine also attempted to incorporate the Scriptural witness of the divine Missions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into his description of God. Augustine, therefore, had to find a solution that addressed the existential concerns of his generation which did not relegate the Son and the Holy Spirit into the realm of creaturehood.

In Book II of his *De Trinitate*, Augustine outlines a hermeneutical principle or rule for searching Scripture that helps keep these concerns in proper dialectical tension with one another. Augustine notes that "some things in the Scriptures concerning the Father and the Son are, therefore, put in such a way as to indicate the unity and equality of the substance of the Father and the Son."[44] At the same time, he also recognizes that some Scripture passages "are so put as to show that the Son is less on account of the form of a slave, that is, on account of the creature with a changeable and human substance that He assumed."[45] In order to be able to make sense of these seemingly contradictory statements from Scripture, Augustine cites a principle that he has received from "learned Catholic interpreters": "that the Son of God is understood to be equal to the Father according to the form of God in which He is, and less than the Father according to the form of a slave that He has received."[46] The failure to apply this hermeneutical principle is at the root of the Arian heresy:

> From this rule...not as giving us to understand that one is less than the other, but only who is from whom, some have drawn another meaning, as though it were said that the Son were less...To avoid this, the rule we have just mentioned is to be observed, whereby it is intimated that the Son is not less, but that He is of the Father: in these words not His inequality but his birth is made known.[47]

The hermeneutical rule is applied in order to understand, on the one hand, the divine nature of the Son and, on the other, to relate this divinity to the mission of the Son in time: "not his inequality but his birth is made known." Augustine attempted to combat Arianism while, at the same time, address the pastoral and existential concerns that Arianism attempted to meet. He does this by making a conceptual distinction between God in Himself and God in Mission.

This distinction is illustrated most clearly by the fact that Augustine can write that Jesus can even be less than Himself, depending on what "side" of the "rule" one is applying. Augustine comments on Jesus' status in his temporal Mission:

> In this form He has been found to be not only less than the Father but of the Holy Spirit as well, and not only that, but He has been found to be even less than Himself, not of Himself who was, but of Himself who is, because by the form of a slave which He received, He did not lose the form of God....[48]

After setting up the distinction in the first place, Augustine is deliberate in making sure that no breach is fashioned in his understanding of God in eternity and God's Mission in time. This concern is illustrated in his discussion in Book II of *De Trinitate* when he speaks of the sending of the Son or Word of God. Augustine asks whether the sending of the Son at a particular time breaks the immutability of the eternal God. He solves this apparent problem by "drawing" a conceptual circle. When the Son was sent he was sent through a Word of God. However, the Word of God is none other than the Son, Himself. It is incomprehensible that God could be conceived of without His Word or His Wisdom.[49] The temporal sending of the Son does not create a breach with the eternal relationship between Father and Son.

The careful connecting of the *theologia* back to the *oikonomia* is necessary to avoid the pitfalls of Arianism and to give proper weight to the temporal Missions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as proclaimed in Scripture. Arianism was a temptation for Augustine because he had to address the same existential concerns that the Arians had attempted to satisfy. After making sure that there should be no conceptual breach between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, Augustine returns to consider the themes of *theologia*:

> But since the form of a slave was so assumed that the form of God remained unchangeable, it is obvious that what became visible in the Son was made by the Father and the Son who continued to be invisible, that is, that the same Son Himself was sent so as to be visible, by the invisible Father together with the invisible Son.[50]

The sending of the *visible* Son is for the purpose of accomodating the *invisible* Son to the *eyes* of temporal life.[51] The history presented in the *oikonomia* directs the observer to the unchangeable and in-

visible God of eternity. The same structure is evident when Augustine
turns his attention towards the sending of the Holy Spirit. After recall-
ing the biblical accounts of the manifestation of the Spirit in the form
of a dove, with the sound of a violent wind and in the form of tongues
of fire, Augustine comments:

> This operation, visibly manifested and offered to mortal eyes,
> has been called the sending of the Holy Spirit, not as if His
> essence itself had appeared in which He Himself is invisible
> and unchangeable as the Father and the Son, but in the
> hearts of men, being moved by these external signs, might be
> turned away from the temporal manifestation of His coming
> to the hidden eternity of Him who is forever present.[52]

The relationship between *oikonomia* and *theologia* intersects
the soteriological concerns of humanity in such a way that the tem-
poral Mission is instrumental in moving the believer toward the eter-
nal life of the Trinity.[53] A hierarchy between the *oikonomia* and the
theologia is established in the same way one arose in the distinction
between faith and truth.

