



JOHN ZIZIOULAS' ECCLESIOLOGY OF 'THE ONE AND THE MANY'



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*In memory of those who
perished in the 2019 mosque
attacks in Christchurch, New
Zealand.*

Abstract

This thesis examines John Zizioulas' ecclesiology of 'the one and the many' in the context of eucharistic ecclesiology. By comparing Zizioulas' ecclesiology with Nicholas Afanasiev's, I show how Zizioulas articulates an ecclesiology of *communion in otherness* based on his unique concept of 'the one and the many.' In Zizioulas' structure of the Church, the bishop stands out as the indispensable icon of Christ in the Eucharist. Through him as the 'one,' the local church is constituted by the 'many' members, the 'one' local church remains in communion with the 'many' other churches to constitute the one Church, and the 'one' (*protos*) can exercise *synodical* primacy over the 'many' episcopal churches.

These are the primary insights in this dissertation:

- 1) Zizioulas' ecclesiology is based on a synthesis of the ideas of the Church Fathers Ignatius, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, the Cappadocian Fathers and Maximus, all of whom Zizioulas cites extensively to argue persuasively that the central act of the Church is the Eucharist which constitutes the Church which is in turn simultaneously constituted as the Body of Christ.*
- 2) Although the Church is historically in the world and deeply involved in the world, she is **not of the world** because her true being is derived from the eschaton. This is because she is the eschatological community of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ in whom humanity finds its everlasting being and its true image.*
- 3) Although Zizioulas' ecclesiology has its critics and short-comings, it is an advance beyond Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology in that it offers us a blueprint for the re-unification of all **episcopal churches** under **one primate** through conciliar structures modelled after Zizioulas' theological concept of 'the one and the many.' This may be applied to the local church, the regional synods comprising of bishops and a universal synod comprising of all the patriarchs, **provided that the concept of communion and autonomy is respected in every local church.***

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction i

Part I: John Zizioulas and Eucharistic Ecclesiology 1

1. The Life and Work of John Zizioulas 2
 - 1.1. Introduction
 - 1.2. Overview of Zizioulas' Theological Output
 - 1.3. Early Years as a Lay Theologian
 - 1.4. Later Life as an Academic and as Bishop
 - 1.5. Conclusion
2. The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev 34
 - 2.1. Introduction
 - 2.2. *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007)
 - 2.3. A General Critique of Afanasiev's Eucharistic Ecclesiology
 - 2.4. Zizioulas' Correction of Afanasiev's Ecclesiology
 - 2.5. Conclusion
3. Zizioulas' Anthropology and Trinitarian Ontology 59
 - 3.1. Introduction
 - 3.2. Zizioulas' Ontology of Communion and Otherness – Towards Being and Truth as Communion
 - 3.3. Zizioulas' Anthropology – Personhood in Communion and Otherness
 - 3.4. Zizioulas' Trinitarian Ontology – Towards the Father as 'Cause'
 - 3.5. An Ontology of Love
 - 3.6. Conclusion
4. Zizioulas' Eucharistic Ecclesiology Conditioned by Pneumatology 100
 - 4.1. Introduction
 - 4.2. Zizioulas' Christology as conditioned by Pneumatology
 - 4.3. Zizioulas' Ecclesiology as conditioned Pneumatologically
 - 4.4. The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God in the Light of Zizioulas' Ecclesiology
 - 4.5. A Comparison between the Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Afanasiev and Zizioulas
 - 4.6. Conclusion

Part II: Zizioulas' Patristic Sources 143

5. Patristic Influences on Zizioulas 144
 - 5.1. Introduction
 - 5.2. St. Ignatius of Antioch, Hippolytus of Rome and St. Irenaeus of Lyons

- 5.3. The Cappadocian Fathers
- 5.4. St. Maximus the Confessor
- 5.5. Conclusion

Part III: A Dialogue with Zizioulas and his Critics 178

6. Criticisms of Zizioulas	179
6.1. Introduction	
6.2. Demetrios Bathrellos' Criticisms of <i>Eucharist, Bishop, Church</i>	
6.3. Nicholas Loudovikos and an Ontology of Dialogical Reciprocity	
6.4. Miroslav Volf	
6.5. Further Criticisms of Zizioulas and his Response	
6.6. Conclusion	
7. Assessment of Zizioulas' Theology	214
7.1. Introduction	
7.2. Some criteria for Assessment	
7.3. Strengths	
7.4. Weaknesses	
7.5. Enriching Zizioulas' Theology	
7.6. Further Reflections	
7.7. Conclusion	
8. Applications and Conclusion	241
8.1. Introduction	
8.2. A Theological Vision of the Church	
8.3. Broad applications	
8.4. Final Reflections and Analysis	
8.5. Further Research	
8.6. Conclusion	

Bibliography	264
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Appendix – Supplementary List of Dissertations and Books On Zizioulas	277
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Sunday of Orthodoxy
17 March 2019

Introduction

“... ..that they may be one as we are one.” (John 17:22)¹

Through consideration of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology based on his concept of ‘the one and the many,’² this dissertation systematically reflects on the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and shows how it could be unified under one universal primate who ‘presides in love’³ and unity. Exploration of this special possibility – the reunification of the churches, a possibility and vision Zizioulas has presented – is the goal of this dissertation. My main contribution is the direct comparison between Zizioulas’ and Afanasiev’s ecclesiologies and a clear articulation of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of communion that is based on the Patristic Fathers.

Literature Review

Until now, there has not been a full-length study of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of ‘the one and the many.’⁴ So far, there have been thirteen extended studies of Zizioulas’ theology broadly divided into ecclesiology of communion and relational ontology of personhood. The first is G. Baillargeon’s (1989) *Perspectives orthodoxes sur L’Eglise Communion*.⁵ Another is C. Agoras’ (1992) *Personne et Liberté ou “être comme communion” dans l’oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas*.⁶ However, these works are currently available only in French and do not engage Zizioulas articles written from the 1990s onwards. Another is D. W. McHardy’s (1996) *Eucharist, Ministry and Authority in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas*.⁷ There has also been an early study on Zizioulas’ relational ontology, Peter Robinson’s (1999) *Towards a*

¹ New International Version (NIV).

² Bishop Athanasius Yevtich has commented, “The title, ‘The One and the Many,’ suggests the idea of a profound relationship that exists between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, between Christ and the Church, between one Catholic Church and many catholic churches” in his Foreword to J. Zizioulas *The One and the Many – Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), ix.

³ This is a phrase used by Afanasiev to describe the bishop of Rome.

⁴ Zizioulas has published a book entitled *The One and the Many* (2010). This is his collection of 32 articles on the Church written over a span of over forty years. Liviu Barbu has compiled a list of secondary works on Zizioulas in D. Knight (ed.), *The Theology of John Zizioulas* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing), 197-202.

⁵ *Orthodox Perspectives on the Church in Communion*. This was reviewed by A. de Halleux in *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 24 (1993): 78-80 and by Myroslaw Tataryn in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* vol. 29, issue 3-4 (Jun 1992): 172-73. Baillargeon has also written an article “Jean Zizioulas, porte-parole de l’Orthodoxie contemporaine,” *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 111 (1989): 176-93.

⁶ A doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Sorbonne, Paris, 1992.

⁷ This was a doctoral dissertation accepted in 1996 by the University of Edinburgh. ProQuest document ID 301545516.

