

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS THE KEY
TO ENCOURAGING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA PROVINCE OF INDONESIA
TO BE RECONCILING COMMUNIONS
IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDONESIAN MASSACRE OF 1965/66

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE ARTS
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND LAW
FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

22ND DECEMBER 2016

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SUMMARY

This thesis discusses how the doctrine of the Trinity becomes the foundation of Christian faith to encourage the Christian church in Indonesia to be a reconciling communion in the light of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66. The discussion is divided into three chapters. The first examines how a doctrine of Christian faith, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, can lead to Christians' practices in their daily lives. This discussion has its basis on the thought of Catherine M. LaCugna in her book *God For Us*, arguing that human beings can only know God (*theologia*) if God reveals God's self through God's actions (*oikonomia*). From the *oikonomia*, human beings know that God also invites them to participate in God's actions, certainly, in a creaturely way.

Based on that pattern, the second chapter discusses the reconciling action of the Triune God that makes God known as the relational God. This chapter insists that reconciliation is the work of the Triune God – the Father initiates the reconciliation, the Son executes it, and the Spirit activates it. The last chapter examines how the knowledge of the Triune God, as the reconciling God, has impact in Christian church fellowship where its members are in broken relationship as an impact of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66. God is the reconciling God as God is the relational God. The relational God that reconciles human beings to God also invites them to participate in the reconciling work of God. This is by living in loving relationship with God and with their neighbours. This chapter also insists that this participation of Christians is actually the identity of every Christian as the *imago Dei* that echoes the Triune God as the relational (*theologia*) and reconciling (*oikonomia*) God.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Bedford Park, Adelaide

22nd December 2016,

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise be to the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Spirit – who helps and guides me in this process of knowing and experiencing the Triune God as the relational and reconciling God in my mind, heart and soul, and also in my relationship with my neighbours. To the Triune God be the glory now and forever. With a grateful heart I thank God for the people God has sent to assist and support me in this work. I thank them for everything they have done for me. They are:

1. Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney, PhD. as my supervisor.
2. Dr. Tanya Wittwer as the Postgraduate coordinator at the Adelaide College of Divinity.
3. All the lecturers and staff at Flinders Theological Department.
4. Rev. Greg Pearce who always has time to proofread my work.
5. Lyn Howland as my professional editor.
6. My wife, Debora Lulu Leo and my daughter, Arwen Eldeira Maggang.
7. My mother, Christiana Kapitan, and all my brothers and sisters with all their children.
8. My brothers and sisters in Christ in the Indonesian Fellowship at Trinity Lutheran Church Pasadena.
9. My friends in the Flobamora Community in South Australia.

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INTRODUCTION

It is commonly known that the killing of the Indonesian Communist Party's members and sympathisers is a dark side of Indonesia's history. The bloodletting began when six Indonesian generals and one lieutenant on 1 October 1965 were killed by a movement, namely the 30 September Movement.¹ This murder was considered by the Indonesian Military as a *coup d'état*. Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI/Indonesian Communist Party) was accused as the party behind that movement. As a consequence, the Indonesian Military under Major General Soeharto (Suharto) led the army to crush that movement.² During six months from October 1965 to March 1966 the massacre occurred.³ Hundreds of thousands of members and sympathisers of the Indonesian Communist Party or those who had any connections with this party were murdered by the Indonesian Military in that tragedy.⁴

The massacre is over but its impacts seem to be everlasting.⁵ The bloodletting happened in just six months but it left a terror that keeps going today. Mery Kolimon argues that the genocide has led individuals, families, and even the entire nation as the victims of the tragedy to a serious collective trauma.⁶ The people of Indonesia have lived under this dark history for fifty years.

Indonesian people are systematically indoctrinated in the history of this tragedy created by the Indonesian Military as the 'winner' of that 'fight'. The winner's

¹ Adam Hughes Henry, "The Role of Propaganda During the Indonesian Massacres," *ISAA Review* 13, no. 1 (2014). 88.

² Ibid.

³ Robert Cribb, "Unresolved Problems in the Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002). 550.

⁴ Mery Kolimon, *Forbidden Memories: Women Victims and Survivors of the 1965 Tragedy in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. Mery Kolimon, Liliya Wetangterah, and Karen Campbell-Nelson, *Forbidden Memories: Women's Experiences of 1965 in Eastern Indonesia* (Victoria, Australia: Monash University Publishing, 2015). 1.

⁵ Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, no. 4 (2011). 545.

⁶ Kolimon, *Forbidden Memories: Women Victims and Survivors of the 1965 Tragedy in Eastern Indonesia*.

story was spread out from one generation to other generations through oral and written histories, monuments, museums, movies, and even a national day of remembrance and a ceremony called *Hari Kesaktian Pancasila* (the Sacredness of Pancasila Day) on 1 October.⁷ People are afraid to talk about the tragedy from different perspectives. The survivors have been forbidden to tell their stories. There is only one history. It is the story of the winner which aims to destroy everything about communism from Indonesia and to recognise Soeharto as the hero who saved the nation from the coup.⁸ Parents tell this story to their children. Teachers teach this history to their students. The whole nation knows only that Communism is evil. These all have brought terror to the survivors and their families. They have been living in this situation and bearing this burden for a half century.

The survivors and their families in particular live with bearing the stereotype of rebel and traitor. Bad stigma is attached to those who have relations with those who were killed and gaoled or arrested during that tragedy. They were marginalised by the society and even by the religions. It is very common that they were associated with bad things in the society. A case in point is that if a man steals something from his neighbour, he will be labelled as 'PKI' (Partai Komunis Indonesia/Indonesian Communist Party) even though he does not have any connection to that party. In fact, social and family relationships were broken by the continuous impact of that stereotype.⁹

There are certainly many questions concerning this tragedy. Some questions that might rise are: who is(are) the actor(s) behind this tragedy? Was that massacre as the response right or not? Were there any courts for them who were accused? What has the government done for the survivors? These questions are absolutely needed to be answered. In fact, there are plenty of debates concerning those issues. However, this project will focus on the responses of the Christian Church. Therefore, some important

⁷ Hilmar Farid, "Indonesia's Original Sin: Mass Killings and Capitalist Expansion, 1965–66," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (2005). 3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Particularly in East Nusa Tenggara Province, stories about bad stigma and marginalisation like this can be found in *Forbidden Memories: Women's Experiences of 1965 in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. Mery Kolimon, Liliya Wetangterah, and Karen Campbell-Nelson (Victoria, Australia: Monash University Publishing, 2015).

issues which emerge here are: where was the Christian Church, the protestant church in particular, in that event and what was the church's response when the bloodletting was happening? What did the church do, especially for the victims or survivors that were the members of the church at that time and afterwards? The most important question in this project is what should the Church do today for the society in which people do not live in 'peaceful relationship'?

The church as the image of God should always imitate God and what God has done for God's people who live in a 'hidden' enmity. As the enmity displays relational disharmony among God's people, the church should find and imitate how God acts to bring harmony to the Christian community. However, the question, as raised by Miroslav Volf in "The Trinity is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement", is "can we copy God"?¹⁰ Volf discusses Nicholas Fedorov's thinking, arguing that humans can imitate God, in contrast to Ted Peters' thought claiming that creatures cannot copy God at all.¹¹ Volf then suggests that there is an open space for humanity's responsibility in the midst of that contradiction. It is to imitate God in some respects.¹² Volf argues that humanity can copy the 'some respects' of God only in creaturely ways as humanity is God's creature, and in historical ways as humanity is sinful and fleshly.¹³ Similarly, Colin Gunton suggests that the church is the echo of God's being in a finite level.¹⁴ Therefore, as the image of God, the church is called to reflect (to echo) in some respects (in a finite level) who God is as revealed in God's works. As Peter the apostle says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9 – NRSV).

The act of God that is very foundational for Christian faith is the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the cross. This, as Jürgen Moltmann claims, is the centre of all

¹⁰ Miroslav Volf, "The Trinity Is Our Social Program": The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement," *Modern theology* 14, no. 3 (1998). 403.

¹¹ Ibid. 403-4.

¹² Ibid. 404.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Colin E Gunton, "The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community," in *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*, ed. Colin E Gunton and Daniel Hardy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989). 78.

Christian theology.¹⁵ All the theological statements of Christianity, he argues, have their roots in the crucified Christ.¹⁶ The death of Christ on the cross, as the apostle Paul loudly speaks in Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:15, 18; Ephesians. 2:16; and Colossians. 1:20, is the work of God to reconcile God's people to God. Thus, the cross of Christ resonates the Triune God's work for reconciliation.¹⁷

At this point, reconciliation has its significance in Christianity. Christian Mostert suggests that "in the broadest sense, reconciliation is a relational term; it is about bringing into harmony two or three parties (individuals or societies) especially where there existed disharmony or animosity, even violence, or different sets of ideas or programs or facts and figures."¹⁸ This thought places reconciliation as the way to restore broken relationships. Put simply, reconciliation is a condition where people live in peaceful and loving relationship. This kind of relationship is actually the echo of God's being as the Triune God, that is, the relational God.

What God has done is proclaimed in the Christian scripture. The scripture speaks of the human who breaks the relationship with God and God who initiates and works for reconciliation (cf. Genesis 3). It is clear in 2 Corinthians 5:18, as Paul says, that "through Christ, God reconciled us to Himself..." It is God who brings humanity back into harmony with God's self. Therefore, reconciliation is essential in the Christian's perspective as it reflects the being of God who acts in reconciling love towards humanity. In addition, that text insists that reconciliation is very significant in God's perspective. It implies that God never wants disharmony dwelling among God's creation.

Recently, the Indonesian Government through the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) for the first time held an official national symposium in

¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM Press, 1974). 204.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013). 351.

¹⁸ Christiaan Mostert, "Reconciliation and the Church," *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies* 23, no. 2 (2010). 192.

Jakarta on the 1965/66 massacre.¹⁹ The two-day event held on 18-19 April 2016 mainly aimed to seek reconciliation for Indonesia's dark past.²⁰ The symposium's recommendations was to be given to the Indonesian Government in July 2016. This event shows the commitment of the Indonesian Government to resolve that tragedy. What the government is doing is to seek reconciliation between the government and society.

However, this historical event will mean nothing if it is not followed by concrete actions by the government. At this stage, the church's involvement is needed. In the East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT) context, the church can play its significant role as most survivors and perpetrators are the members of the church. The engagement of the church can be the model of the reconciliation from society to society. Furthermore, the church as the fellowship of the people who believe in Christ, is an integral part of the society itself. In fact, as the image of God that echoes God's being as the relational God and God's work for reconciliation, the church should work for reconciliation.