Appropriation

The priority given to the immanent Trinity causes Augustine to
stress that there really is no incongruity between God's operation in
time and God's life in eternity. This is the problem that arises when
Augustine tries to explain the difference between the theophanies
described in the Old Testament and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.
After reading through the various theophanies of the Old Testament
Augustine concludes that God can use any part of His creation as a
sign to point toward the ineffable. If the same principle is applied to
the Incarnation a docetic Christ would be the result. Also, such a
reading of the Incarnation would set up an incongruity between God's
Mission and God's life in eternity.

Augustine expends a great deal of literary energy examining the
Scriptural witness of various theophanies. In each case, he comes
to the conclusion that it is uncertain whether the one appearing
through some creature (i.e., fire, angel, wind, etc) is the Father, the
Son, the Holy Spirit or the Trinity itself.[54] According to Colin Gunton,
this conclusion was in opposition to a long Latin tradition which at-

tempted to identify the Old Testament theophanies as appearances of Christ.[55] However, Augustine did make speculations about who actually appeared in the individual theophanies. For instance, the appearance of a pillar of fire that accompanied Israel out of Egypt suggests for Augustine the Holy spirit who appeared in the tongues of fire at Pentecost.[56] Each time he makes these speculations he quickly reminds his readers that his conclusions are only based on probable considerations. What really matters is that the members of the Trinity are joined in a common purpose.

At the end of his extended discussion concerning the theophanies, Augustine concludes:

> When God was said to appear to the Fathers of ancient times before the coming of the Saviour, those voices and those corporeal forms were wrought by angels. This holds true whether they themselves spoke or did anything in the person of God...or whether they assumed a form from a creature which they were not, in which God was revealed to men in a symbolic manner.[57]

Augustine continually reminds his readers that these "signs" should not be confused with the "something" that is God. "Seeing" God in his "substance" is reserved for the final salvation: "in order to see this substance our hearts are cleansed through all those things which are seen by our eyes and heard by our ears."[58] Since salvation is a result of the proper work of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Augustine concludes that the task is still ahead of him "to make clear the difference between those appearances of ancient times and these which are proper to the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, although the latter were produced through a visible creature."[59]

This theological task returns to the question concerning the relative value Augustine places on *oikonomia* or *theologia*. Augustine describes the human predicament in terms of distance from "eternity" and uses the *oikonomia* to proclaim Christ as the Mediator of this distance. This identification of Christ as the Mediator prevents the hubris inherent in the attempts of humans to reach up to God and also prevents the despair possible when human beings contemplate the great "distance" between them and God. The Father reveals the Son to avoid, on the one hand, that "through despair we should not dare to be lifted up to Him", and on the other, that "lest being proud...of our own merits...and fail the more in our own

strength."[60]   However, as was shown above, the language used to describe the hope given to believers is of such a nature that it sets up a conceptual structure which points beyond the Trinity of *oikonomia* to the immanent Trinity.

Augustine uses the doctrine of trinitarian appropriation[61] to assert his faith that there is no breach between the operations of the Trinity in time and the life of the Trinity in eternity. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Augustine's approach to trinitarian metaphysics somehow makes such a doctrine necessary in the first place.   In Edmund Hill's discussion with Rahner, it was legitimate for him to point toward Augustine's use of this doctrine as his way of avoiding an ultimate breach between the economic and immanent Trinities. Augustine does indeed use "appropriation" in order to show that it is the same God who is revealed in time that exists in eternity. More precisely, Augustine writes in a variety of ways that the Trinity which has been revealed in time points us in the direction of the Trinity of eternity. This "pointing in the right direction" is the redemption that is given to the believer now in faith.

However, the evidence that we have examined also suggests that the doctrine of appropriation would not be necessary if Augustine did not begin and end with a metaphysic which separates the immanent Trinity from the economic Trinity.   Catherine Mowry LaCugna writes: "In contrast to Augustine's theology, it is clear that if a theology were to begin from and center itself on the economy, all the while presupposing the essential unity of economy and 'theology', it would have no need for a doctrine of appropriations."[62]

Analogia entis

When Augustine describes his understanding of the existential meaning of the human encounter with the revealing God he sets up a distinction between faith and truth. At the same time, Augustine also is diligent about explaining that while there might be a distinction between the two, faith and truth are not discordant with each other. Similarly, in the interest of developing his understanding of the doctrine of God that addresses the concerns of Arianism without embracing its solution of conceiving the Son and the Holy Spirit as creatures, Augustine sets up a distinction between God in Mission

and God in Himself. He insists, however, that what can be observed from the revealed God in Mission is not discordant with the eternal will of God outside time.