*Definition of Persons and Relations with Particular Reference to the Relational Ontology of John Zizioulas.*⁸ Then there is another non-English full-length study on Zizioulas' ecclesiology, Roman Malecki's (2000) *Kosciol jako wspolnota. Dogmatyczno-ekumeniczne studium eklezjologii Johna Zizioulasa.*⁹ For an ecclesiology of communion, there is Robert Turner's (2001) *Foundations for Ecclesial Communion in the Work of John Zizioulas. Three Foundations and Particular Church – Perspectives and Assessment.*¹⁰ Zizioulas has also inspired Douglas Knight's (2006) *The Eschatological Economy: Time and the Hospitality of God* which is a comparative study of the eschatological economy and the economy of modernity, with special reference to Zizioulas' concept of personhood. Finally, there is Cal Christiansen's (2007) *The Source of the Church: The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of John D. Zizioulas and its Contribution to the West.* However, these dissertations are limited to either Zizioulas' communion ecclesiology or his relational ontology. A combination of these two aspects of Zizioulas' theology can be found in Walter Oxley's *Personhood and Communion: A Critical Application of Relational Ontology in Ecclesiology* (2009). More recently, interest in Zizioulas has shifted to his anthropology in Ramon Degenkolb's (2010) *Participatory personhood: An evangelical essay on Christian anthropology,*¹¹ which uses Zizioulas' theology of communion to advance the thinking of evangelical anthropology via the concept of participatory personhood. There has been an attempt to study the pneumatologically conditioned ecclesiology of Zizioulas in Valerie Morgan-Guy's (2011) *The Place and Role of the Operation of the Holy Spirit for "Person-Specific" Sanctification and "Ecclesial Existence" in Relation to the "Hypostatic" Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas.* Jele Manganyi's (2012) *Church and Society: The Value of Perichoresis in Understanding Ubuntu*¹² with *Special Reference to John Zizioulas* offers a good discussion on how a person is defined in relation to others using Zizioulas' concept of otherness in communion. Most recently, interest has shifted back to Zizioulas' relational ontology in Kent Warner's (2013) *The Father as God's Nature: John Zizioulas' Relational Ontology* which concentrates on a relational ontology based on the person of God the Father. There has also been a full-length study on Zizioulas' ontology of personhood – Jiang Tingcui's (2014) *A Critical Study on Zizioulas' Ontology of Personhood.*¹³ This dissertation offers the most helpful critique so far of one of

⁸ This was a doctoral dissertation submitted to King's College London.

⁹ *The Church as Communion. A Dogmatic and Ecumenical Study of the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas* (Lublin: RW KUL, 2000).

¹⁰ This was later published as *Foundations for John Zizioulas' Approach to Ecclesial Communion.* Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 2005.

¹¹ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9781124071183.

¹² This is an African word that refers to how a person is defined in relation to others. It literally means, "I am because of you."

¹³ This was a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Zizioulas' main ideas – the concept of the person.

In addition, there have been an additional 37 major works on various aspects of Zizioulas' theology in comparison with others. A supplementary list can be found in the Appendix. All of them are comparative studies between Zizioulas and one or more theologians or philosophers on a particular aspect of theology. Foremost of these dissertations is Paul McPartlan's (1993) comparative study of Henri de Lubac and Zizioulas on the theme of the "Eucharist Makes the Church."¹⁴ This is by far the most comprehensive study of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology in dialogue with the one who first coined this phrase: "The Eucharist Makes the Church." However, McPartlan's study has not dealt in detail with the philosophical and theological sources that form the basis of Zizioulas' ecclesiology. Nor does McPartlan say much about Zizioulas' key idea of the *monarchia* of the Father which has been a source of controversy in Protestant circles. Criticisms of Zizioulas' insistence on the *monarchia* of the Father can be found in Guan Chin Soh's (1993) *A Trinitarian Covenant Theology of the Church* and Miroslav Volf's (1998) *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*. In addition, A. J. Torrance's (1996) *Persons in Communion* also picks out for criticism Zizioulas' idea of God the Father as the *sole cause* of the Trinity. These critiques from a Protestant view-point provide a more vigorous critique of perceived weaknesses in Zizioulas' theology.¹⁵ These critiques were written more than twenty years ago however, and do not take into account Zizioulas' own defence of the notion of "The Father as Cause."¹⁶

Knight's *The Theology of John Zizioulas* (2007) is the only book that contains various articles critically appraising Zizioulas' theology of personhood and the Church. In this book, we encounter Demetrios Bathrellos' excellent summary and critique of Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001).¹⁷ This is an important article because it is the best summary of Zizioulas' doctoral thesis and its main achievements, highlighting Zizioulas' own criticisms of his doctoral work.¹⁸ Bathrellos has deemed Zizioulas' 1965 doctoral dissertation as outdated and in need of some major revisions.¹⁹ He has also questions Zizioulas' over-

¹⁴ P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993).

¹⁵ I will address Volf's and A. J. Torrance's criticisms of Zizioulas in chapter six.

¹⁶ See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 113-54.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001). See also D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 133-45.

¹⁸ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop," 133-38. See my chapter six for a more detailed account of Bathrellos' critique.

¹⁹ Bathrellos points out that Zizioulas' doctoral dissertation was originally written in Greek and thus it was not subject to the scrutiny of the wider theological world at that time. Bathrellos supposes that the importance of Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001) has waned as some modern scholars of ecclesiology such as F. A. Sullivan and A. C. Stewart have not referred to Zizioulas' doctoral work in their own books. See for example, F. A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of*

emphasis on the institutional structures of the church and the bishop rather than on faith.²⁰ Another critic of Zizioulas can be found in Knight's book, Nicholas Loudovikos, who has in recent years become a chief critic of Zizioulas' theological system.²¹ Like Bathrellos, Loudovikos begins his article criticizing Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001) on the issue of the unity of the Church in the bishop for Zizioulas' "excessive legal and institutional elevation of the bishop, as almost the sole presupposition of this unity."²² Loudovikos later published *A Eucharistic Ontology* (2010) where he further criticizes Zizioulas for identifying "nature with blind necessity and person with freedom."²³ Loudovikos then goes on to charge Zizioulas with introducing an ontology of *dictated otherness* in Zizioulas' books *Being as Communion* (1985) and *Communion and Otherness* (2006).²⁴ Zizioulas has defended himself against Loudovikos by publishing a paper read at a symposium on Maximus where he defended himself in a paper entitled "Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor."²⁵ This was quickly responded to in Loudovikos' "Possession or Wholeness? Maximus the Confessor and John Zizioulas on Person, Nature and Will."²⁶ Finally, in 2016, Loudovikos published *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality* where he summarizes his critiques on Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology and Zizioulas' ecclesiology of communion.²⁷ However comprehensive its survey of the ecclesiologies of Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Maximus and other modern ecclesiologists, Loudovikos does not present Zizioulas' ecclesiology and the basis of it in good light. Rather, *Church in the Making* builds on Loudovikos' ontology of dialogical reciprocity and

the Episcopacy in the Early Church (New York: The Newman Press, 2001) and A. C. Stewart, *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014). My take is that Sullivan is unlikely to have had access to Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001) when he wrote *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (2001) because Zizioulas' English version of his doctoral dissertation was published in the same year as Sullivan's book. Unless Sullivan was proficient in Greek, he would not have profited from Zizioulas' 1965 doctoral dissertation written originally in Greek and with an English translation published only in 2001. As for Stewart's omission of Zizioulas in his book, I cannot judge why he did so, but in the very least, he did not point out deficiencies in Zizioulas' earlier historical study.

²⁰ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop," 139-45.

²¹ In chapter six, I will attempt to describe his objections to Zizioulas.

²² See N. Loudovikos, "Christian Life and Institutional Church," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 125.

²³ See N. Loudovikos, – *Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010).

²⁴ See N. Loudovikos, "Person instead of Grace, and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position," *The Heythrop Journal* 52.4 (2011): 684-99.

²⁵ See J. Zizioulas, "Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor," in *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection. Proceedings of the Symposium on St. Maximus the Confessor*, ed. Maxim Vasiljevic (California: Sebastian Press, 20

²⁶ This was first published in *Participatio* 4 (2013): 258-86. This paper criticizes Zizioulas' notion of trinitarian freedom as well as Zizioulas' apparent mis-reading of St. Maximus.

²⁷ N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality* (Yonkers: New York: SVSP, 2016). Here, Loudovikos also re-published an earlier paper that was first published as "Eikon and Mimesis: "Eucharistic Ecclesiology" and the Ecclesial Ontology of Dialogical Reciprocity" in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 11.2-3 (May-August, 2011): 123-36.

consubstantiality to identify the Church “with an order of charisms-in-a-process-of-achieving-consubstantiality, by introducing this mimetical, participational, consubstantial, synergetic, or, in a word, dialogical dimension to it.”²⁸ Despite having been for many years a student of Zizioulas’, Loudovikos has merely singled out various aspects of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology for criticism without having systematically explored his whole theological system based on the Patristic Fathers. My dissertation is therefore an attempt to present Zizioulas’ ecclesiology on its own terms, first in the light of the Patristic Fathers, before having a dialogue with him and his main critics.