How can the church do that? Some people might suggest many ways, especially practical that the church can do. However, this project will be concerned to change the Christian's view and heart fundamentally and practically regarding that issue. As a consequence, we will need to look at an aspect of Christianity that is both fundamental and practical. It needs a foundation that clearly shows the whole work of God for reconciliation including God's reason for that work and, at the same time, encourages Christians to imitate that work, certainly in a creaturely way. It requires an aspect that changes Christians' views and directs their paths. It should be something that is the very centre of Christianity.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna claims that the doctrine of the Trinity is the heart of Christian faith.²¹ This doctrine reveals the God who Christians believe and worship. That

¹⁹ Anton Hermansyah, "1965 Symposium Indonesia's Way Back to Face Its Dark Past," *The Jakarta Post*, 19 April 2016.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (Harpercollins College Div, 1991). 1.

God is the relational God in which the three persons of God – the Father, the Son and the Spirit – are in a loving relationship. Furthermore, the doctrine of the Trinity also proclaims the actions of the Triune God from the beginning to the end of everything. It insists that as the Triune God is the relational God, God works to bring God's people to live in loving relationship with God and their neighbours through reconciliation. Hence, it is the doctrine of the Trinity that is needed in order to change Christians' minds and hearts, and to lead the church as the image of God to practical actions as the reconciling communion. Therefore, this essay will discuss how the doctrine of the Trinity can encourage the Christian church to be the reconciling communion in the light of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66.

This discussion will be divided into three parts. The first part will strengthen the foundation of this doctrine as the fundamental and practical key in this issue. In this part, the claim of LaCugna as mentioned above will be discussed. The second will explore the actions of the Triune God for reconciliation. In this part, the work of each person of the Trinity concerning reconciliation will be addressed. The third will reinforce the concept of the church's engagement in social reconciliation as the participation of the church in the inner life and the work of the Triune God.

CHAPTER 1

OIKONOMIA TOWARDS THEOLOGIA AND THEOLOGIA TOWARDS OIKONOMIA

How can a doctrine become the foundation of the church's practices? This is a serious question that requires an answer. The answer for this question is vital not only in terms of discovering the basis of the Christian churches' practices, but also to encourage theologians to connect, through reflection and doctrinal thinking with Christians' daily lives. To put it in other words, it is how to bring heaven down to earth.

In fact, Jesus talks much about the kingdom of God. Christians are called to live in the kingdom in which God reigns. What does this kingdom look like? It is when Christians live in the truth of God. How can Christians know that truth? It is to know who God is and to know God's will. However, it does not stop here. Christians should live such knowledge in their daily lives. The knowledge of God will encourage them to the living of it. When this process is happening, Christians experience God. They know and experience God who they believe in their daily lives. This is the kingdom of God. God is the King who rules. Christians are God's people that know God and are close to God as they live following the rules of the King.

Therefore, the answer for the question above is essential for the sake of God's kingdom. In this whole project, the practice of reconciliation within the church and as practiced by the church is the outcome of the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. How can the doctrine of the Trinity become the foundation for reconciliation? In this part, the focus is on how the doctrine of the Trinity can encourage Christians' practices in their daily lives. To answer such a question, this chapter will discuss the thought of Catherine Mowry LaCugna in her book *God For Us*.²²

²² Ibid.

In 1991, LaCugna, a Catholic theologian, published her landmark work on the doctrine of the Trinity, *God For Us*, a book that according to Elizabeth T. Groppe, is a milestone work which contributes to the continuing revitalisation of Trinitarian theology.²³ In addition, this book connects in a comprehensive way, the doctrine of Trinity and its practicality in Christianity. It is heaven touching earth.

A doctrine should lead to practical actions. LaCugna claims that confessing faith will be complete only if it becomes a way of life.²⁴ Especially for the doctrine of Trinity, it is fundamentally the basis for Christian practice. LaCugna is very strong on this position as expressed in her thesis and its foundation in *God For Us*. The thesis says that “the doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a practical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life”.²⁵ This thesis speaks loudly of a strong connection between a doctrine, Trinity, and its practice, Christian life.

Oikonomia to Theologia

The foundation of LaCugna’s thesis is the inseparability of *oikonomia* and *theologia*.²⁶ As LaCugna claims, humans can gain the knowledge of God only through God’s mystery of grace and God’s redemption as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.²⁷ Humans’ knowledge of God derives from the action of the Triune God to save them from the curse of sin. Hence, what and how *oikonomia* works and is understood are significant to be highlighted as a start to this discussion.

‘Oikonomia’ as the revelation of God: Jesus Christ

Christians believe that human beings never know the existence of God unless God reveals it through God’s actions. God, for Christianity, is the revelational of God, as God. It is not God that requires human beings to find and then know God. Christians

²³ Elizabeth T Groppe, "Catherine Mowry Lacugna's Contribution to Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 63, no. 4 (2002). 730.

²⁴ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 377.

²⁵ Ibid. 1.

²⁶ Ibid. 4.

²⁷ Ibid. 1-4.

believe that it is God that reveals God's self to God's creation. It can even be said that for Christians, there is no God if there is no revelation.

Anthony C. Thiselton in his book, *Systematic Theology*, argues that the God of Christianity is the acting and living God as revealed in the Bible.²⁸ That God since the beginning has worked in order to reveal God's self. This is totally different to the God that is more abstract, static, and theoretical in theism's perspective.²⁹ Thiselton states that God in Christianity is the living God who connects to God's creation in personal or supra-personal ways.³⁰ God, whom Christians believe is God, is not far away on God's throne. God does not only create everything but also restores through God's gracious actions what God has made. God wants and allows humanity to gain the knowledge of God and come into God's presence. God invites them to know and experience God in an eternal relationship with God.

It is interesting to pay attention to the phrase 'the living God' which Thiselton stresses. That phrase is very popular in the Old Testament as it occurs frequently in books such as 1 Samuel 17:26, 34 ("... the armies of the living God"); 2 Kings 19:4 ("... the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God"); Joshua 3:10 ("... you shall know that among you is the living God ..."); and Jeremiah 10:10 ("But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King"). That phrase makes a difference between the God of Israel and the god of other nations. God whom Israel worships is God who is known from God's activity.³¹

The phrase "the living God" has its roots in the essential story of Israel's exodus from Egypt. It is the story of God calling and sending Moses to go and lead Israel out of Egypt in Exodus 3. Putting his understanding of B. S. Childs' commentary, Thiselton argues that the name of God, "I am who I am" as the answer for Moses' question in Exodus 3:13-15, amplifies the continuity and activity of God, which is known as "the God

²⁸ Anthony C. Thiselton, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2015). 39-40.

²⁹ Ibid. 40.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”.³² The name of God as introduced to Moses, suggested by M. A. Grisanti, as quoted by Thiselton, can also be translated as “I will be with you”, which echoes the futurity of the God of Israel.³³ It means that the God of Israel is not static; that God is with Israel in its journey. Grisanti, argues that the name of God primarily shows the character of God who was speaking to Moses.³⁴ “I am who I am” or “I will be with you” is the guarantee for Moses to do God’s command.

In the New Testament, the living God is incarnated in Jesus Christ. The continuity, the activity, and the futurity of the living God is real in the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament God revealed God’s self in historical events. It also happened in the New Testament in Jesus Christ. As Keith Ward, quoted by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, suggests, in Jesus Christ God makes the Divine reality known in a particular historical form and the Eternal expressed in time.³⁵ In addition, the continuity, the activity, and the futurity of the living God still remains, even though Jesus has ascended to the Father, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in Christian communities, that is, in the church.³⁶ It is clear now that God whom Christians believe is God, acts yesterday, today and tomorrow; from generation to generation.

The revelation of God through God’s actions is known as the *oikonomia* or the economy of God. The word *oikonomia* comes from two Greek words, *oikos* and *nomos*, that mean “the law or management of a household”.³⁷ In biblical usage, particularly in the Pauline letters, *oikonomia* is a description of “God’s providential plan and care for creation”³⁸ that connects to the mystery of God.³⁹ This can be seen in Ephesians 1:8-10 saying that “With all wisdom and insight he [God] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan [*oikonomia*]

³² Ibid. 40-41.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Trinity and Revelation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014). 24.

³⁶ See LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 380.

³⁷ Ibid. 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. 24.

for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” As a result, the *oikonomia* or economy of God, as LaCugna argues, is God’s salvific plan to the whole of creation which is revealed in the coming of Christ.⁴⁰ As Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the Ephesians, quoted by LaCugna, wrote, “Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of Mary according to the economy of God”.⁴¹

The economy of God works and is understood completely through the incarnation of Christ. Christ is all that the incarnation is about. He is the way human beings can come to know and experience God. As argued by LaCugna, Jesus is the way God comes to us and the way we come to God and others.⁴² Similarly, T. F. Torrance claims that from Jesus Christ, Christians start their knowledge of God.⁴³ Jesus Christ is not a character among God’s creatures that makes God known. He is God that makes God known. Torrance states that what Jesus does is what God does.⁴⁴ Jesus Christ is the self-revelation of God. God’s life and actions are perfectly known in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, it is very important to always bear in mind that the dependence of human beings upon the revelation of God, highlighted by LaCugna, grounds the subject and object of the revelation. As Gunton argues, the significance of revelation is in its function of maintaining and explaining the character and action of that which is revealed.⁴⁵ It is to show the divine saving actions of God in Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ It is God as the subject that reveals God’s self through Jesus Christ, the object. It is the salvific actions of God in Christ that lead Christians to know and experience the Triune God. As a result, the work of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is the centre in the revelation. In Jesus Christ, His words and deeds, through the Holy Spirit, God reveals God’s self fully and perfectly.⁴⁷ Jesus Christ, Daniel L. Magliore argues, is proclaimed by the New

⁴⁰ Ibid. 25.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. 377.

⁴³ Thomas F Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015). 37.

⁴⁴ Ibid. xxxi.

⁴⁵ Colin E Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995). 110-11.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 3.

Testament as “God’s light in a world of darkness” that reliably and definitely has revealed God.⁴⁸ Jesus Christ is all that the revelation of God is about.

As God is the revelational God, Christians are enabled to know and experience God. This is a guarantee for Christians to have the true knowledge of God. They have the true foundation to put their trust in the true God. This means Christians can confidently declare that they believe in the true God, based on the knowledge of God revealed completely in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if that knowledge of God leads Christians to certain practices, they believe this is what God does want them to do.⁴⁹

Theologia to Oikonomia

LaCugna’s claim of the inseparability of *oikonomia* and *theologia* speaks loudly of the knowledge of God as revealed that leads to Christians’ way of life. The revelation of God is vital for human beings, not only in terms of how they are enabled to know and experience God, but also how they can live as they have to. The knowledge of God does not stop at the point where human beings realise that God exists. It also leads them to see and experience in their daily lives how the existence of God looks by living it. As discussed above, the existence or the life of God cannot be separated from the action of God. In fact, the existence of God is known through the action of God as revealed. Even, it can be said that the action of God at its very heart is the existence of God. These all strengthen the fact that the existence of God is the action and life of God, *oikonomia* and *theologia*. They are inseparable.