Edmund Hill characterizes Augustine's *De Trinitate* as a great foundational work on the doctrine of God which operates between two dialectical poles of humanity seeking God and God revealing Himself.[63] Hill concludes that Augustine manages to maintain this tension without collapsing these poles into some easy synthesis.[64] Augustine manages to do this by making distinctions while insisting that what has been distinguished is, nevertheless, not in a discordant relationship.

Trying to remain between these two poles, Augustine unearths a vast variety of analogies that point to the revealing God. Along with the analogous relationships that arose between truth and faith and God in temporal Mission and God in eternity, Augustine establishes a number of possible analogies between the Trinity and human personality. If humanity is indeed created in the image of God, Augustine believes it is a justifiable activity to look for analogies of God in human life. These analogies included: the unity of thinking, speaking and willing; the lover, the beloved and the love between them; memory, intelligence and will; mind, knowledge and love; or being, knowing and willing. This variety is one that makes it impossible to collapse the two poles of the seeking human and the revealing God into any conceptual synthesis. God remains a mystery and at the same time, the seeker is given a direction in which to look.

Augustine warns his congregation against the dangers of being too anthropomorphic when applying some analogy from the realm of human life to God.[65] This, however, is not a great danger in Augustine's explication of the Trinity. In fact, the greater danger in Augustine's conceptualization of God is that the various analogies that he employs function to create a breach between the analogy and Whom the analogy is designed to point toward.[66] That Augustine is aware of this danger is shown in his use of the doctrine of appropriation.

Conclusion

When St. Augustine began his *De Trinitate* he made it clear that

he did not consider it beneath his dignity to begin with faith in his treatise on the Trinity.[67] However, Augustine also understood faith in relation to truth whereby faith was something that would eventually be superceded by truth and presently pointed ahead toward truth. This distinction between faith and truth was parallel to another distinction which Augustine made between the God of faith and the God of truth. These distinctions were made in the interest of maintaining what he considered to be the Scriptural witness of God as a solution to the pastoral and existential concerns of the day. These concerns of life caused people of Augustine's time and place to search for a unity or coherence outside the realm of *chronos* to give them security and meaning. The analogies and the conceptual images that Augustine used were in response to these concerns.

St. Augustine did indeed establish a conceptual distinction between the Trinity of *oikonomia* and the Trinity of *theologia*. There were existential reasons for this distinction and Augustine was diligent in attempting to show that while there might be a distinction between the two they were not discordant with one another. He wanted to maintain the mystery of God while at the same time insisting that the Scriptures allowed one to say something about God that could give a person hope. The temporal Missions of the Trinity discouraged one from being proud in one's knowledge of God and at the same time prevented despair over the distance from God in eternity and temporal life.[68]

We have shown that Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity strongly prevented the believer from developing pride in the knowledge of God. The distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity prevented this. The question that remains is whether Augustine's theology on the Trinity is effective for preventing despair over the distance between God-in-eternity and human temporal life.

In the language of the debate between Rahner and Hill, Augustine does indeed establish a priority concerning the unity of God over against the multiplicities of temporal life. This priority of the One God is asserted over against the temporal Missions of the Trinity. Augustine recognizes that it is harmful for Christian life to have a conceptual breach between the Trinity of *oikonomia* and the Trinity of *theologia*. Rahner's solution is to avoid making a distinction between the two in the first place. Augustine, as Hill has pointed out

over against Rahner, has a different solution. He makes the distinc-
tion but reconnects the two in the doctrine of appropriation. Augus-
tine's solution is one that protects God's unity and is a safeguard
against the establishment of temporal idols. This is done, however,
at the high cost of lessening the priority given to the Trinity of the
oikonomia.

Notes

[1]   For an excellent definition and history of this distinction, see: Ted Peters,
        God -- the World's Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era
        (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 107. Peters writes: "However, by
        extending the notion of *oikonomia*, introduced earlier by Tertullian,
        post-Nicene theologians began to speak of an economic Trinity (or
        'Trinity of manifestation'). This is the Trinity as manifested externally in
        the world and temporal history through creation, redemption and
        sanctification." The *theologia* is a more speculative venture and refers
        to the immanent relations of the Trinity (also referred to as the
        "ontological" or "essential" Trinity).