There have also been many studies done comparing Zizioulas with modern existential philosophers such as Martin Buber and John Macmurray and with the post-modern philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida on the concept of otherness. Much work has also been done to compare Zizioulas’ theology with Roman Catholics represented by Joseph Ratzinger, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Henri de Lubac, Avery Dulles, Jean-Marie Tillard, Louis-Marie Chauvet, Edward Kilmartin, Walter Kaspar and Elizabeth Johnson, and with Protestant theologians, Volf, Jürgen Moltmann, Colin Gunton, John Milbank, Karl Barth, Robert Jenson, Eberhard Jüngel and Wolfhart Pannenburg, and with Orthodox theologians George Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Alexander Schmemmann, Nikos Nissiotis, Panayiotis Nellas and Christos Yannaras. However, most of these studies have focused on comparative studies of one or two aspects of Zizioulas’ theology such as Pneumatology, ministry and the Eucharist. None of these comparative studies take into account the full range of Zizioulas’ works in order to articulate comprehensively and integratively Zizioulas’ theology. Of these comparative studies, only two come close to my subject at hand: one is Patricia Fox’s *God as Communion* and Aristotle Papanikolaou’s *Being with God*. The former brings Zizioulas together with Elizabeth Johnson in order to retrieve the concept of communion as the Christian symbol of the triune God.²⁹ The latter compares Lossky’s trinitarian theology to Zizioulas’ with reference to their shared concepts of personhood and divine-human communion.³⁰ Both these books have up to date bibliographies that take into account what Zizioulas wrote on trinitarian theology and personhood in the 1990s while he was a visiting professor at the Research Institute at King’s College, London. Fox’s book is a feminist approach to theology which leads her to concentrate on the existential aspects of Zizioulas’

²⁸ N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 287.

²⁹ P. Fox, *God as Communion. John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001).

³⁰ A. Papanikolaou, *Being with God. Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

theology while Papanikolaou's focuses more on the theoretical aspects of Zizioulas' theology of trinitarian personhood and touches too little on the existential and practical aspects. Neither Fox nor Papanikolaou give much attention to the various aspects of the Church (ministry, apostolic succession and conciliarity) in relation to the Eucharist.

In addition, although some work had already been done in this area of the so-called 'eucharistic ecclesiology' by Afanasiev, especially in his posthumous work *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (1971),³¹ there has not been much work done to critically compare Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology with Zizioulas' ecclesiology of communion.³² Zizioulas himself has briefly engaged Afanasiev in his doctoral dissertation (1965) and in his book *Being as Communion* (1985).³³ To date, there has been only one study on the eucharistic ecclesiologies of Afanasiev and Zizioulas:³⁴ Vitaly Dudkin's (2010) *The Pastoral Implications of the Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Nicholas Afanasiev and John Zizioulas*. This was a Master's level thesis that concentrated more on the pastoral implications rather than on a comparative study between the eucharistic ecclesiologies of the two.

Having briefly considered all the above works, there has so far been no integrated study which considers the *entire corpus* of Zizioulas' works spanning some fifty years (1965-2015) in order to offer a systematic and critical reflection on Zizioulas' ecclesiology as it is related to his theology of the person. This is an ecclesiology which is influenced by Zizioulas' concept of the person and his unique eschatological outlook which combines Christology and Pneumatology together in a *mutually conditioning relation* that yields an ecclesiology that is eucharistic and based firmly on the idea of the Church as communion. I will argue that Zizioulas has developed a comprehensive eucharistic ecclesiology, first introduced to the West by Afanasiev. Furthermore, I will argue that this eucharistic ecclesiology is not an ecclesiology that is articulated in purely sacramental categories. Zizioulas' ecclesiology of 'the one and the many' is defined by the whole nature and structure of the Eucharist as it is related to trinitarian ontology. Finally, I will contend that this ecclesiology is faithful to the Patristic Fathers.

³¹ This is the first edition in Russian.

³² There is one doctoral dissertation done to compare Afanasiev with J. M. R. Tillard by Joseph Aryankalayil entitled *Local Church and Church Universal: Towards a Convergence between East and West: A Study on the Theology of the Local Church according to N. Afanasiev and J. M. R. Tillard With Special Reference to Some of the Contemporary Catholic and Orthodox Theologians*. PhD dissertation, Fribourg, Université de Fribourg, Institut d'études oecuméniques, 2004.

³³ McPartlan has also written a section on Zizioulas' engagement with Afanasiev in chapter ten "Russian Theology" in *The Eucharist Makes the Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 226-35.

³⁴ There is also a book by Jaume Fontbona I. Misse. *Comunion y Sinodalidad. La ecclesiologia eucaristica después de N. Afanasiev en J. Zizioulas y J.M.R. Tillard* (Sant pacia, 52), (Barcelona: Edicions de la Facultat de Theologia de Catalunya-Herder, 1994). This book compares the ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and J. M. R. Tillard.

My thesis examines how Zizioulas builds upon Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology and further enhances Afanasiev's ecclesiology by enlarging its trinitarian and anthropological base using the concept of the person derived from the Greek Patristic Fathers. By introducing the concept of communion into ontology itself and subsequently into ecclesiology, Zizioulas defines the Church as a *Communion of churches*. A consequence of such an ecclesiology is that primacy is necessary for a unified Church.

Preliminary Considerations

The Church as an Image of the Trinity

Afanasiev, reflecting on the Church,³⁵ has remarked, "The very name of the Church, which we find from the earliest time of its existence, implies the notion of an organised congregation of people rather than a mob or a crowd that defies any order or structure."³⁶ He goes on to define the Church as "*ekklesia* because it is the assembly of God's people in Christ."³⁷ This view reflects the New Testament view that the Church is an *assembly* of the *people of God* (Rom. 9.25; 1 Cor. 16.1), called (Jude 1), elected (1 Pet. 1.1) and gathered together in one place by God (Acts 2.1) to be his holy people (Eph. 5.4; 1 Pet. 1.15-16).³⁸ This assembly is a corporate body that has structure and order – the *Body of Christ* (1 Cor. 6.15, 10.16, 12.13-27; Eph. 1.23; Col. 1.24) whose head is Christ (Col. 1.18). Afanasiev further asserts, "What manifests the Church as a gathering in Christ is the eucharistic assembly, because Christ is present there."³⁹

Besides structure, what goes on in this assembly is crucial for understanding the nature of the Church. There are certain actions performed in this assembly which seem to suggest a certain order of movement, from a gathering and then, through the Divine Liturgy, to a corporate journey toward a goal. This is especially evident in the Eucharist which, according

³⁵ I use the capital for the word 'Church' when I am referring to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. However, I use 'church' and 'churches' to refer to one local church and to a plurality of local churches respectively. Whenever one local church is identified with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, I use the capitalized 'Church.'

³⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2007), 136.

³⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 136.

³⁸ The Church of God was clearly a gathering in one place, e.g. Corinth, of those "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy." (1 Cor. 1.2) The New Testament emphasis on the sanctification, faithfulness and holiness of God's people in the Church is very clear. This is evident in St. Paul's letters to the various churches. He writes to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1.1). He also addresses one of his letters to "all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi" (Phil. 1.1) and another letter to "the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse." (Col. 1.1) How election, sanctification and obedience to God is related to the Trinity is revealed when St. Peter writes a letter to God's elect "who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood." (1 Pet. 1.2) The work of all three persons of the Trinity in the Church of God's people is clearly evident here. This provides the biblical foundation for Zizioulas' emphasis on the Church as foremost *the Church of the trinitarian God*. The Bible translation used here is the NIV.

³⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 136.

to Zizioulas, “is not only an assembly in one place, that is, a historical realization and manifestation of the eschatological existence of man; it is at the same time also *movement*, a progress towards this realization.”⁴⁰

In order to really understand the being of the Church, we first need to understand the Being of God, for the Church is an assembly *of God* and especially, *of Christ* and *of the Holy Spirit*. In the words of Ratzinger, the Church is “brought forth by the call of Christ, that is, she is formed out of the sacrament and is therefore herself a sacrament. It is the Eucharist, as Christ’s presence and sacrament, which builds up the Church. Consequently, the Church is present *as a whole* wherever he is, hence, wherever the Eucharist is *rightly* celebrated.”⁴¹ Zizioulas maintains that central to the Eucharist together with Christ, is the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell in the Church (Eph. 2.22) through the eucharistic *epiclesis* and, who brings the *eschaton* into her life and mission (Acts 2.17-21).⁴² This image of the Church as the *Temple of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 6.19, 2 Cor. 6.16; Eph. 2.21-22) is founded upon the New Testament and according to Zizioulas, “implies that the Church is not simply a unity, but a unity in diversity and personal freedom.”⁴³ In short, Zizioulas argues that the Holy Spirit *constitutes* the Church while Christ *institutes* her. The difference between these two prefixes: in- and con- “can be enormous ecclesialogically,” according to Zizioulas. “The ‘institution’ is something presented to us as a fact, more or less a *fait-accompli*. As such, it is a provocation to our freedom. The ‘con-stitution’ is something that involves us in its very being, something we accept freely, because we take part in its very emergence.”⁴⁴

Whether the Church is defined using these three biblical images: as the people of God, the Body of Christ or the Temple of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁵ one has to first wrestle with the being of God because the Church is first and foremost *of God* (1 Cor. 1.2; 2 Cor. 2.1). It is perhaps no wonder that the early Christian community felt the need to firstly work out the being of God. Zizioulas correctly observes that there was scarcely any mention of the being of the Church during the patristic period.⁴⁶ However, the patristic Fathers were preoccupied with the

⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 1985), 61. Italics original.