It is important to clearly understand that when Christians have had the *theologia*, it becomes the starting point or the foundation for them to move into their practices. *Theologia* talks about who God is and what God’s actions are. *Theologia* is the knowledge of Christians about the God who acts. The actions of God come from God’s life. As a result, *theologia* in turn leads to the *oikonomia*. The knowledge of God leads

⁴⁸ Daniel L Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014). 25.

⁴⁹ See Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*.

Christians to act in response to the economy of God. God's work in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit brings human beings back to their existence in the image of God, reflecting God's self by living and acting as God commands. Hence, every believer is drawn to the *oikonomia* of God.

However, it does not mean that Christians act in the same way that God acts. Volf reminds us that human beings can only imitate God in some respects,⁵⁰ not fully copying God, or as Samuel Powell and Gunton argue, in limited ways as finite beings.⁵¹ Volf suggests that human beings are God's creation, thus, they cannot jump over their own being. Human beings can only imitate God in the analogous sense, not the univocal one. This, according to Powell, also speaks of the transcendence of God. In addition, Volf also argues that human beings are at the same time sinful and fleshly creatures. Hence, they can only reflect God in historically appropriate ways. Christians, therefore, do not have their own *oikonomia*. They act to proclaim in their daily lives the *oikonomia* of God. Christians are invited to partake in God's life and actions. Christians live to reflect God's life and actions by imitating Christ with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

Due to the salvific action of God, human beings are enabled to recognise, and invited to proclaim, that God is the source and centre of Life. It is God who creates, owns, and rules the whole creation. It is God who came down to the earth to God's own people that had fallen to sin, redeemed them from their sins, and brought them to God's glorious kingdom. This is the existence of God as revealed in the salvation story. Since the very beginning of history God invites humans to participate in the existence, the life and actions of God. For the sake of the whole creation, humanity is engaged to "work it [other creatures] and take care of it [other creatures]" (Genesis 2:15, NIV). God also involves human beings to be the of God's salvific plan when God says to the serpent:

"And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;

⁵⁰ Volf, "'The Trinity Is Our Social Program': The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement." 404.

⁵¹ Samuel M Powell, "Participating in God: Creation and Trinity," (2008). 52.

he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

All believers are called and invited to participate in God’s life. They are welcomed to be in a loving relationship with the Triune God as prayed by Jesus in John 17. This biblical account, Samuel Powel argues, is the participation in the context of the relationship of the Father and the Son: as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father, so may we collectively be in the Father and the Son (John 17:21).⁵² That verse also claims the purpose of such relationship. It is “... so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” Humans’ relationship with God is the proclamation of God’s life and action. The *oikonomia* of God draws Christians into God’s life. As God is the acting God, Christians also act in the creaturely ways God wants them to. Through this, Christians are drawn to partake in God’s life and actions. LaCugna claims that “entering into the life of God means entering to the deepest way possible into the economy, into the life of Jesus Christ, into the life of Spirit, into the life of others.”⁵³ This the participation of Christians in the existence of God, as revealed, which reflects to the whole creation the life and action of God.

Interestingly, God does not only invite humans to participate but God also provides guidance for humans, as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Humans can find the ways of participating in God’s life and actions in the life and actions of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God. Jesus Christ is the character humans should always look at. Jesus Christ is the perfect model of the existence of God. The gospel of John precisely proclaims Jesus as the One who reveals God through His ministry.⁵⁴ John clearly and loudly speaks of this in several famous verses: 1:18, “No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known”; 12:45, “And whoever sees me sees him who sent me”; and 14:9, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”

⁵² Ibid. 45.

⁵³ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 382.

⁵⁴ John F O’Grady, “Jesus the Revelation of God in the Fourth Gospel,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 25, no. 4 (1995). 161.

As imitating Christ is not a piece of cake, God also sent the helper for humans. God sent the Holy Spirit in order to help and enable God's people to imitate Christ. The Holy Spirit guides the people of God to reflect the existence, the life and the actions of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. As well as the guarantee of guidance and help by the Spirit, God also equips God's people with gifts which they can use to participate in God's life and action. Volf states that the Spirit has given charisma to each believer to participate in God's ministry (Acts 2:17-21; 1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 13:3; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10).⁵⁵ The Spirit guides and helps Christians with their individual gifts to partake in the life and action of God. This shows that it is God that designs human beings to participate in God's life and actions. Paul Fiddes argues that God enables God's creatures to participate in the divine life of the Creator.⁵⁶ Looking at this thought of Fiddes, and LaCugna's claim concerning the inseparability of God's life and actions, it can be said that God designs and, indeed, enables human beings to participate in God's life and actions.

It is clear that God's self' revelation leads Christians to know God and to reflect God in their lives. Reflecting God is a logical consequence of knowing God as knowing God cannot be separated from reflecting God. As LaCugna claims, the faith in the Triune God is not faith at all unless it becomes a form of life.⁵⁷ It is a form of life completely found in the life, the ministry, of Jesus Christ, the incarnated God; and that form of life is applied in humans' lives by the help of the Holy Spirit.

All the discussion above shows the very heart of Christian doctrines in relation to Christian practices. The doctrine addressed is certainly the doctrine of the Trinity. The discussion from its start speaks of the logical consequence of a doctrine for Christian practical life. The knowledge and experience of God, the Trinity, fundamentally leads Christians to practices that reflect the life and actions of the Triune God. For this,

⁵⁵ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998). 229-30.

⁵⁶ Paul S Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2000). 54.

⁵⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 377.

LaCugna has helped Christian discussion concerning this issue by providing the order of Christian faith. It is started from the *oikonomia* of God to the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of God leads Christians into the *oikonomia* of God through the participation of Christians in God's life and actions.

The *oikonomia* comes from God. God acts in God's economy for the world and it makes the world know God (*theologia*). This means that from a human point of view, all is begun by the practices of God. Human beings know and come to God as God has revealed God's self and invited them. This is the *theologia*. This *theologia* is not static or passive. The *theologia* leads human beings to actively come to God and participate in the life and action of the living and acting God. *Theologia* (the knowledge of God), therefore, brings humans to the *oikonomia* (the actions of God). Hence, the theological order in this issue is: the actions of God as the starting point; this leads to the knowledge of God; and the knowledge of God leads to the actions of God, reflected by humans in creaturely ways, shown by God in Jesus Christ, and by the help of God, in the Spirit. It is from practice to knowledge, and knowledge to practice.

However, there is one fundamental question emerging in response to the discussions above. It is: what is the very basis of the *oikonomia* of God? To put it another way, why does God act in a certain way? Actually, the discussion in this chapter shows just a glimpse of thoughts that can answer that question. The question needs to be answered in more detail. The order mentioned in the previous paragraph is the key. The answer will come by applying the order in more detail, theologically and practically, in the following chapters, in the frame of the life of the Triune God (*theologia*) and God's work for reconciliation (*oikonomia*).

CHAPTER 2

RECONCILIATION AND THE TRIUNE GOD: THE RESTORATION OF LOVING RELATIONSHIP

In the previous chapter, I discussed the practicality of the doctrine of the Trinity. Focusing on LaCugna's thought in that discussion, I argued that the knowledge of the Triune God as revealed through God's actions will certainly lead to the practices that reflect the Triune God. As God's life and action are inseparable, humans' knowledge of God cannot be separated from their actions that reflect God. As God is known through God's actions, humans' knowledge of God is known through their actions.

In this chapter, there will be two essential points discussed according to the order in the previous chapter. First, it is from the actions of God that human beings know God. And, secondly, that knowledge of God in turn will lead human beings to engage in certain practices through the participation in God's life and actions. This chapter will specify the actions of God, which make God known, into one action of God and discuss it. It is reconciliation as the unified work of the Triune God that restores God's relationship with humans and between men/women with their neighbours. Based on this, this chapter will also examine the foundational reason for God to work for reconciliation. It concerns the significance of reconciliation in relation to God's Trinitarian life. These two crucial points will lead to the foremost thought of this chapter: the action of God bringing humans back to their position before God in which they are in a loving relationship with God and their neighbours.

Reconciliation as the unified work of the Triune God for relationship restoration.

Generally speaking, many Christians tend to associate reconciliation with the work of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. It is clear in Paul's letters that it is God who reconciled God's people to God's self through Jesus Christ (Rm. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:16; and Col. 1:20) and that happened on the cross of Calvary, but many Christians see Jesus Christ standing at the centre of the reconciliation history as separate from the work of the Triune God. This seems to make sense as those verses place Jesus'

work as the means of God to do the reconciliation. In Romans 5:10 for instance, Paul says “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Or in Colossians 1:20, he says, “and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” All the verses mentioned above imply the work of God for reconciliation through Jesus Christ using different terms – death, cross, the blood of His cross – underlining the significance of the suffering of the second person of the Trinity in reconciliation.

In fact, it was Jesus Christ, based on the gospel accounts, who was nailed to and died on the cross as a sacrifice, in order to save humans from their sins. The greater emphasis on Jesus Christ’s role seems to be supported by a famous movie of Mel Gibson, *The Passion of the Christ*, that shows Jesus Christ’s sufferings in a very extreme way. In addition, it is Jesus who was nailed on the cross by the plan of Jewish leaders and by the hand of the Romans, but in the redemption story Jesus’ death on the cross is believed to be the punishment of God for humans as the sinners. On the cross Jesus took humans’ position before God. That makes God forsake God’s Son, nailed to and dying on the cross as a sacrifice. Jesus Christ, therefore, is seen as the one who fulfilled his work for reconciliation or at least the one that was dominant in the drama of reconciliation.

However, reconciliation history is ultimately the work of the Triune God.⁵⁸ There are at least two reasons for this statement. Firstly, the Gospels depict Jesus Christ being sent by the Father in the power of the Spirit to fulfil the promises made to Abraham. Secondly, the drama of reconciliation is not only about the cross but it also includes the story of resurrection. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross only has its meaning when the tomb was empty on the third day. The resurrection is the beginning of the future. It gives hope for a new life in the future because it also includes the ascension and the Pentecost story. In addition, as reconciliation is about the restoration of relationship, it needs to be real in the life of those whose relationship was broken in the

⁵⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 351.

past. These two things suggest that reconciliation is a long story from the beginning to the end of humans' lives in this world. Reconciliation is the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the history of this world. It is the history in the past, present and also in the future.