        It should also be noted that since *De Trinitate* was written over a long
        period of time, questions have arisen about its structure and overall
        coherence. These questions are further complicated by the fact that the
        first eleven and one half to twelve books of *De Trinitate* were pirated and
        published against Augustine's wishes.   Edmund Hill interprets
        Augustine's anger over this event and his subsequent reluctance to finish
        De Trinitate as evidence that despite the long time it took to write,
        Augustine "considered the work to be one which should be read as a
        whole, a logical and consistent whole." (Edmund Hill, "St Augustine's *De
        Trinitate*: The doctrinal significance of its structure" *Revue des Etudes
        Augustiniennes* 19 (1973) 277-286.)   Another suggestion is that
        Augustine was planning to rework his initial scheme but was prevented
        by the premature publication of the pirated manuscript. Irénéé
        Chevalier, for instance, puts forth the theory that Augustine had had a
        major shift in his initial plan of the shape of the treatise when, in the year
        413, he read Gregory of Nazianzus' *Theological Orations*. (Irénéé
        Chevalier, *Saint Augustin et la pensée grecque.   Les relations
        trinitaires*, Fribourg en Suisse: Collectanea Friburgensia, 1940, pp.15-
        28.)

[2]   See Henry Chadwick, "Augustine" in *Founders of Thought* (Oxford:
        Oxford University Press, 1991) 273.

³   Sabellius was a 3rd century Monarchian Modalist who lived in the west. He was later condemned for "patripassionism" since, in his conceptualization of God, the Son would be a mode of the being of the Father. Eunomius held a very similar theological position in Eastern Christendom and wrote against the Cappadocian Fathers.

⁴   This according to Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991) 81.

⁵   Colin Gunton, "Augustine, The Trinity and the Theological Crisis of the West," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990) 33-58.

⁶   Ibid.

⁷   Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, tr. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) 17.

⁸   Ibid. 17-18.

⁹   Ibid. 22. Rahner formulated it in this way: *The "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity.* T his has become known as "Rahner's rule".

¹⁰ William J. Hill, *Knowing the Unknown God* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971) 210-217.

¹¹ Referred to in William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982) 55-56. This judgement is also quoted by Mary T. Clark, *Augustine* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994) 71. This quotation is a summary of Edmund Hill's conclusions in "Karl Rahner's 'Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise *De Trinitate*' and St. Augustine," *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 2 (Villanova University, 1971) 67-80.

¹² Edmund Hill, 'St. Augustine's *De Trinitate*" 284. In support of Hill's thesis it should be noted that books V-VII of *De Trinitate* were excerpted and made available to medieval readers in the *florilegia*. See Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us*, 81.

¹³ Ibid. 284.

¹⁴ Ibid. 285.

¹⁵ In this paper, the following translation was used: Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, tr. Stephen McKenna (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963) 129. From this point on it will be abbreviated as follows: DT 4.0.1 (CUAP: p.129).

¹⁶ Augustine spends a lot of literary energy further developing this

distinction in books IX - XII in his *De Trinitate*. These arguments include a penchant for arguing that the outer world of sense is inferior to inner, rational nature. Especially in Book XI, the inferiority of the outer to the inner serves as an analogy of the Trinity. See Colin Gunton, "Augustine, The Trinity and the Theological Crisis of the West," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990) 33-58; esp. p. 40.

17   DT 4.0.1 (CUAP: pp. 129-130).

18   DT 4.0.1 (CUAP: p. 130).

19   DT 4.1.2 (CUAP: p. 131).

20   DT 4.1.2 (CUAP: p. 131).

21   DT 4.2.4 (CUAP: p. 133).

22   DT 4.3.5-6 (CUAP: pp. 134-139).

23   DT 4.3.5 (CUAP: p. 135).

24   DT 4.3.5 (CUAP: p. 135).

25   DT 4.3.5 (CUAP: p. 135).

26   While writing about the problem of how to approach history, John D. Zizioulas contrasts Augustine's use of eternity as the ruling principle with the Greek fathers: "In contrast with the approach to this problem found in the West since St. Augustine, the problem of the relationship between truth and history is tackled not from the viewpoint of time in relation to eternity, but from that of being and life in relation to death and decay." John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985) 95.

27   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.160).

28   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.160 and p.161).

29   It should be noted here that the soul is mutable. See DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.160).

30   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: pp.160-161).

31   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.161).

32   "...in order that the faith of our mortal life may not strike a discordant note with the truth of eternal life" DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.161).

33   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.161).

34   See William Vander Marck, "Faith: What It Is Depends on What it Relates To," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 43 (January-December, 1976).

35   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.161).

36   DT 4.18.24 (CUAP: p.161).

37   H. A.Wolfson asserts that Augustine places "faith" in an hierarchical
      relationship in between opinion and knowledge. "Faith" is not to be
      confused with either opinion or knowledge but is in a dialectical
      relationship with both. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church
      Fathers*, vol. 1; Faith, Trinity, Incarnation (Cambridge: Harvard
      University Press, 1956) 130-138.