⁴¹ J. Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 85-86. Italics mine.

⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 22.

⁴³ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement,” in *The One and the Many* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2010), 310-11.

⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 140.

⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 310. These three biblical images are the foundation of Orthodox ecclesiology and perhaps any ecclesiology. A more detailed reflection on the ontology of the Church using these three images can be found in S. Chan, *Liturgical Theology. The Church as Worshipping Community* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2006), 21-40. Roman Catholic ecclesiology tends to stress the first two images of the Church as the “people of God” and the “Body of Christ.” See J. Ratzinger, *Called to Communion. Understanding the Church Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 28-40.

⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

being of God, especially with *how* he existed.⁴⁷ If the Church is to be “the Church of God,” Zizioulas asks “of *what kind of God* she is the Church?”⁴⁸ This question must precede any attempt to examine the being of the Church because the Church’s being has always been tied up with God’s being i.e. God’s mode of existence, His way of being. Zizioulas’ answer is that if the Church is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, “her nature cannot but depend on a *Christology conditioned fundamentally by Pneumatology*”⁴⁹ “in a constitutive way.”⁵⁰ This is one of the pre-suppositions of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology.

When Zizioulas first wrote that the Church was “not simply an institution” but “a ‘mode of existence,’ *a way of being*,”⁵¹ it captivated many young theologians who were drawn to the vision of the Church as expressed in the opening page of Zizioulas’ *Being as Communion* (1985).⁵² One of these theologians was the Roman Catholic scholar, McPartlan, who had the opportunity to attend one of Zizioulas’ 1984 lectures given at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.⁵³ This lecture was entitled “Pneumatology in Relation to Christology and Ecclesiology.” It wove together the major fields of theology in one remarkable synthesis of what the true nature of the Church is in relation to Christ and the Spirit.⁵⁴ In Zizioulas’ words,

The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God. In virtue of this bond, so characteristic of patristic thought, ecclesiology assumes a marked importance, not only for all aspects of theology, but also for the existential needs of man in every age.⁵⁵

Zizioulas’ conception of the Church is a remarkable development in thought in which the being of the Church is not directly specified in terms of its own being but rather in terms of its relation to God, to the world, and to man. The Church is a relational ‘mode of being.’ The relational ontology employed here is central to Zizioulas’ whole theological project. In the case of the Church, the relational entities are God, the world and man. The being of the Church is defined in terms of these entities just as in the case of God, the relational entities of Father, Son and Spirit define the ‘mode of being’ of the trinitarian God. Hence, we arrive at another of Zizioulas’ basic theological pre-supposition: *The mode of being of the trinitarian*

⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16.

⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” in *The One and the Many*, 265. Zizioulas gives the answer that first of all, the Church of God is the Church of God the Father before she is the Church of Christ or of this or that place.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265. Italics mine.

⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition,” in *The One and the Many*, 138. Italics original.

⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15. Italics original.

⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

⁵³ P. McPartlan in his introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xiii.

⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Christ, the Spirit and the Church,” in his *Being as Communion*, 123-42.

⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

God is the model for the Church. In Zizioulas' words, "*Ecclesiology must be situated within the context of Trinitarian theology.*"⁵⁶

A Relational Ontology

Zizioulas' relational ontology is rooted in the twin concepts of the person and of communion. These two are for him the *ultimate ontological concepts*. According to Zizioulas, all entities trace their being to the person – the 'cause' of being.⁵⁷ All persons have a 'cause' because "they are the outcome of "*communion, freedom and love,*"⁵⁸ and "they owe their being who they are, their distinctive otherness as persons, to another person. Ontologically, persons are givers and recipients of personal identity. Causality in trinitarian existence reveals to us a personhood which is constituted by love."⁵⁹ God is love (1 John 4.8, 16). Zizioulas stresses that this love is that of the Father (1 John 3.1).⁶⁰ In this way, God's being is traced to the person of God the Father, and humanity's being is traced to the person of Adam, who is from God.⁶¹ Zizioulas bases his concept of the person on the Cappadocian Fathers' association of *hypostasis* with *prosopon*, a relational term in classical Greek, giving *prosopon* an ontological content which *hypostasis* already had. Thus, Zizioulas claims that for the first time in history, the Cappadocian Fathers *introduced relationality into substance* and made the particular ontologically absolute in the notion of the person.⁶² The survival of the particular is found in the survival of the person and not in substance.

Zizioulas maintains that a person is a relational entity who exists in communion with an "other." He clarifies that

Being a person is basically different from being an individual or 'personality' in that the person cannot be conceived in itself as a static entity, but only as it *relates to*. Thus, personhood implies the 'openness of being', and even more than that, the *ek-stasis* of being, that is, a movement towards communion which leads to a transcendence of the boundaries of the 'self' and thus to *freedom*. At the same time, and in contrast to the partiality of the individual which is subject to addition and combination, the person in its ekstatic character reveals its being in a *catholic*, that is, integral and undivided, way, and thus in its being ekstatic it becomes *hypostatic*, that is, the bearer of its nature in its totality. *Ekstasis* and *hypostasis* represent two basic aspects of personhood, and it is not to be regarded as a mere accident that both of these words have been historically applied

⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 137. Italics original.

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17-18; 39; 41-42, n. 37. According to Zizioulas, St. Maximus was prepared to apply the term hypostasis to everything that exists, not only to human beings. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 24, n. 36.

⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 214. See also his *Being as Communion*, 141.

⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141-42.

⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46, n. 41. Here, Zizioulas notes that a careful study of 1 John reveals that when we speak of God being love, it is the Father who is love as He sent His only-begotten Son.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 106, 142. See especially St. Basil C. *Eun.* 1.14-15; cf. Lk. 3.32-38.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

to the notion of person. Thus the idea of person affirms at once both that personal being cannot be ‘contained’ or ‘divided’, and that the mode of its existence, its *hypostasis*, is absolutely unique and unrepeatable. Without these two conditions, being falls into an a-personal reality, defined and described like a mere ‘substance’, that is, it becomes an a-personal thing.⁶³

The transformation of a being from the state of thinghood to the state of personhood is possible only when there is what Zizioulas has called an “*ek-stasis* of communion.”⁶⁴ This applies to all of creation which has been made from nothing into something that exists in communion with an ‘Other.’ As St. Maximus says, although the whole cosmos is divided because of *difference*, yet it is in *communion* that all things exist in relation to God.⁶⁵

The central thesis of Zizioulas’ ontology is that *being is communion*. Being exists as communion and subsists in communion. Being does not exist in-itself or for-itself. Being does not begin in itself. According to Zizioulas, it begins with the Father. He is the *arche* of all being, including the Trinity. Outside of time, the person God the Father *begat* the person God the Son and *breathed out* the person the Holy Spirit. Through the economy of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, God is known. In this way, God is known outside of Himself, in His energies, in His movement in love towards His creation. God is known in His *ek-static* communion with humanity and with all creation.

If being is communion, then God exists as communion. He is the Trinity of Persons. Following the New Testament, God is known as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are distinct persons in mutual relations with one another and united as one God. His one being is constituted as three persons in relation. He exists only in relation as Zizioulas insists that apart from communion, God does not exist.⁶⁶ He explains,

The being of God is a relational being: without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of the being of God. The tautology “God is God” says nothing about ontology, just as the logical affirmation $A = A$ is a dead logic and consequently a denial of being which is life. It would be unthinkable to speak of the “one God” before speaking of the God who is “communion,” that is to say, of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is a *primordial* ontological concept and not a notion which is added to the divine substance or rather which follows it.... The substance of God, “God,” has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.⁶⁷

⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 212-13. Italics original.

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 186.

⁶⁵ Zizioulas draws inspiration from St. Maximus when he says that the whole universe is divided on account of difference. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2-3 where Zizioulas cites Maximus, *Theol. Pol.* 20 (PG 91 249C); *Amb.* 67 (PG 91, 1400C) in n. 4.

⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17. Here, Zizioulas maintains, “The substance of God, ‘God,’ has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.”

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17. Italics original.