To clarify, the death of Jesus Christ (the cross) and His resurrection (the empty tomb) will be discussed in more detail as the starting points to see how the Triune God works for reconciliation. The cross and the empty tomb are addressed here as two key events to look at the whole drama of reconciliation from a Trinitarian perspective. The discussion of the cross will be connected to the covenant which God, the Father, made with God's people in the Old Testament, while that of the empty tomb will be linked to the new covenant which God, the Holy Spirit, fulfils.

The Triune God at the cross: the Father and the Son

It is clear in the gospel narratives that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, was crucified on the cross at Calvary. However, the death of Jesus on the cross will only have its salvific and theological meaning if it is seen from a Trinitarian point of view.⁵⁹ In a broader perspective of reconciliation, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the punishment of humanity's sin actually involves the Father and the Spirit. This part will look at the engagement of the Father, while that of the Spirit will be discussed more in relation to the empty tomb, although the Spirit also shares with the Father and the Son in the cross event.

At the cross at Calvary the Father and the Son work for reconciliation. This can be seen clearly, for instance, in the cry, widely known as the cry of dereliction, of Jesus Christ. Mark 15:34 says, "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"* which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"" However, many Christians understand this as the cry that speaks only of the suffering of the Son, who was being abandoned by the Father. This seems to be true as in fact, both Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:47 record that cry, explicitly showing

⁵⁹ Ibid. 345.

the very suffering of Jesus Christ being forsaken by God. Jesus' physical pain on the cross might be less than other martyrs, but His pain that comes from the god-forsakenness is incomparable.

From a Trinitarian perspective it is not only the Son who works for reconciliation. The Triune God works and takes the consequences of that reconciliation. There are at least three different thoughts on this. The first comes from Barth whose thought is rooted in the emphasis of the oneness of God.⁶⁰ For Barth, it is the Triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – who reconciles human beings to God's self.⁶¹ The Triune God is the "Willor" and "Doer" of the reconciling work on the cross.⁶² Barth strongly refuses to see the salvific work of Jesus on the cross as a separated work of a single person of the Trinity.⁶³ Instead, it is the work of the one God in God's fullness of being, and that work is complete and final.⁶⁴ This does not mean that Barth does not distinguish the Father from the Son or the Son from the Spirit or the Spirit from the Father. Barth does distinguish each from the others in the three modes of being of the one God (*ad intra*).⁶⁵ However, Barth's rule of *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* expresses his thought of God as persons who are undivided in God's actions.⁶⁶ Hence, Barth claims that as Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who is with God and is truly God, his work on the cross should be seen as an undivided work with the Father and the Holy Spirit – the Triune God.⁶⁷

The second one comes from theologians, such as Moltmann, who approach the dereliction from the perspective of the *Threeness* of God. This has, in fact, significant difference to Barth's approach and even breaks Barth's rule of *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. On the cross, Moltmann claims, the Son was in a deep separation from the

⁶⁰ Adam J Johnson, *God's Being in Reconciliation: The Theological Basis of the Unity and Diversity of the Atonement in the Theology of Karl Barth* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012). 60-61.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 78-83.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 66-67.

Father.⁶⁸ Based on Moltmann's thought, Kärkkäinen portrays properly the suffering of the Father *and* the Son at the cross as follows:⁶⁹

“This tells us that the God of the dying Son Jesus Christ does not shy away from the suffering of either his Son or of the world but rather makes the suffering his own and so overcomes it in hope. All suffering becomes God's so that God may overcome it. At the cross, the Father suffers in deserting his Son. The Son suffers the pain of being cut off from the life of the Father, and the Father suffers the pain of giving up his Son. By doing so, God also accepts and adopts suffering in himself, making it part of his own eternal life. Therefore, the cross is not only an event between God and humanity. What happened on the cross was an event between God and God. It was a deep division in God himself, in so far as God abandoned God and contradicted himself, and at the same time a unity in God, in so far as God was at one with God and corresponded to himself. Thus the cross belongs to the inner life of God, not only occurring between God and estranged humanity.”

It is clear that there is a contradiction between the first approach and the second. The first one that emphasises the oneness of God does not allow any consideration of the division of work or function of each person of the Triune God. Meanwhile, the second one with its basis in Threeness insists upon the separation of the Father and the Son on the cross in order to reconcile humans to God.

The last one is the thought of Tom Smail that keeps the balance of the Oneness and the Threeness of the Trinity on this issue. He argues that “we shall get our doctrine of reconciliation in proper balance when we remember that reconciliation is an act in which Father, Son and Spirit are recognised as each acting in a way that the doctrine of the Trinity shows to be distinctive and characteristic for each of them, and that our understanding of reconciliation will be diminished or distorted if we neglect or exaggerate the part that each of the three divine persons plays within it.”⁷⁰ For Smail, in

⁶⁸ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*. 244.

⁶⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 348.

⁷⁰ Tom Smail, "Trinitarian Atonement," *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 15, no. 2 (2007). 43.

the distinctive joint work of the one God, the Father sovereignly initiates, the Son obediently executes, and the Spirit creatively fulfils the reconciliation.⁷¹

This chapter of my thesis avoids coming to a deeper discussion on the difference and contradiction above. For this project, those thoughts speak loudly of the fact that reconciliation is the work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Thus, whether it was in an undivided or separated or distinctive work, it is clear that the Triune God works and 'takes the cost' of that work. In fact, as mentioned above, the reconciliation should be seen in a wider perspective.

However, it is critical to acknowledge that the cross presents Christ as the second person of the Trinity and is dominant in the reconciliation as recorded in the gospel narratives. Jesus Christ has freedom to decide whether He continues his obedience to the Father or not. In Gethsemane, Jesus decided to obey. Kärkkäinen argues that the cross is the expression of Christ's obedience to the Father through suffering.⁷² It is a voluntary action or a self-sacrifice of Christ for the reconciliation.⁷³ Pannenberg argues that Jesus Christ is not passive in the work of reconciliation. "The Son is also acting subject in the event."⁷⁴ His love for his 'friends' led Him to lay down his life for them (John 15:13). For what Christ has done on the cross, Paul says, "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name," (Philippians 2:9).

The cross and the Abrahamic covenant

As discussed above, the cross is very significant in the work of the Triune God for reconciliation. Through the death of Jesus Christ, God reconciles all God's people to God. However, the drama of reconciliation is not only on the cross. It has its root in the history of God's chosen people in the Old Testament. God made the relationship

⁷¹ Ibid. 44.

⁷² Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 332.

⁷³ Ibid. 336, 340.

⁷⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994). 441.

covenant with those people. For Christianity, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the fulfilment of the covenant God the Father made with God's people. There are more covenants God made with God's people in the Old Testament. In this project, it will be easier to relate the cross to the Abrahamic covenant. To do this, the character of the work of Christ on the cross and the character of the Abrahamic covenant will be examined.

The Abrahamic covenant is considered in this discussion because of its significance in Israel's history. It is the foundation of the covenants God would make with God's chosen people in the future. Steven L. McKenzie argues that the Abrahamic covenant is the foundation of the further relationship of God with Israel.⁷⁵ In addition, Michael Horton claims that the God of Israel always responds to Israel's rebellion in the frame of God's commitment to the Abrahamic covenant.⁷⁶ Those two things are enough, at this point, to render the Abrahamic covenant as sharing in the nature of the cross.

The cross of Christ is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. In the Abrahamic covenant, God called and promised to bless Abraham and through his heir, all nations will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-13; 22:17-18).⁷⁷ The 'heir of Abraham' and 'blessing to all nations' are the characters of the covenant. Both characters are found on 'the cross'. Jesus Christ is the heir of Abraham. This is clear in Matthew 1 which shows Jesus Christ as the Son of Abraham through the genealogy of Jesus. The second character, that through this heir all nations will be blessed, is also found in the work of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ on the cross is not only for Jewish people but also for gentiles. It brings all nations to God. Paul speaks of this to the Galatians by saying that "there is neither Jew nor gentile" (3:28) because "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith" (3:26). Abraham's seed is Jesus Christ, whose work on the cross in particular stressed here, brings blessing to all nations. By looking at the cross of Christ,

⁷⁵ Steven L McKenzie, *Covenant* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2000). 4.

⁷⁶ Michael Horton, *God of Promise* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2006). 55.

⁷⁷ Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985). 38-39.

that blessing in Christian perspective is reconciliation. God reconciles all nations to God through Jesus Christ.

There is still an essential character of that covenant that is also the most crucial character in relation to the reconciling work of God on the cross. It is the initiation of God the Father to bless all nations through Abraham's heir. This covenant, along with the Davidic Covenant, according to Horton, is an unconditional covenant or promissory covenant.⁷⁸ Abraham did not have to do anything as a bargain in order to ensure the promise be accomplished. Abraham just had to have faith in God and live his faith in response to God's promise.⁷⁹ It is God's promise. It is God who initiated and accomplished that promise even though God should give God's only Son (John 3:16). On the cross, God the Father forsook God's only Son in order to fulfil God's covenant with Abraham. Hence, the Abrahamic covenant and the cross of Christ denote the role of the Father who gave and forsook God's only Son in order to bless all nations. The Father initiates the reconciliation through the cross of Christ. As claimed by Pannenberg, the cross event happened according to the providence of God.⁸⁰

In addition, the connection between the death of Christ on the cross and the Abrahamic covenant implies three crucial elements in relation to reconciliation. They are (1) the initiation of God the Father, (2) Jesus Christ as the seed of Abraham, and (3) the blessing to all nations through Christ's work on the cross. Put simply, it is God the Father who initiates the promise to bless all nations and fulfils it through Jesus Christ. A critical question which emerges here is: how is that blessing spread throughout all nations to become real in the lives of God's people?

The Triune God at the empty tomb: the Spirit activates the reconciliation

Jesus' death and resurrection are the inseparable events initiated and accomplished by the Triune God in order to reconcile God's beloved people to God. As

⁷⁸ Horton, *God of Promise*. 56, 62.

⁷⁹ McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*. 66.

⁸⁰ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 438.

the death of Christ the Son is also the Father's and the Spirit's work, Christ's resurrection is also the joint work of the three persons of the Trinity. Kärkkäinen argues that the resurrection is an undivided part of the salvific action of the Triune God.⁸¹ Hence, the reconciliation does not stop with the cross event. It is carried forward through the resurrection and post resurrection where the work of the Spirit is dominant as the consummation of God's work for reconciliation.⁸²

Smail finds this connection in the cross event as recorded in the gospel of John.⁸³ This gospel on many occasions recorded the special relationship of Jesus and the Spirit. That relationship is in regard to the continuity of Jesus' ministry. In John 14:15-30, Jesus promised his disciples that he will ask the Father to give another Advocate or Counsellor, that is the Holy Spirit, to be with them so that they are not left as orphans (vv. 16-18). The Holy Spirit will be sent to teach all things to the disciples and to remind them of everything Jesus has said to them (v. 26). In chapter 16:8, Jesus says that the Advocate "will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment", and in verse 13, the Spirit will guide the disciples into all truth. These verses speak of the continuity of Jesus' work.