38   See: F. Bourassa, S.I. "Theologie trinitaire de Saint Augustine:
      (Deuxième Partie) L'Intelligence de la Foi," *Gregorianum* 59 (1978)
      375-412. He writes: "Par ce fait, Augustin a, déjà ici, réalisé la synthèse
      vivante de la foi, et ceci à un double niveau: (a) epistémologique:
      synthèse de la foi et de l'intellectus, et (b) éthique: théologie et
      économie, c'est-à-dire la connaissance et l'amour de la Trinité comme
      ontologie du salut, principe, structure et terme de l'économie." (380)

39   See Robert W. Jenson, *The Triune Identity* (Philadelphia: Fortress
      Press, 1982) 116-118.

40   H. A.Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 586.

41   Ibid. 586-587.

42   Ibid. 586.

43   As quoted by H. A.Wolfson, ibid. 585.

44   DT 2.1.3 (CUAP: p.53). He gives the following examples: "I and the
      Father are one" and "when he was in the form of God, he thought it not
      robbery to be equal to God."

45   DT 2.1.3 (CUAP: p.53). Augustine gives a large number of examples.
      Two of these are: "For the Father is greater than I" and "for neither can
      the Son do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing."

46   DT 2.1.2 (CUAP: p.52).

47   DT 2.1.3 (CUAP: p.55).

48   DT 2.1.2 (CUAP: pp.52-53).

49   DT 2.5.9 (CUAP: p.61). The use of the terms "word" and "wisdom"
      usually presumes that these do not have an independent existence apart
      from the person they belong to or originate from. However, long before
      Augustine wrote his *De Trinitate* an understanding of the biblical use of
      these terms had developed whereby, when applied to God, they were
      hypostasized. Over 150 years before Augustine wrote his *De Trinitate*,
      Origen had commented that "when one reads the term 'door' or 'vine' or

'way' no one thinks that Christ is an actual door or a vine or a tree...The Word of God, then, must be understood as something that is *like* a human word, but is not a human word." Origen continues that the "Word of God" has its own "individuality, i.e., has life in itself". As presented in Robert L. Wilken, "Not a Solitary God: The Triune God of the Bible." *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994) 41-42.

50   DT 2.5.9 (CUAP: p.62).

51   Edmund Hill presents this idea as the key to the structure of *De Trinitate*. He characterizes it as a "dramatic confrontation between God revealing and man seeking." Edmund Hill, "St. Augustine's *De Trinitate*: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure," *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 19 (1973) 278.

52   DT 2.5.10 (CUAP: p.63).

53   Eternity is identified with immutability for Augustine. He illustrates this identification with the example of the soul which, because it grows and changes, in a sense dies. That which used to be is no longer. See DT 2.9.15 (CUAP: p.69).

54   See DT 2.10.18; 2.18.35; 3.0.3 (CUAP: pp.73-74; p.92; p.98).

55   Colin Gunton, "Augustine, The Trinity and the Theological Crisis of the West," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990) 33-58. Gunton concludes that this was due to Augustine's abhorrence of the material world. He calls this Augustine's anti-Incarnational slant. I read this, rather, as Augustine's attempt to spell out the difference between these appearances of the invisible, unchanging God in "signs" and the appearance of God in the Incarnation.

56   DT 2.15.26 (CUAP: pp.82-83).

57   DT 3.11.27 (CUAP: p.126).

58   DT 3.11.26 (CUAP: p.126).

59   DT 3.11.27 (CUAP: p.127).

60   DT 4.1.2 (CUAP: p.131).

61   "The doctrine of appropriations is a compensating strategy within Latin theology that tries to reconnect the specific details of salvation history to specific persons. Appropriation means assigning an attribute (wisdom) or an activity (creation) to one of the persons without denying that the attribute or activity applies to all three." (Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, San Francisco: HarperCollins Publisher, 1973, p.100.

62   Ibid.

63   Edmund Hill, "St. Augstine's *De Trinitate*," 277-278.

64   Ibid. 278ff.

65   Henry Chadwick, "Augustine" in *Founders of Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 273.   This concern anticipates Karl Barth's criticism of the *analogia entis*.

66   See Erich Przywara, "Stellungnahmen zur Zeit," in *In und Gegen; Stellungnahmen zur Zeit* (Nürnberg: Glock & Lutz, 1955) 279f. Przywara insists that Christian theology has to be more than an assertion that God is totally Other.

67   DT 1.1.1 (CUAP: p.3).

68   DT 4.1.2 (CUAP: p.131).