Eucharistic Communion and Personhood

While God is communion, it is only in his *ek-static* communion that humanity can experience God. Where is this communion to be experienced? Zizioulas points us to the Eucharist where God is revealed in his fullness when the whole Church gathers as the Body of Christ to offer to God through Christ and in the Spirit the whole of creation as thanksgiving to its Creator. When the people of God gather for worship, together they constitute the Church. Hence the eucharistic assembly makes up the Church which in turn constitutes the Eucharist.⁶⁸ This is because the Eucharist is only truly valid when all orders of God's people are gathered together with their head, the bishop, to constitute the Church and to make Christ present in the world. The eucharistic gathering is also an eschatological assembly that has its roots not only in the past, but also in the future where Christ sits on the throne in heaven surrounded by the apostles, the elders and the whole people of God. The Eucharist has given us a glimpse of heaven itself by being an *icon* – a window into the future, of the eschatological Kingdom of God. Therefore, the Eucharist becomes for Christians the central event and chief act of worship before God. The Church is present in the Eucharist and its very nature is revealed in the Eucharist.

Zizioulas carefully considers the *ecclesial experience* of the early pastoral theologians who approached the being of God through the eucharistic community i.e. the Church.⁶⁹ He concludes that it was the eucharistic experience of these early Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons and later Athanasius that gave birth to an ontology that was neither monistic nor substantialist in nature. This personal ontology of God was further worked out by the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, whom Zizioulas credits with revolutionizing ontology by recognizing the being of God as a personal and relational being. This was a key philosophical development in Greek thought whereby the Cappadocian Fathers identified *hypostasis* with *person* instead of substance and made communion to be the most basic ontological category. In addition, they introduced the concept of causal relations into the being of God the Trinity and stated that God the Father was the 'cause' of the Trinity i.e. He was "the 'cause' of the Son and of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity."⁷⁰ Furthermore the Father is also the 'cause' of communion.

⁶⁸ I use the capital 'E' for 'Eucharist' to denote the Divine Liturgy. Sometimes the word appears as 'eucharist' in the direct quotes in this dissertation. I did not change the original authors' usage of either capital or small letters for the word 'Eucharist.'

⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16-17.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 123. Zizioulas has underlined and promoted this idea in his other publications. See his *Being as Communion*, 7 and 44 and *Communion and Otherness*, chapters 2, 4 and 5.

This meant that for Zizioulas, the *ultimate ontological category* was the person. The person is relational and the cause of freedom. Zizioulas explains

The fact that God exists because of the Father shows that His existence, His being is the consequence of a free person; which means, in the last analysis, that not only communion but also *freedom*, the free person, constitutes true being. True being comes only from the free person, from the person who loves freely – that is, who freely affirms his being, his identity, by means of an event of communion with other persons.⁷¹

In the above short paragraph, Zizioulas has summed up his ontology of God who freely loves and exists as free Persons⁷² in communion.

An Ecclesiology Conditioned By Pneumatology

Having worked out an ontology of God using the concepts of communion and person, Zizioulas then works out an ecclesiology that is fundamentally conditioned by Pneumatology. If the Church is to be simultaneously the “Body of Christ” and the “Temple of the Spirit,” her nature “cannot but depend on a Christology conditioned fundamentally by Pneumatology.”⁷³ This key idea in Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is applied to issues regarding the Church, including the issues of primacy and unity in the Church.

If the Church is to be conditioned by Pneumatology, it must, according to Zizioulas, also be conditioned by two essential “ingredients” of Pneumatology, namely, communion and eschatology.⁷⁴ This is where the Eucharist becomes central to Zizioulas’ ecclesiology as the defining “event” and Sacrament through which the Church is revealed in its fullness in terms of her structure and ministry. The *structure* of the Eucharist itself becomes for Zizioulas, the structure of the Church and her ministries.⁷⁵ The structure of the Eucharist also influences our concept of apostolic continuity and succession in the sense that the way we view the person of the bishop as the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus* determines how the Church is structured.

Eucharistic Ecclesiology

Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is influenced by and is in important respects similar to the late Afanasiev’s “eucharistic ecclesiology.” Both authors contend that where the Eucharist is, there is the Catholic Church, and where the Catholic Church is, there is the Eucharist. But there are also some important differences that Zizioulas has taken pains to highlight in his

⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18. Italics original.

⁷² I use Persons in the capital whenever I refer to the divine Persons.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265.

⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265.

writings without minimizing the importance of Afanasiev's contribution.⁷⁶ The most important difference is that for Zizioulas, the celebration of the Eucharist in one locality is not a sufficient condition for the existence of the Catholic Church in that locality. The other necessary condition to be fulfilled for a local Church to be truly Catholic is the *presence* of the person of the bishop (as the head and presider) in the eucharistic assembly. The bishop is part of the very structure of the Catholic Church, and thus his absence from the eucharistic assembly invalidates the Eucharist because the Eucharist is supposed to point to the eschatological Kingdom of God with the bishop as the icon of Christ seated on the throne of God and surrounded by the presbyters and all the people of God.⁷⁷ According to Zizioulas, this is the first paradox we encounter in the Eucharist: In the bishop, "the one becomes many and the many become one. This is the mystery of the Christology and Pneumatology, the mystery of the Church and, at the same time, of the Eucharist."⁷⁸ The other paradox we encounter is that, "in the bishop, the local Church becomes catholic and the catholic becomes local."⁷⁹ The bishop is the means by which the local Church can be local and catholic at the same time while being related to the wider Church through conciliar structures such as ecumenical councils and synods.⁸⁰ Afanasiev's ecclesiology risks elevating the local church to the status of being primary over the other churches making itself to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church *independently of other local churches*.⁸¹ Zizioulas' ecclesiology is conditioned by Pneumatology, that is, by communion and eschatology. His ecclesiology serves as a corrective measure to the *localism* that Afanasiev's ecclesiology tends towards. The concept of communion in ecclesiology is what Zizioulas wishes to see condition the very being of the Church.⁸² For him, the local church is the catholic Church when it is in communion with the other churches through her bishop. The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is formed when each head of a particular eucharistic community who succeeds the apostles stands in communion with the other bishops through local and regional synods.⁸³

This communion-based framework within which Zizioulas develops his ecclesiology will be explored in detail in this thesis. At the same time, the relationship between Zizioulas' ontological notions of communion and otherness with truth, love and freedom will be detailed

⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23-25.

⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist," in *The One and the Many*, 71-72.

⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 72. The theme of corporate personality and that of the one and the many are according to McPartlan, the keys to Zizioulas' ecclesiological vision. See P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, xxi.

⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 72.

⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 72-73.

⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141.

⁸³ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 74.

to reveal the basic foundations of his ecclesiology of ‘the one and the many.’

Dissertation Structure and Chapter Development

This dissertation is divided into three main parts:

Part I: John Zizioulas and eucharistic ecclesiology

Part II: Zizioulas’ Patristic sources

Part III: A dialogue with Zizioulas and his critics

In Part I, I will examine Zizioulas’ ecclesiology systematically to show how it improves on the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev by widening “both our theological and philosophical horizons.”⁸⁴ Zizioulas accomplishes this through his trinitarian anthropology that is based on the concepts of the person and communion. In addition, by working out an ecclesiology that is conditioned by Pneumatology, Zizioulas further develops a truly eucharistic ecclesiology that transcends both what he has called, “localism” and “universalism” in the Church,⁸⁵ and takes into consideration the unity of the Church in the face of the plurality of churches. The first chapter introduces the life and work of Zizioulas and traces the development of his published works that has spanned some fifty years beginning from the 1960s when he began his graduate work on *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (1965)⁸⁶ to his most recent writings published in 2015. The objective of the second chapter on Afanasiev is to help us understand the key elements of Orthodox ecclesiology, especially the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev and its contribution to the development of the key idea of the Church as founded upon the Eucharist – Where there is the Eucharist, there also is the catholic Church. I will argue that it is indeed true that Afanasiev’s eucharistic theology can be summed up as such, “The Church makes the Eucharist, the Eucharist makes the Church.”⁸⁷ In chapter three, I will show how Zizioulas develops an ontology of love which is based on the relationships between communion, otherness, truth and freedom. Zizioulas argues for an ontology of love and communion based on his claim of the Cappadocian Fathers’ radical revision of Greek ontology to one that is personal and relational. In chapter four, I will show how the central focus of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is the Eucharist and in particular, eucharistic being. The Eucharist is, in Zizioulas’ estimate, the way “ecclesial being” and the being of

⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 24.

⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

⁸⁶ This is his first publication (in Greek).