This is clearly presented by the gospel of John when Jesus died on the cross. In John 19:30, Jesus died after saying "it is finished". That indicates the completion of his work on the cross. Then the gospel recorded that Jesus "bowed his head and gave up his spirit." The spirit of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. This can be seen in the epistles of Paul that mention the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9), the Spirit of the Son (Galatians 4:6) or the Spirit of Jesus (II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:6; and Philippians 1:19).⁸⁴ In addition, Moltmann argues that the Spirit that is in Christ accompanies Christ in his death on the cross.⁸⁵ Owing to this, Smail is right to claim that Jesus, after finishing his work, "handed over [*paredoken to pneuma*] the Spirit to his disciples to bring them

⁸¹ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 353.

⁸² Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 450.

⁸³ Smail, "Trinitarian Atonement." 48.

⁸⁴ Andrew Sung Park, *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009). 62.

⁸⁵ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCM Press, 1992). 68.

into salvific relationship through all that he had done for them.”⁸⁶ For this, Andrew Sung Park suggests that the Holy Spirit is the successor of Jesus who continues his salvific and liberating work.⁸⁷

It can be said that the Holy Spirit has worked ‘dominantly’ since the death of Christ. It becomes a bit clearer at the resurrection event. Moltmann claims that the Spirit accompanies Christ to his end and the Spirit can make this end the new beginning.⁸⁸ That new beginning started from the empty tomb.⁸⁹ The Spirit who seems to be absent at the resurrection event has, in fact, a significant role in Christ’s resurrection as Paul insists in Romans 8:11, the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.

This work of the Holy Spirit is vital in Christianity because Jesus’ resurrection from death is very crucial in Christian faith. The apostle Paul clearly insists this in 1 Corinthians 15:14, “and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain”; and in verse 17 he says, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” These two verses speak of the fundamental aspect of Christ’s resurrection for Christianity. There would not be Christianity unless Christ was raised from the dead. Thus, the death of Christ on the cross had its meaning when Christ was raised from the dead. As the death of Jesus Christ is for reconciliation, so is his resurrection.

The resurrection event is the trigger of the massive movement of the Spirit established in the ascension event and started at Pentecost. Park argues that as Jesus ascended to heaven, the Spirit takes over his ministry of reconciliation.⁹⁰ At the Pentecost event, the Spirit came down to the disciples in a visible way through tongues of fire that inflame their spirits to preach the reconciling work of the Triune God (Acts 2 cf. Acts 3 and 4).

⁸⁶ Smail, "Trinitarian Atonement."

⁸⁷ Park, *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation*. 63.

⁸⁸ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*.

⁸⁹ See Anthony Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008). 142-3.

⁹⁰ Park, *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation*. 65.

These show that the Spirit is significant also in the post resurrection event. Paul does not only speak of the Spirit's role at the event of resurrection but he also states the fundamental role of the Spirit after that event. Paul says, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you." This implies that the Spirit is the One that makes Jesus' resurrection real in Christian lives. As the resurrection of Christ is an integral part of reconciliation,⁹¹ the Spirit gives the experience in Christians lives.⁹² Therefore, Christians need to bear in mind that the Spirit is involved in the event of reconciliation and also in the process in which humans are led to live as the reconciled people.

This role of the Spirit is to activate the reconciliation, initiated by the Father and executed by the Son, in the life of those who believe. It is to guide and help the reconciled people to live in the reconciliation. Pannenberg argues that the reconciliation will only have its meaning when human beings are "taken up into fellowship with the Father of the Son who became man in Jesus Christ" (cf. Galatians 3:26f.; 4:5; Romans 8:14f.).⁹³ This can only happen through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works to bring all people to God so that they can live in a close relationship with God. As Moltmann suggests, the Spirit leads all the followers of Christ to enter into "Christ's saving and life-giving fellowship."⁹⁴ This, according to Kärkkäinen⁹⁵ and Pannenberg,⁹⁶ is the Spirit's work of completion of the death and the resurrection events. The completion is when Christians live as the reconciled people. Here, the Spirit is seen as the Creator of new life from the resurrection⁹⁷ and the Sustainer of that life. That new life is the

⁹¹ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 353.

⁹² Christ's resurrection brings a new life for us (Gerald O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012). 53-54.)

⁹³ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 450.

⁹⁴ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*.

⁹⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 352.

⁹⁶ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 395.

⁹⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1.

reconciled life in Christ. Hence, creating new life in terms of leading human beings into the reconciliation, and sustaining the reconciled life in the people of God from all nations, is the work of the Spirit: to activate the reconciliation initiated by the Father and fulfilled by the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit makes the reconciliation real in the life of God's people.

Reconciliation as an echo of God's inner life

A vital question that emerges here is how does this work of reconciliation relate to the inner life of God? The discussion above has clearly shown that reconciliation is the work of the Triune God. The discussion in the first chapter insists that the Triune God is known through God's actions and that knowledge in turn will lead Christians to certain practices. This means that from reconciliation, human beings know the Triune God. The reconciliation event and process (activation) lead Christians to know and believe that it is the Triune God working for the restoration of relationship. Therefore, Christians are convinced that the Triune God is the reconciling God.

However, it is very crucial to bear in mind that there is a very foundational character of God before the reconciling character. It is the inner-life of the Triune God. Christians believe in one God (being) that reveals God's self in the three different Persons – the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The three persons of God are in a loving relationship. That relationship is explained by the Cappadocian fathers with the Greek term *perichoresis*.⁹⁸ This term is used to express the dynamic, mutual and loving relationship of the persons in the Trinity.⁹⁹ Leonardo Boff simply explains that:

“perichoresis means one Person's action of involvement with the other two. Each divine person permeates the other and allows itself to be permeated by that person. This interpenetration expresses the love and life that constitutes the

⁹⁸ Graham Buxton, *The Trinity, Creation and Pastoral Ministry: Imaging the Perichoretic God* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007). 129.

⁹⁹ Ibid.; see also Thomas F Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994). 141; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1981). 175;

divine nature. It is the very nature of love to be self-communicating; life naturally expands and seeks to multiply itself. Thus, the divine Three from all eternity find themselves in an infinite explosion of love and life from one another. The effect of this reciprocal interpenetration is that each Person dwells in the other. ... The Three do not first exist and then relate. Without beginning, they live together eternally and are interconnected. That is why they are one God, God – Trinity.”¹⁰⁰

This shows God the Trinity, whom Christians believe is the relational God whose existence is in a loving relationship. As discussed above, God reconciles human beings to God in terms of relationship between God and human beings and among human beings.¹⁰¹ Reconciliation is the restoration of that relationship that was broken.¹⁰² Therefore, the restoration of the broken relationship through reconciliation is the effect of God’s inner life as the relational God. It can be said that God is known as the reconciling God because of God’s response to restore the broken relationship caused by human beings. This means that the character of God as the reconciling God is the effect of God’s character as the relational God, the inner life of the Triune God.

As the fundamental reason for God to work for reconciliation is the character of God as the relational God, it is right to say that reconciliation is an echo of God’s inner life. Reconciliation reflects in a very clear way the life of the Trinitarian God. In reconciliation, the action and life of the Triune God are real. The Triune God works for reconciliation. The Father initiates, the Son fulfils by executing it, and the Spirit completes by activating it. That work echoes who the Triune God is.

Reconciliation as an event happened once and finally on the cross but its process started to be activated from the empty tomb to the end of the world. God places Christians in this process period. As reconciliation, both as event and process, is the echo

¹⁰⁰ Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Orbis Books, 2000). 14-15; See also Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*. 175; and LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 271.

¹⁰¹ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 398; see also Mostert, "Reconciliation and the Church." 192.

¹⁰² Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, 1. 364.

of the Triune God, how should Christians live in this period of echoing the work and life of the Trinity? This question will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LIVING AS THE RECONCILED AND RECONCILING COMMUNITY AS AN ECHO OF THE TRIUNE GOD

In the previous chapter, I argued that the Triune God is known from the reconciliation, both its event and process; that is, the unified work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. From the view points of the cross of Jesus Christ and His empty tomb, reconciliation speaks loudly of the Triune God who restores the relationship between God and human beings. God, in God's eternal love, reconciles human beings to God by bringing them back to a loving relationship with God and their neighbours. Furthermore, reconciliation also echoes the inner life of the Triune God. It speaks of the very reason for God to restore such relationship. God is relational within God's own being. There is an eternal loving relationship among the three persons of God. As God is the relational God, God works to restore the broken relationship between God and human beings. Based on these two critical issues, the previous chapter strongly insists that as God is the relational God, God is also the reconciling God. God's being and God's action are inseparable and *vice versa*.

I also argued in the previous chapter that reconciliation as a process has not finished yet as it will only finish when Jesus Christ has come again at the end of time. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus.¹⁰³ The Holy Spirit is still at work to actualise the reconciliation in all believers.¹⁰⁴ This work of the Spirit for reconciliation is the main issue that will be discussed in this chapter in the light of the Indonesian massacre of 1965/66. This chapter will focus on how the Christian church, as the communion of the reconciled people, echoes the Triune God as the relational and reconciling God. It is about the work of the Spirit to actualise the reconciling work of the Triune God *in* and *through* the Christian church, the communion of the reconciled people. This activation is visible by the participation of the Christian church, which

¹⁰³ Park, *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation*. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 451.

includes the perpetrators and the victims of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66, in the dance of the Trinity.

Broken relationships as an impact of Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66

After defeating the *30 September Movement* and taking control of the situation on 1st October 1965 in Jakarta, the Indonesian Military, led by Major General Soeharto (Suharto), killed members and sympathisers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as PKI was accused of enacting that movement. About five hundred thousand people were killed from October 1965 to March 1966 across Indonesia. Those who were arrested but then released have been labelled as traitors.

That tragedy has had a huge negative impact in Indonesia. One of its impacts is that that tragedy has broken various relationships in the society and even in the congregational life in the East Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia (NTT). Generally speaking, conflicts and violence that happen in society always have negative impacts on social relations. The slaughters that occurred in NTT have broken such relations. The common broken relationships were between perpetrators and victims. Perpetrators can be defined as those who inflict the execution or those who are involved in that movement, which includes those who help the military to arrest the victims. It also includes the perpetrators' families as they supported the perpetrators who had defended the sovereign of Indonesia and therefore they are also in broken relationship with the victims and the victims' families. The victims are those who are killed and their families (wife, husband, parents, children, relatives). Both perpetrators and victims live in the same society.