⁸⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xiv.

God, history and eschatology can be drawn together “without destroying their dialectical relationship.”⁸⁸ The Eucharist was to become for Zizioulas, the event that “constituted the Church’s being. Consequently, the eucharist had the unique privilege of reuniting in one whole, in one unique experience, the work of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁹ The paramount importance of Pneumatology in ecclesiology means that a full ecclesiology cannot be constructed purely out of Christological material alone nor through Christology first and then Pneumatology. Zizioulas contends that this needed to be corrected after Vatican II⁹⁰ and in the work of his teacher George Florovsky who, in Zizioulas’ opinion, leaned more toward a Christological approach in ecclesiology.⁹¹ Zizioulas’ main contention is that there needs to be a *proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology* when it comes to ecclesiology.⁹²

In Part II, I will dwell on the Patristic sources for Zizioulas’ theology. In chapter five, I will show how some of the early Church Fathers Ignatius and Irenaeus influenced Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. Hippolytus of Rome influenced Zizioulas’ concept of apostolic succession. St. Maximus the Confessor is the main source for Zizioulas’ ontology of otherness⁹³ while St. Basil of Caesarea and St. Gregory of Nazianzen influenced Zizioulas’ ontology of the person and of communion. Zizioulas is not without critics and one of the main criticisms against Zizioulas concerns his use of the Cappadocian Fathers to support his key idea of personhood. Despite some reservations from some scholars such as Lucian Turcescu regarding his interpretation of Cappadocian theology, I argue that Zizioulas is still faithful to the Orthodox Tradition.

In Part III, I will attempt a dialogue with critics of Zizioulas’ trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology and his ontology of personhood. Beginning with chapter six which discusses some scholarly criticisms of Zizioulas, I will go on to make a theological assessment of Zizioulas in chapter seven. Here, I will assess the strengths and weaknesses of Zizioulas’ thought based on some broad criteria. These criteria include orthodoxy, catholicity and evangelical witness. In all three criteria, I contend, Zizioulas scores highly, especially in orthodoxy and evangelical witness. I shall argue, however, that improvements can still be made to the catholicity of Zizioulas’ thought. Chapter eight is my attempt to sketch out a theological vision together with some broad applications of Zizioulas’ theology in the hope that the realization of Zizioulas’ theological vision of the *Church as Communion* will, upon

⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20.

⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123.

⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 124.

⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 126.

⁹³ J. Zizioulas *Communion and Otherness*, 19-32.

further research and work, ultimately lead to a unified Church under one primate who “presides in love” over the many episcopal churches.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Afanasiev had first used this phrase, “presides in love” when referring to the Church in Rome. See his “The Church which Presides in Love,” in J. Meyendorff *et al.*, *The Primacy of Peter* (London: The Faith Press, 1963), 57-110.

PART I

John Zizioulas and Eucharistic Ecclesiology

The Life and Work of John Zizioulas

1.1. Introduction

His Eminence the Most Reverend John Zizioulas was born in Greece on 10 January, 1931.¹ At that time the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches were already actively involved in the ecumenical movement after the Ecumenical Patriarch had called for the foundation of a league of churches in 1920.² Earlier Greek ecumenists such as the late Prof. Alivizatos had vigorously defended the participation of the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement.³ Elsewhere, Orthodox theologian Florovsky, a deeply-respected Russian theologian in conservative Orthodox circles, supported the ecumenical movement and thus contributed decisively, according to Zizioulas, to the continuing full participation of the Orthodox in the World Council of Churches (WCC).⁴ After receiving his undergraduate degree in theology from the University of Athens in 1954, Zizioulas undertook a semester of formation for graduate students at the ecumenical Institute of Bossey where he first came into contact with the West and was exposed to ecumenical issues.⁵ A scholarship awarded by Conseil Oecuménique des Eglises (C.O.E) made it possible for Zizioulas in 1955 to pursue a Masters course at Harvard in the U.S.A. where he received in 1956 his M.T.S.⁶ His teachers for his Master's study from 1955-56 were Florovsky in patristics and Paul Tillich in philosophy. After two years of compulsory military service in Greece, he returned to Harvard on a scholarship and became a Fellow of Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Byzantine Studies where he undertook doctoral research from 1960-64. There, under the guidance of Florovsky, G. Williams and K. Stendahl, he completed a thesis on the unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the bishop⁷ during the first three centuries.⁸ This was submitted to the University of Athens where Zizioulas received his doctorate in 1965. The ecumenical stage

¹ This is taken from a biographical note on Metropolitan John D. Zizioulas that was kindly composed by Andriana Krstich in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 443.

² J. Zizioulas, "Orthodox Ecclesiology," in *The One and the Many*, 309.

³ J. Zizioulas, "The Self-Understanding of the Orthodox and Their Participation in the Ecumenical Movement," in *The One and the Many*, 321.

⁴ J. Zizioulas, "The Self-Understanding of the Orthodox," in *The One and the Many*, 322.

⁵ P. Fox, *God as Communion*, 3-4.

⁶ It was the very generous financial support of Metropolitan Panteleimon of Thessaloniki and of Metropolitan Dionysios of Servies and Kozani that enabled Zizioulas to complete and to publish his doctoral thesis. See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 4.

⁷ I have generally used the word 'bishop' to denote the *episkopos*. In many of Zizioulas' writings, he uses the capitalized 'Bishop' instead. So when directly quoting from Zizioulas, I have left the word 'Bishop' as it is in the original quote.

⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 4.

was set for Zizioulas to enter a lifetime of ecumenical work as a theologian and later as the Metropolitan of Pergamon under the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

1.2. Overview of Zizioulas' Theological Output

In what follows, I will provide an overview of the development of Zizioulas' career and the succession of publications that have emerged during that career.⁹ It is a rather complex story because many of his writings have been republished several times in different collections. I hope to show, however, the principal themes of his authorship as they have emerged during the past fifty years.

After his studies, Zizioulas returned to Greece where he published three articles for an encyclopaedia.¹⁰ He also published his doctoral dissertation *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* in 1965.¹¹ An English translation of this book was published in 2001.¹² In this book, Zizioulas argued for a return to the church structure of the first three centuries where the bishop was the *chief celebrant* of the Eucharist in a particular city. *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* was written based on the earliest church documents (till 300 CE) available in so far as they shed light on the role of the bishop in relation to the Church and in relation to his place in the celebration of the Eucharist. Through vigorous analysis of the biblical data on the Church as *ekklesia* and the systematic study of the patristic documents on the ordering of early church life, Zizioulas pieces together the evidence that the early churches found their unity in the person of the bishop and in his celebration of the Eucharist with *all* the people of God in the city. However, the emergence of the parish system after the first three hundred years led to the gradual shift of emphasis from the Eucharist being presided over by bishops to the proliferation of “parish communions” where the Eucharist was presided by presbyters without the bishop. The importance of the presence of the bishop at the Eucharist was gradually lost which resulted in a fragmentation of the Church into localized churches that had little relation to the source of their unity – the bishop, who had become merely an administrative and symbolic figure,¹³ not someone who was an *organic part* of the Eucharist.¹⁴

Zizioulas also engaged in *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, with the “eucharistic ecclesiology”

⁹ For biographical details of Zizioulas' formative years as a theologian, see G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes sur l'Eglise-Communion, L'oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas* (Editions Paulines, Montreal and Mediaspaul, Paris, 1989), 27-33.

¹⁰ “Jerusalem,” “St. Ignatius I – Patriarch of Constantinople,” and “Church of Thyatira,” were Zizioulas' initial contributions to the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 6 (Athens, 1964) (in Greek).

¹¹ A good review of this book can be found in D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 133-46.

¹² J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

¹³ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 238.

¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 239.

of Afanasiev, a contemporary of Zizioulas' teacher, Florovsky.¹⁵ In the light of his own historical research into the first three centuries of the Church, Zizioulas has acknowledged the importance of Afanasiev's work.¹⁶ However, he also highlights the potential dangers of taking Afanasiev's well-known axiom "wherever the Eucharist is, there is the Church"¹⁷ to the point of neglecting the unity of the universal Church in the communion of bishops who were the heads of each local church.¹⁸ Over the next twenty years, Zizioulas worked on an ontology of communion to re-work Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology by taking into consideration the importance of "the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" throughout the world.¹⁹ This culminated in the publishing of *Being as Communion* (1985) which attempted to point its readers to understand the Eucharist in terms of its ecclesial nature as "it expresses simultaneously both the "localization" and "universalization" of the mystery of the Church."²⁰

Being as Communion (1985) and its companion volume *Communion and Otherness* (2006) are collections of papers and studies centered on personhood and the Church. Three other books have been published more recently from 2008-11. One of them, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (2008) is a collection of Zizioulas' lectures given to students in the University of Thessalonica. The other two, *The One and The Many* (2010) and *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (2011), are a collection of studies on God, humanity, the Church, the Eucharist and the world today. Finally, Zizioulas is writing a book that is to be published in 2021 entitled *Remembering the Future: An Eschatological Ontology*.²¹

In addition to his books, Zizioulas has written well-over a hundred articles that have reflected his work and his theology over fifty years of theological research and teaching in the theological faculties of the UK and Greece.²² I will be highlighting some of these articles

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 17.