However in East Kupang, that tragedy also broke family and sibling relationships in the society.¹⁰⁵ It caused destruction between former political prisoners

¹⁰⁵ Welys Hawuhaba-Taedini, Elfrantin de Haan, and Fransina Rissi, *There Is a Gulf between Us*, ed. Mery Kolimon, Liliya Wetangterah, and Karen Campbell-Nelson, *Forbidden Memories: Women's Experiences of 1965 in Eastern Indonesia* (Victoria, Australia: Monash University Publishing, 2015). 92.

and their own families (between parents and children, and also between siblings).¹⁰⁶ Children hated their parents as their parents were the prisoners of 'a coup' movement. Those prisoners also had relatives and their relatives hated them in the same way as the children. This happened because of the negative stigma of the society. They were always associated with negative things happening in the society. Meanwhile, the perpetrators were seen as those who kept Indonesian's ideology, Pancasila.

That tragedy also destroyed the relations between both victims and perpetrators and their families with society.¹⁰⁷ It can be said that those in the society who were not either perpetrators or victims were 'watchers' of that tragedy. They did not have any family relationship with either party (if they had, it was not a close family relationship). Within this group of people, most supported the perpetrators as they thought the perpetrators were heroes. That is the reason the negative stigma for victims remains with these people. A few support the victims silently as they are afraid of being accused as sympathetic to the victims.

It can be said that three different groups of people emerged as a consequence of that tragedy. They are perpetrators, victims and watchers. These groups of people are still alive as they tell that story to their children. Although that negative stigma is not as powerful as it was, most people in that society know who were the victims and their families, and who were the perpetrators and their families. They live together but their relationships are broken. That bad stigma, although it is not always spoken aloud, lives in their hearts and minds. It is very common in that society that if a person does, or is accused of doing, bad things such as stealing, the society will associate that person with PKI.¹⁰⁸ This is a case in point proving that that negative stigma still lives in the society of East Kupang.

Furthermore, that tragedy is taught in all schools in Indonesia. As the history is written by the winner, those historical books record that the PKI attempted a coup and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 100-1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 101.

¹⁰⁸ The story of Pak Kobus is a case in point. Ibid. 104-5.

as a consequence, the members and sympathisers of that party were killed in order to protect Indonesia. Those books are written to justify that massacre. In addition, every 30th September all Indonesians commemorate that tragedy. There is always a state ceremony on that day, including in all schools. Therefore the tragedy and its impacts, including the broken relationships as discussed above, live on in the society and, even, in the Christian church.¹⁰⁹

It is sad to say that most of those people –victims, perpetrators and watchers – were the members of a congregation of the Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor/GMIT). For the victims are not atheists as communists are usually accused of being. They are active members of a congregation in Oesao. As a response of that church to the tragedy, the victims were disciplined. Consequently, the victims were not allowed to attend the church services or holy communion as they were under that discipline; they could not bring their children to be baptised in the church; and they were prohibited to hold positions in the church ministry.¹¹⁰ In the church, the victims were seen as the sinners.

It is clear that that congregation had a tendency to follow the state which punished those who were accused as the members or sympathisers of the PKI. At this point, it can be said that the Christian church in East Kupang was in the position that “supported” the murder of those who were accused as PKI. However, one might argue that the church leaders were threatened to be killed by PKI members.¹¹¹ They knew this from stories that were spread in that area. Those stories said that there was a list of people, including church leaders, who would be killed on 30th September 1965 by the communists. Hence, although that list has never been found and it was not clear where it came from, the fact that the church leaders were threatened needs to be considered. Furthermore, those who supported the victims were considered as communists.¹¹² Therefore, the church leaders were silent at that time and tended to follow the state.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 105.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 107.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 106-7.

¹¹² Ibid. 107.

However, the silence of that church and its tendency to support the state with its discipline can be considered as the church's 'sin'. It is a sin because the church's silence enlarged the gap between the perpetrators and victims, and also with the watchers in the society and in the church fellowship. It made those broken relationships worse. Although in 1979 there was a new pastor in that congregation who conducted pastoral ministry by visiting all the members, including the victims, and erased all the disciplinary actions,¹¹³ it did not heal the broken relationships. While it allowed the victims to return to the fellowship, it did not encourage other people in the fellowship to accept them. It did not bring the perpetrators and victims to a reconciliation as in fact, those people still live in broken relationships: family relations, society relations and church fellowship.¹¹⁴

Such broken relationships as an impact of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66 are not only found in East Kupang but also other places across NTT. This makes sense as in NTT Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, is the majority, which means most of the perpetrators, victims and watchers are members of those churches. As those churches' responses to that tragedy were the same in terms of having tendency to follow the state, such broken relationships can be found in all the congregations or parishes. For the Protestant church in particular, which this project focuses on, GMIT is the mainstream church in NTT. As a result, such broken relationships can be found in all its congregations across NTT although the broken relationship in families is very typical of East Kupang.

Those broken relationships should be restored. Those people need to be reconciled. The Christian church in NTT has a huge opportunity to work on that as the perpetrators, victims and watchers are members of the Christian church. In fact, the Christian church does not only have that opportunity, but also the responsibility to work for reconciliation because the church was also involved in that tragedy. The Christian

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 108-9.

church has silently supported that tragedy that has broken various relations in families, societies and church fellowships. The Christian church is charged with this responsibility.

The Christian church as the restored image of the relational God

As reconciliation is the restoration of the broken relationship between human beings and God, and between human beings and their neighbours, it implies that there was a time when all parties lived in a good relationship. This is clear in the book of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. It was when God in the very beginning created all creatures and God said “it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). In the garden of Eden, the book of Genesis describes a good relationship both between human beings and God, and between Adam and Eve. It can be said that such relationship is the reflection of human beings as the image of the Triune God (Genesis 1:26, 27).¹¹⁵ This is not only found in biblical narratives but also in pagan temples that insist the image of deity is the visible character of the deity.¹¹⁶ In pagan deities, the invisible deity is signified in wood and stone forms which are static. Meanwhile, the Hebrew scripture says that the invisible living God of Israel is represented in human beings who are created as the image of God.¹¹⁷

As God is the relational God, God created human beings as relational creatures. This is clear in Genesis 2:18 when God says that “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Regarding this, Vladimir Lossky suggests that human beings are created as ‘persons’ and as distinct from ‘individuals’.¹¹⁸ He argues that ‘an individual’ belongs to the order of nature, while ‘a person’ differentiates itself from nature.¹¹⁹ Thiselton explains Lossky’s thought of ‘person’ saying that, “personal existence supposes a relation to the other. ... A person can be fully personal only insofar as he has nothing that he seeks to possess ... to the exclusion of others. ... Otherwise we are in the presence of individuals.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Joseph Coleson, *Genesis 1-11*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2012). 72.

¹¹⁶ Thiselton, *Systematic Theology*. 136.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 137.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

'Person' therefore is a relational term.¹²¹ This means that the relational creature is the identity of human beings.

As the image of God, they certainly had a good relationship with God. That relationship is described beautifully in the garden. They had direct communication with God without any boundaries. They could speak to God just like a man to his friend. It is critical to note that relationship in the perspective of God, based on Genesis 1 and 2, is a mutual relationship. It is when human beings realised they need others (Genesis 2:20). God knew that Adam needed Eve in his life. It is also when they supported each other. God created Eve as a helper for Adam. Claus Westermann argues that the word "helper" in this text expresses "mutual help in all spheres of human existence".¹²² Westermann also suggests that the presence of Eve implies "mutual self-understanding in conversation, in silence, in openness to one another".¹²³ Owing to Westermann's thoughts, it can be said that it is good in God's view when human beings live in that mutual relationship. At this point, it is critical to note that human beings, man and woman equally,¹²⁴ reflect their Creator as the relational God who is in a mutual relationship.

However, the book of Genesis also shows that that relationship was broken. It was not from God's part as the Creator, but because of human beings, the creatures. It was because human beings wanted to be the same as God. They preferred to be the 'God' rather than the image of God. Instead of being 'commanded' by God, they wanted to be God who commands. This led them to disobey God's command. As a consequence, their relationship with God was broken. God drove human beings out of Eden, out of the good relationship with God (Genesis 3:24).

That broken relationship had a negative impact in their relationship. In their relationship to God, human beings hid from God's presence (Genesis 3:8). They

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987). 21.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Coleson, *Genesis 1-11*. 67-9, 71.

'rejected' God's presence in their lives. In their relationship as human beings, instead of 'to need' and 'to support' one another in a mutual relationship, human beings 'rejected' each other, began to recognise their wrong deeds and 'blamed' others (Genesis 3:12-13). Instead of protecting Eve, Adam replied to God's question with an individualistic term "I": "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).¹²⁵ This sentence implies that Adam did not care for Eve who was hiding with him. Adam 'rejected' Eve's presence in his life. This broken relationship separates human beings from God and from their neighbours. Such broken relationship can also be seen in chapter 4 when Cain murdered his brother, Abel, and denied his deed when God asked him. Cain 'rejected' the presence of his brother in his life. Hence, as those relationships (between relational creatures) are broken, the image of God is broken.

It is critical to pay more attention to an important issue of that broken relationship. It is 'rejection' both of human beings and of God. That broken relationship began with the intention of human beings being the same as God. They refused to be creatures. This led them to refuse to obey God's command. They also refused one another. They refused to recognise their wrong deeds. By driving them out from Eden, God shows God's refusal of what they have done.

However, the refusal of God is different to humans' refusal. Before driving them out of Eden, God had planned to bring them back to 'Eden' (Genesis 3:15). This will happen in God's time. Christians believe that that time is when Christ died on the cross to reconcile them to God.¹²⁶ By reconciliation, as Mostert claims, God brings human beings to the Creator-creation relationship so that human beings can glorify and enjoy God as is God's intention for human beings from eternity.¹²⁷ In addition, God's rejection in Genesis 3 is followed by God's reception of human beings according to God's eternal plan. This can also be seen in the following chapter. In chapter 4, God rejected Cain's offering but God also received him by putting a mark on him as a protection although

¹²⁵ Ibid. 128.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 135-6.

¹²⁷ Mostert, "Reconciliation and the Church." 196-7.

he had murdered his brother (verse 15). As Volf argues, “God both relentlessly questions and condemns Cain (verses 6-12) and graciously places a protective mark upon him (verse 15)”.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, humans’ rejection continues. Cain rejected the reality that there was something wrong with him or his offering that caused God to have no regard for his offering (verse 5, 7). He refused to listen to God’s warning (verse 6). He refused to change himself based on God’s advice (verse 7) for him to control himself. Cain’s refusal excluded both God and his brother, Abel from his life.¹²⁹ As Westermann argues, this primal history states that sin against God will lead to sin against a brother.¹³⁰ This is clear in that text as Cain killed his brother. This murder then has a negative impact on his relationship with the land (verse 12) just as happened in the previous chapter.¹³¹ As a consequence, Volf claims that Cain “excluded himself from all relationship – from the land below, from God above, from the people around”.¹³² Chapter 4 ends when Cain “went away from God’s presence” (verse 16). He settled in the land of Nod (that is the Land of Misery), east of Eden which, according to Westermann, means “away, far from God”.¹³³

It is clear that God’s rejection is followed by God’s reception to bring human beings back to the good relationship with God. Meanwhile, human beings keep going away from that relationship. The human characters in the primal history above actually describe the character of all the human beings who have broken their relationship with God, their neighbours and other creatures. Claus Westermann, as quoted by Volf, claims that the primal history means to state that every human being has the potential to be

¹²⁸ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Abingdon, 1996). 93.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 95.