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 256-57.

¹⁷ Quoted by Zizioulas in his *Being as Communion*, 24.

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 258-59.

¹⁹ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 25.

²⁰ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 25.

²¹ The Worldcat has listed this book *Remembering the Future* as published in 2009. Yet, I have not been able to source the book from any libraries. But Zizioulas refers to this concept of an eschatological ontology in his earlier works such as *Communion and Otherness*. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 67. Here he defines eschatological ontology as a kind of ontology in which reality is expressed in terms of the future. For example, the meaning of philosophical terms such as 'nature' and 'hypostasis' is derived not from the past or the present, but from the future.

²² A full bibliography of Zizioulas' published writings from 1965-91 can be found in McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 316-21. This is complemented by an updated bibliography covering the period 1965-2001 in A. Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 209-14. There is also in French a biography of Zizioulas' published works from 1965-2008. See J. Zizioulas, *L'Eglises et ses institutions* (Paris: Cerf, 2011). The most up-to-date compilation of his works covering the period (1965-2015) appears in this chapter of my dissertation. At last count, Zizioulas has published well over 120 articles and more than 10 books. In addition, he has written several more articles in Greek. A full bibliography up to 2007 of secondary works on John Zizioulas compiled by Liviu Barbu can be found in *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church*, ed. D. Knight (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 197-202.

to chart Zizioulas' theological concerns during the fifty years of his life-work.

1.3. Early Years as a Lay Theologian

After teaching two years in Greece, Zizioulas worked in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva. He was a member of working groups on the Eucharist and on the development of conciliar structures.²³ His interests at this point can be grouped around four main areas:

- a) The Eucharist and the other Church sacraments (Baptism and Ordination)
- b) Conciliarity and Church authority
- c) Pneumatology and the Church
- d) Ecumenism

A) The Eucharist and the other sacraments of the Church

From 1965-70, Zizioulas followed-up on his doctoral research and pursued theological work on the Eucharist and on specific sacraments of the Church, namely ordination, baptism and confirmation. He published several articles in the late 1960s. The first, "La Vision Eucharistique du Monde et L'Homme Contemporain,"²⁴ was key to Zizioulas' eucharistic vision of God, the Church and the world. It was hailed as pointing to "an authentic theological renewal"²⁵ and contained a "truly Orthodox elaboration of an ecclesial anthropology and cosmology."²⁶ In this article, besides reminding us that Orthodox theology is basically a *eucharistic theology*, Zizioulas also offers for reflection the Eucharist as event, as acceptance of creation, as anthropology, as ethics, as eschaton and as hope.²⁷ These themes would appear in a Faith and Order document entitled *The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought (1968)*.²⁸

Of all his articles on the Eucharist, "La Communauté Eucharistique et la Catholicité de

²³ P. Fox, *God as Communion*, 5.

²⁴ This was Zizioulas' first post-doctoral publication and was presented at a congress in Thessalonika on "The Orthodox Church and the World." It was first published in *Contacts* 19 (1967): 83-92. A Greek version was also first published in *Christianiko Symposio* 1 (1967): 183-90. A German translation was published as "Die Welt im eucharistischen Schau und der Mensch von Heute," in *Una Sancta* 4 (1970): 342-49 and re-printed in *Philoxenia*, hrsg. 1 (Friedeberg, Marburg/Lahn, 1973): 24-34. It appeared in Serbian in *Teoloski Pogledi* 6 (1973): 37-45. Then it was translated into Italian and appeared in *Simposio Cristiano* (Milano, 1975): 301-10. Finally, an English translation by Luke Ben Tallon, entitled "The Eucharistic Vision of the World," was published in J. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. L. Ben Tallon (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 124-31.

²⁵ Note on page 1 of *Contacts* 19 (1967) where this paper was published.

²⁶ Olivier Clément, "Liminaire," *Contacts* 19 (1967), 1.

²⁷ J. Zizioulas, "The Eucharistic Vision of the World," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 123-31.

²⁸ This was a Faith and Order document "The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought," in *Study Encounter*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1968).

L'Eglise"²⁹ is particularly important because it highlights the importance of catholicity in the sense of the fullness of the local Church consisting of the eucharistic community headed by the bishop. This paper introduced the idea of the "one" and the "many" in the eucharistic consciousness of the early Church where the Eucharist was "understood primarily not as a *thing* and an objectified means of grace but as an act and a *synaxis* of the local Church, a 'catholic' act of a 'catholic' Church."³⁰ The catholicity of the Church is a major theme in Zizioulas' ecclesiology in which he argues for the Church to be a *corporate Body of Christ* based on the Hebrew conception of "corporate personality" in the Bible.³¹ This paper that argued for the importance of the bishop in the Eucharist was also the first to be published of the articles in his later book *Being as Communion*.³² The person of the bishop was instrumental in the eucharistic assembly because he was the *alter Christus, the head of the eucharistic assembly*, who expressed in one person the unity and catholicity of the Church in the Eucharist.³³ This would lead to his concept of the episcopacy in the Church and his insistence on the presence of the bishop in the celebration of every Eucharist.³⁴ The bishop is in Zizioulas' view, the "organ of the Church's catholicity" through communion with the other orders of the Church at the Eucharist and through communion with the other Churches.³⁵ Very early on in his writings, we see that communion was at the heart of Zizioulas' ecclesiology and the bishop was at the center of Zizioulas' vision of the Eucharist. Zizioulas follows closely Ignatius of Antioch's eschatological approach to the Church where "the essence of the Church is that she constitutes an *eikon* or *typos* (an image or type) of the Kingdom of God, of the *eschata*."³⁶ The bishop in the Church was the *eikon* of Christ seated on his throne in heaven. Thus, the bishop had to be at the centre of the eucharistic celebrations of every Church. Without him in the Church, the complete image of the

²⁹ This was first published in French in *Istina* 14 (1969): 67-88 and re-published as chapter three in J. Zizioulas, *L'être Ecclésial* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1981). It was published in German as "Abendmahlsgemeinschaft und Katholizität der Kirche" in W. Pannenberg *et al*, *Katholizität und Apostolizität*, Beiheft zu *Kerygma und Dogma* 2 (1971): 31-50. It has appeared in Serbian in *Glasnik* 52 (1971): 110-21. It first appeared in English in *One in Christ*, Vol. 6 (1970): 314-37. It was also published in English as "Eucharist and Catholicity," in *The New Man*, eds. J. Meyendorff and J. McLelland (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Agora Books, 1973), 107-31. Finally, it appeared with this English title in chapter four of Zizioulas' *Being as Communion*, 143-69. Clearly it is a key article in the eucharistic ecclesiology of Zizioulas as it attempts to help us see "the concept of the catholicity of the Church in the light of the eucharistic community." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 143.

³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 145.

³¹ H. W. Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 25-44.

³² The fact that this paper was also included in *Being as Communion* (1985) demonstrates the central place it occupies in Zizioulas' ontology of communion. It is this chapter that links the concept of communion to all aspects of the Church including ministry and apostolic succession.

³³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 154.

³⁴ See J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church," in *The One and the Many*, 236-53.

³⁵ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 252.

³⁶ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 241.

Kingdom of God which the Church is supposed to mirror would be lost.