¹³⁰ Westermann, *Genesis*. 35.

¹³¹ Richard Baukham, "Humans, Animals, and the Environment in Genesis 1-3," in *Genesis and Christian Theology*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Mark W Elliott, and Grant Macaskill (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012). 188.

¹³² Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. 97.

¹³³ Westermann, *Genesis*. 35.

Cain and Abel, also Adam and Eve.¹³⁴ In fact, everybody has sinned against God and lives in a broken relationship with God and others. Cain is therefore all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve in relation to their brothers and sisters. They all have sinned against God. They have rejected and excluded God and their neighbours from their lives. Their relationships with God and their neighbours are broken. They all are away, far away from God.

It is interesting to connect this story with the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66. As discussed before, human tragedy in Indonesia, especially in East Kupang has had a negative impact on families, society and church relations/fellowship. Christian has rejected fellow Christian in many forms since that tragedy occurred until today. The perpetrators rejected the victims from the life of the community just based on accusations that have never been proved in the court. The victims were also refused fellowship and acceptance by their families. The Christian church rejected the victims from the church fellowship. The victims were excluded from society, their families, and even the church. These rejections are still alive today although not as strong and clear as before. At this point, it can be said the Christian church and the victims' families that rejected the victims are perpetrators like Cain.

However, it is essential to note that based on the Cain and Abel story above, both victims and perpetrators are the sons and daughters of Cain, as before God all human beings are sinners because of their rejections of God and their neighbours. One might argue that for perpetrators to be understood as sinful is clear, but how could one say that victims are sinful as well? In fact, it is clear in that story that Cain, the perpetrator, got angry and then murdered his brother. Thus, Abel could not be considered as a sinful person in that murder event.

¹³⁴ Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. 93; see also Stanley J Grenz, *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1998). 92-6.

However, both Cain and Abel are sinful people because that event happened outside the garden of Eden in which they ought to be.¹³⁵ Both Cain and Abel are those who are driven by God out of the garden. Although they still had relationship with God as they offered their offerings to God, it is clear that they were outside the garden of Eden, the place where God places human beings to have the loving relationship with God, their neighbours and other creatures. Furthermore, both Cain and Abel in that story are the broken image of God that needs to be restored. The fact that they are outside the garden shows that they are living under their broken identity as the image of God.

Christians believe that all human beings, including the perpetrators and victims, are in God's plan for restoration in Genesis 3:15. That God will bring them back to the loving relationship with God in the garden of Eden by restoring their broken image of God. It is critical to note that Cain went away with a mark of God that made him belong to and be protected by God.¹³⁶ Volf is right to say that "we leave Cain protected in primal history; on Good Friday we will find him redeemed" as he "will be drawn near and embraced by the Crucified"¹³⁷ who, as argued by Colin Gunton, bears the consequences of human injustice.¹³⁸ On the cross of Christ, God reconciles all the sons of Adam and Eve to God. Christians can say that the mark put on Cain by God is the cross of Christ. By the cross of Christ, God protects Cain along his way until he, guided by the Spirit of God, encounters Christ, God's only Son, whom God gave as a sacrifice, nailed on the cross in order to bring him back to the presence of God. Through the cross of Christ, God changes God's rejection to God's reception of all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve into a loving relationship with God (cf. Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 5:22).

God's reception of Cain through the reconciling cross of Christ shows the act of God to restore God's image. The image of God that has been broken before by the

¹³⁵ See Terence E Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005). 77.

¹³⁶ Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. 98.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Colin E Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003). 191.

rejection of human beings is restored by the reception of God. It is clear that the restoration of God's image does not come from human beings. It can even be said that human beings had no intention to do that. Paul the apostle states that it is God who works to reconcile human beings to God even when human beings were still the enemy of God (Romans 5:8-10). In doing so, God makes those reconciled people become the restored image of God that echoes the relational God. By the cross of Christ, they are now able to reflect their Creator, as the relational God, through their lives.

The Christian church as the reconciled people who participate in the inner life and the work of the Triune God

It is essential first to briefly discuss the being of the Triune God. Christians believe that the Triune God is the relational God. Graham Buxton in his discussion concerning the Cappadocian Fathers' concept of 'person', argues that the unity of God is constituted by the loving relationships between the three divine persons.¹³⁹ That the three persons of God – Father, Son and Spirit – are in a mutual and loving relationship. The Father exists in the Son and the Spirit as well as the Son and the Spirit exist in the Father. The Son exists in the Spirit as well as the Spirit also exists in the Son. Hence, there is no time when one or two of the persons of the Triune God do not exist. The three persons of God eternally exist in a reciprocal relationship.

Theologians explain that relationship using a Greek word, *perichoresis*. That is the theological formulation used by the Cappadocian fathers to defend their theology against tritheism¹⁴⁰ and Arian subordinationism.¹⁴¹ *Perichoresis* speaks of the dynamic and mutual relationship among the three persons of God in the divine life.¹⁴² Colin Gunton insists that the reciprocal relatedness of the three persons of the Triune God is in eternity.¹⁴³ Leonardo Boff simply explains the perichoretic life of God by saying that,

¹³⁹ Buxton, *The Trinity, Creation and Pastoral Ministry: Imaging the Perichoretic God*. 109.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 129.

¹⁴¹ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 270.

¹⁴² See Buxton, *The Trinity, Creation and Pastoral Ministry: Imaging the Perichoretic God*. 131.

¹⁴³ Colin E Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 164.

Perichoresis means one Person's action of involvement with the other two. Each divine Person permeates the other and allows itself to be permeated by that person. This interpenetration expresses the love and life that constitutes the divine nature. It is the very nature of love to be self-communicating; life naturally expands and seeks to multiply itself. Thus, the divine Three from all eternity find themselves in an intimate explosion of love and life from one to the other. The effect of this reciprocal interpenetration is that each Person dwells in the other."¹⁴⁴

To depict this notion of *perichoresis*, theologians have used different analogies. A metaphor that for LaCugna effectively expresses "the dynamic and creative energy, the eternal and perpetual movement, the mutual and reciprocal permeation of each person with and in and through and by other persons" is the divine dance.¹⁴⁵ In this dance, each person is a dancer that "expresses and at the same time fulfils him/herself towards the other".¹⁴⁶ The divine dance does not need leaders and the dancers cannot be seen as followers as it is an eternal movement of reciprocal giving and receiving.¹⁴⁷

It can be said that the divine dance is the dance of a loving relationship. The three persons of the Trinitarian God are in a mutual and intimate love. This, for Moltmann, is a process of the most perfect and intense empathy.¹⁴⁸ That love is dynamic and active. That love is, hence, the character of the dance of the Trinity. The Triune God invites all believers to participate in that love. As LaCugna claims, God draws human beings into that loving relationship.¹⁴⁹ This is clearly seen in John 17:21 when the Son prays asking the Father to bring all believers to be in the Father and the Son. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are invited to be in that loving relationship, the dance of the Trinity.

It is vital to note that the participation of human beings in the dance of the Trinity can only happen if human beings are reconciled to God. There are no enemies in

¹⁴⁴ Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*. 14-15.

¹⁴⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 271-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 272.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*. 175.

¹⁴⁹ LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. 274.

that dance. There are only beloved partners. There are no spaces for hatred and anger in that relationship. There are only persons to love and to be loved. There is no refusal in that loving relationship. There are only giving and receiving. For human beings, who had previously broken that loving relationship, to be in that relationship again and eternally, the Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit – works to reconcile human beings to God in order to bring them to be in the loving relationship with God. It is from the love of God and for the eternal loving relationship, that God acts for reconciliation although it costs God's only Son. John 3:16 speaks loudly of this, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

On the cross, the Triune God opens God's arms to all people to come to and participate in God's inner life: to come to a loving relationship with the Triune God. God brings God's people back to their existence before God as the people who are in an intimate relationship with God. The reconciling work of God is for all, as God's love is for all.

God's inner life, or the divine dance, then becomes the very foundation for seeing the reconciling work of God in relation to the broken relationship that is the impact of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66 in the East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT). God's reconciling work is addressed to God's people which includes the perpetrators, the victims, and also the watchers in the NTT context. The cross of Christ embraces all people whatever their past as, in fact, they all have sinned against God. The Triune God invites everyone into the divine dance. The Triune God brings all Christians into the loving relationship with God. All are included, whether perpetrators, victims or watchers, in the inner life of the Trinitarian God, the dance of the Trinity. There is not any rejection either from God to human beings or from human beings to God in that dance. There is only reception of God for God's people in that loving relationship with God. In that relationship with God, hates, angers and revenges in human beings' hearts and minds are replaced with love.

The kind of people in such loving relationship are those who have left or tried hard to leave anything hampering them from being in that loving relationship. People can only come to God's presence with a pure heart; a heart that has been set free from enmity; a heart that is hurt by its struggles within itself in order to make it pure. It is, indeed, a heart that repents of any wrong things including words, deeds, thoughts and intentions that are opposite to the love of God. For the perpetrators to repent is a must. The perpetrators need to repent for the violence they have made in various forms. They have dehumanised and deprived the victims. Even, Moltmann suggests, that by the violence against God's image in other people, the perpetrators have also injured God's self.¹⁵⁰

The congregation in Oesao in particular, and the Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor in general, as an institution should also repent. This church has sinned against God because instead of seeking and working for justice at that event, it was afraid of the consequences of speaking the truth and working for justice. That church should repent as it has let its members live in hatred and violence. It indeed should repent as its discipline to the victims had justified the violence committed to the victims and their families.

However, a critical question that has emerged is how could one say to the victims of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66 that they need to repent also? One might argue that they did nothing wrong in that event. In fact, they are victims of evil deeds from others. As Volf claims, the oppressed should not repent for the violence they have suffered because it is only the oppressors that should repent of that violence.¹⁵¹ However, the victims also need to repent in relation to that event for several reasons. Volf argues that the victims should repent if they let their heart and attitudes be directed by the perpetrators in the sense that they mimic the behaviour of the perpetrators.¹⁵² They need to repent if they let themselves be controlled by the perpetrators in the sense

¹⁵⁰ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. 132.

¹⁵¹ Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. 116.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 117.

that they become angry and have intentions toward revenge because of the violence the perpetrators committed against them. They need to repent if that violence they experienced makes them sin against God by their hatred towards the perpetrators which deviates them from Jesus' command to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). The victims need to repent if their responses and reactions to that massacre make them 'far away' from God's presence.

For such reasons the victims need to repent in order to purify their hearts and minds to answer the invitation of the Triune God to be in loving relationship with God. Along with the victims, the perpetrators should also repent but in a different way. As mentioned above, they should repent as they have violated the victims in many ways. Therefore, both perpetrators and victims need to repent to purify their hearts and minds.¹⁵³

That purification is their response to the opened arms of the Christ. It is clear that repentance is not the prerequisite of God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness is unconditional as Paul says in Roman 5:10 that God reconciled human beings to God while they were the enemies of God. The Son of God opens his arms to the sinners, not to the righteous people. Hence, the repentance of the perpetrators and victims in this context is understood as the recognition of the evils they have done, and at the same time the commitment to let those evils go from their lives. Repentance is therefore the purification of heart and mind as a movement towards God's embrace for all sinful people. That purification is a joyous willingness to be in a loving relationship with the Triune God.

Such loving relationship between both victims and perpetrators with God in turn leads to that between the victims and perpetrators. Graham Buxton, in his discussion on 'community realisation' as his second 'perichoretic theme', argues that Christians' participation in the life of the Triune God determines their participation in

¹⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.* 118-9.

each other's lives.¹⁵⁴ To participate in the inner life of the Triune God is to feel 'at home' and to invite others, in receptivity, to feel at home together.¹⁵⁵ Buxton claims that "in our call to live ethically in the church and in the world, we actually need one another because we are created for relationship and can only realise our full humanity in communion with God and with each other".¹⁵⁶ This means that the victims' loving relationship with the Triune God must lead them into a loving relationship with the perpetrators and *vice versa*. Both perpetrators and victims invite each other to be 'at home' together. That is, to be in a loving relationship with God and with each other; to love and to be loved in a mutual giving and receiving relationship.

As the open arms of Christ, showing the forgiveness of God, is the invitation of God to the perpetrators and the victims, forgiveness is also the invitation of the victims to the perpetrators. This is a critical point towards living together at home. As God's forgiveness to the victims is unconditional, so is the victims' forgiveness to the perpetrators. Forgiveness is an essential element of the reconciliation process between the victims and the perpetrators. Volf argues that "to offer forgiveness is at the same time to condemn the deed and accuse the doer; to receive forgiveness is at the same time to admit to the deed and accept the blame".¹⁵⁷ This is problematic in the context of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66 because the perpetrators are still seen as the heroes and the victims as the traitors. Hence, it will be very difficult for the perpetrators to accept the forgiveness as they believe they did nothing wrong.

However, as discussed above, the perpetrators should repent of the violence they have committed. They should recognise all the evils they have committed against the victims. In fact, there was never any legal court saying that those victims deserved to be punished. They were put to death without any legal court hearing. The victims who were not put to death still suffered just by the accusation. Therefore, it is right for the

¹⁵⁴ Buxton, *The Trinity, Creation and Pastoral Ministry: Imaging the Perichoretic God*. 152.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 167.

¹⁵⁷ Miroslav Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ed. Raymond G. Helmick (S.J.) and Rodney L. Petersen (Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001). 45.

perpetrators to accept the forgiveness offered by the victims. Furthermore, the perpetrators' loving relationship with God should encourage them to accept that forgiveness as they have to be at home together with the victims. As they have been embraced by God, they embrace the victims by accepting that forgiveness. As they have been drawn into the loving relationship with God, they give themselves to be in loving relationship with the victims by receiving the forgiveness given from the victims' selves.

In that loving relationship Christians, including the perpetrators and the victims, as the restored image of God, by the guidance and the power of the Spirit, echo the Triune God as the relational God, that is in mutual giving and receiving. Human beings can do this, certainly in a creaturely way, through the process of the mutual internalisation of personal characteristics at ecclesial level as explained by Volf. It will be interesting to read and understand that process in the light of the victims-perpetrators relationship.

“In this mutual giving and receiving, we [victims/perpetrators] give to others [perpetrators/victims] not only something, but also a piece of ourselves, something of that which we [victims/perpetrators] have made of ourselves in communion with others [perpetrators/victims]; and from others (perpetrators/victims) we [victims/perpetrators] take not only something, but also a piece of them (perpetrators/victims). Each person [victim/perpetrator] gives of himself or herself to others [perpetrators/victims], and each person [victim/perpetrator] in a unique way takes up others [perpetrators/victims] into himself or herself.”¹⁵⁸

That is how human beings, including the perpetrators and the victims as the restored image of God, reflect the Triune God in a creaturely way. This is not something that they should achieve so much as actualise. It is already their identity. It is their existence as the restored image of God. That is how the reconciled people should live.

¹⁵⁸ *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*. 211.

Interestingly, living as the reconciled community is at the same time living as the reconciling community. Echoing the inner life of the Triune God as the relational God is at the same time echoing the action of the Triune God as the reconciling God. As has been argued in the previous chapters, the inner life and action of the Triune God are inseparable. To know the Father, the Son and the Spirit, who are in mutual receiving and giving, is to know the Triune God who works for reconciliation. To believe in the Triune God as the relational God should not be separated from believing in the Triune God as the reconciling God. To participate in God's inner life as the relational God and to participate in the action of the Triune God as the reconciling God are, indeed, inseparable.

This is clearly seen in the loving relationship between human beings and God which leads to the loving relationship between the victims and the perpetrators. This is the visible work of the Spirit that actualises the reconciling work of the Triune God. That loving relationship is an echo of the Triune God in the sense that the reconciling work of God is real *in* and *through* the life of the reconciled people or the Christian church.

It is essential to note that the reconciling work of the Triune God as an event has been fulfilled on the cross, but reconciliation as a process still continues to the end of time. The Spirit is at work on this *in* and *through* the Christian church to actualise the reconciling work of the Triune God in the world. *In* and *through* the Christian church, the Spirit has been working to bring human beings into the loving relationship with the Triune God by the process of reconciliation. Thus, to bring all its members into the loving relationship with God is the mission of the Christian church that echoes the Triune God as the relational God. To ensure that all its members have been *in*, and have been struggling to be *in*, the loving relationship with their neighbours is the mission of the Christian church that echoes the Triune God as the reconciling God.

Echoing the Triune God *in* and *through* the Christian church is actually the identity of the church itself. Colin Gunton strongly insists that the being of the Christian

church is to echo the Triune God.¹⁵⁹ The Christian church existence is signed by its participation for reconciliation by the help of the Spirit. As God, the Holy Trinity, is known *in* and *through* God's work for reconciliation, so the Christian church, as the image of the Triune God, is known *in* and *through* its work for reconciliation at the finite level (creaturely way). Owing to this, the Christian church is ultimately 'the reconciled people' that reconcile people.

In addition, living as the reconciled and reconciling communion is vital in the sense that it can become the Christian church's contribution for national reconciliation in Indonesia. As both the perpetrators and the victims are in a loving relationship as the result of reconciliation in the Christian church, it is not only the victims but also the perpetrators that urge the government to solve the 1965/66 conflict. If the Indonesian government prefers to work for justice before the reconciliation, both the victims and the perpetrators will stand together in love to support it. In the case of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66, the Christian faith offers a justice which is pursued by the reconciled people. Whatever the justice will be, those who have been reconciled and therefore are living in a loving relationship will respond in love. Some people might argue that this is impossible. However, why it is not possible? In fact, Christian faith loudly speaks of God the victim, who reconciled the perpetrators to the victim when the perpetrators were still the enemy of the victim.

¹⁵⁹ Gunton, "The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community." 78.

CONCLUSION

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS THE RECONCILED PEOPLE THAT RECONCILE PEOPLE

The doctrine of the Trinity as discussed in the three chapters of this project can encourage the Christian church in Indonesia in general, and particularly the Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor (Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor/GMIT), to be the reconciling communion in the light of the Indonesian Massacre of 1965/66. The first reason for this is the fact that the Trinity is a fundamental doctrine of Christian faith and has radical consequences for Christian life. God whom Christians believe is God, reveals God's self through God's salvific works. Through those acts that are defined as the economy of God (*oikonomia*), Christians know the Triune God (*theologia*). Christians know and believe in God who acts for the goodness of human beings and that God invites and equips them to participate in God's works. Therefore, the knowledge of God (*theologia*) in turn leads human beings, as the image of God, to participate in God's salvific works (*oikonomia*).

This is the order of Christian faith derived from LaCugna's thought. It goes from the *oikonomia* of God to the *theologia*, and the *theologia* leads Christians into the *oikonomia* of God through the participation of Christians in God's life and actions. The actions of God (*oikonomia*) is the starting point; it leads to the knowledge of God (*theologia*); and the knowledge of God (*theologia*) leads to the actions of God (*oikonomia*) echoed by humans in creaturely ways, shown by God in Jesus Christ, and by the help of God, in the Spirit. It is from practice to knowledge and knowledge to practice. *Theologia* and *oikonomia* are inseparable and vice versa.

The salvific action of God that makes God known as the Triune God is reconciliation which is the unified work of the Triune God that restores God's relationship with humans and between men/women with their neighbours. The restoration of the broken relationship through reconciliation is the effect of God's inner life as the relational God. Through reconciliation (*oikonomia*), Christians know God as the relational God (*theologia*).

As God is the relational God, God works for reconciliation and therefore God is the reconciling God. This means that the character of God as the reconciling God is the effect of God's character as the relational God, the inner life of the Triune God. Reconciliation reflects in a very clear way the life of the Trinitarian God. In reconciliation, the action and life of the Triune God are real. The Triune God works for reconciliation. The Father initiates, the Son fulfils by executing it, and the Spirit completes by activating it. That work echoes who the Triune God is.

The knowledge of the Triune God as the relational and reconciling God is the foundation for the Christian church to approach the broken relationships in society and church fellowship as an impact of the Indonesia Massacre of 1965/66. The doctrine of the Trinity strongly encourages the Christian church to be the reconciled communion that works for reconciliation of that tragedy in terms of restoring the broken relationship between the perpetrators and the victims in and through the Christian church. This is ultimately the being of the Christian church which is the echo of the Triune God: the relational and the reconciling God. The Christian church is the Christian church when all its members live in loving relationship and spread such relationship to the world by the guidance and power of the Spirit. As God, the Holy Trinity is known in and through God's work for reconciliation. The Christian church, as the image of the Triune God, is known in and through its work for reconciliation at finite level/creaturely way. A Christian is a reconciled person that reconciles others.

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