The Eucharist was also the context, very early on in his career, for Zizioulas' conception of man as a 'priest of creation.'³⁷ This concept first appeared in Zizioulas' next article "L'eucharistie: quelques aspects bibliques."³⁸ This was a study of the Lord's Supper in the early Church with close reference to the Holy Scriptures. It contrasted the Lord's Supper with the Passover meal and pointed out the Eucharist offers an eschatological vision of the Kingdom of God.³⁹

Besides the Eucharist, Zizioulas also reflected in several papers published in the late 1960s on the other sacraments of baptism, confirmation and ordination. In these papers, he argued for an integrative approach to understanding these sacraments of the Church in relation to the Eucharist.⁴⁰ Many of the ideas for these papers came in the first five to ten years of his theological career when he drafted many important documents for the WCC.⁴¹ They displayed Zizioulas' interest in integrating the sacraments of the Church with God, humanity and the world.⁴² These were to be the building blocks of his *eucharistic ecclesiology*, for the heart, goal and basis of his theology is ultimately the Eucharist.⁴³

B) Conciliarity and Church Authority

Besides the Eucharist and the sacraments of the local Church, Zizioulas was interested very early in his career in Church matters that touched on the development of conciliar structures in the early Church and on Church authority. Zizioulas researched the intrinsic relationship between conciliarity and the liturgical life in the early Church.⁴⁴ He concluded that conciliar action was to be found *within the context of the Eucharist* in order to lead the Church to sacramental unity.⁴⁵ The decisions of the ecumenical councils had to do with the subject of

³⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Ordination and Communion," in *The One and the Many*, 189.

³⁸ This was published in J. D. Zizioulas, J. M. R. Tillard, J. J. Von Allmen, *L'eucharistie* (Eglises en dialogue 12: Mame, 1970), 11-74. It was later published in J. Zizioulas, *L'Eglise et ses institutions* (Paris: Cerf, 2011), 257-311. An English translation by Luke Ben Tallon is found in J. Zizioulas, "Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 1-38.

³⁹ This key idea of Zizioulas which linked the Eucharist with the Kingdom of God is further developed in a three-part paper entitled "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God," in J. Zizioulas, "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 39-82.

⁴⁰ See J. Zizioulas, "Ministry and Communion," in his *Being as Communion*, 209-46 and "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist," in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 91-100.

⁴¹ He has also prepared papers for the Faith and Order Commission, WCC. Some of these papers are unpublished. An example is "The Church as Eucharistic Community and the Basis of Law" (Mar 1974).

⁴² Zizioulas has coined the term "catholic anthropology" and has proposed a "catholic view of existence" to relate the Eucharist and the world to each other. See his "Eucharist and Catholicity," in *Being as Communion*, 162.

⁴³ This is noted by Tallon in his introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, xiii.

⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar Structures to the Time of the First Ecumenical Council," in *The One and the Many*, 213.

⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 213.

eucharistic communion – who to exclude from communion and the liturgical life.⁴⁶ The theological *raison d'être* of conciliarity or even the institution of synods is to be found in the idea of communion as an ontological category.⁴⁷ The final goal of conciliarity was, according to Zizioulas, eucharistic communion.⁴⁸ In addition, even the concept of authority in the Church depends very much on her communion with God in the Holy Spirit who is the bond of love creating persons in communion with God and with one another.⁴⁹ Using the historical material from the first three centuries of the Church that he had researched for his doctoral thesis, Zizioulas published the following articles: “The Development of Conciliar Structures to the Time of the First Ecumenical Council”⁵⁰ and “Preliminary Considerations on the Concept of Authority.”⁵¹

In the 1968 article, he provides an account of the sacraments and the nature of conciliarity in the first three centuries leading up to the First Ecumenical Council. Zizioulas wrote this in a critical period when the WCC was changing its emphasis to social concern in what was then known as “horizontalism” thus threatening the original task of the WCC which was to promote Christian unity by way of theological engagement via the comparative method.⁵² In this article, Zizioulas argued that conciliar structures already existed in the regular assemblies convoked and constituted by the apostles and presbyters of the early Church and later on, by the bishop with the presbyters.⁵³ These first conciliar structures were the foundations for later councils (consisting of provincial councils,⁵⁴ bishop’s councils⁵⁵ and councils of one local Church)⁵⁶ preceding the First Ecumenical Council.⁵⁷ The structure of conciliarity was strictly episcopal and its purpose was to lead the Church to a unity expressed through eucharistic communion understood as “the first act of a repeated or rather ongoing

⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 213.

⁴⁷ Zizioulas believes that for Basil, the nature of God is communion. When speaking of the unity of God, Basil prefers to speak of it in terms of the communion of persons instead of his one nature.

⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 213.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Preliminary Considerations on the Concept of Authority,” in *The One and the Many*, 173.

⁵⁰ This was first published in *Councils and the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: World Council of Churches Studies 5, WCC, 1968): 34-51. Later, it was published in Zizioulas’ *The One and the Many*, 190-213.

⁵¹ This was first published in *The Ecumenical Review* (1969): 160-66 and then in Zizioulas’ *The One and the Many*, 170-76. It has also been published in *Krestanska revue* 41 (1974): 6-13.

⁵² J. Zizioulas, “Faith and Order: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” in *The One and the Many*, 379-80.

⁵³ J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 211.

⁵⁴ A provincial council consisted of the bishops of a province. See J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 212.

⁵⁵ A bishop’s council consisted of the bishop and the presbyters. According to Zizioulas, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* sheds considerable light on the institution of the bishop’s council by describing its structure and function in detail. This document was written about one hundred years after St. Ignatius of Antioch first mentioned a “council of the bishop” in his letter to the Philadelphians (8.1). See J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 195-96, 212.

⁵⁶ The council of the local Church or diocese consisted of either the Apostles or the bishops and the presbyters with the multitude of the faithful. See J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 212.

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 212.

liturgical drama in which peace is sought in love and truth so that *communio in sacris* – which at the same time is *communio sanctorum* – may follow.”⁵⁸

In the 1969 article, Zizioulas emphasized the role of communion in establishing authority in the Church. Authority is established principally through a relationship of *love* so that it can truly be called an “authority of love” within a community.⁵⁹ This kind of authority implies a particular concept of *freedom* in which authority is not externally imposed but established freely in a loving relationship that comes from intimate *communion* with God and with one another. Here we see that very early in his career, Zizioulas had already started to grapple with the ontological concepts of *communion*, *love* and *freedom* which were to become the cornerstones of his theological writings.

A decade later, in 1978, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity”⁶⁰ and “Conciliarity and the Way to Unity – An Orthodox Point of View”⁶¹ were published. These recount Zizioulas’ engagement within the Orthodox circles in search of an Orthodox response towards Church unity through conciliar structures and primarily through the Eucharist and the local church community. These articles reflect Zizioulas’ maturing theological outlook on the relation between truth, love and life in the one Church as a “*communion of churches*” and not as “a single and uniform institutional entity.”⁶² Reinforced by earlier years of studies on the Eucharist, Zizioulas developed the conviction that it is only in the Eucharist that the Church acquires “a vision of the truth as both historical and free from the laws of history; as social and yet transcending all societies, as love that, although experienced in and through human relations, remains ultimately only a matter of sharing the trinitarian life of God, of *theosis*.”⁶³

So, very early on in Zizioulas’ writings, we see him applying the concept of communion to conciliarity and to Church authority, always *in the context of the Eucharist* where communion is expressed in all its fullness. For Zizioulas, conciliarity is “the expression of the unity of the local Churches in *one Church*” and thereby constitutes “a fundamental condition

⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 213. Zizioulas stresses that for the ancient Church, “the Eucharist was not simply a *communio in sacris* but also a *communio sanctorum* and therefore the expression of the very ‘*ecclesia* of God’ in a certain place.” See J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 199. Zizioulas bases this on the text of 1 Cor. 11.18-22 whereby the Church of God is identified by St. Paul with the local eucharistic body. See also J. Zizioulas, “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 191.

⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Concept of Authority,” in *The One and the Many*, 172-73.

⁶⁰ This paper was entitled “A Comment” to Prof. Zabolotsky’s “Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *Procès-Verbaux du Deuxième Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes 19-29 août 1976*, ed. S. C. Agourides (Athènes, 1978): 129-40. It was published in *Procès-Verbaux*, ed. S. C. Agourides, 140-46. Later it was published in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 214-20.

⁶¹ This was first published in *Churches in Conciliar Fellowship* (Geneva: Conference of European Churches, 1978), 20-31 (in English, French and German). It was again published in German in *Die Zeichen der Zeit* 1/2 (1979): 30-39.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, “Conciliarity and the Way to Unity – An Orthodox Point of View,” in *Churches in Conciliar Fellowship*, 28.

⁶³ J. Zizioulas, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *The One and the Many*, 220.

for the Eucharist.”⁶⁴

C) Pneumatology and the Church

In the early seventies, Zizioulas’ began to do more systematic studies in theology. This probably reflects a change in his work place as he started teaching systematic theology at the University of Edinburgh from 1970 to 1973 before moving on to Glasgow. One of the key insights he obtained while studying conciliarity in the Church was what he called “the *constitutive* role of Pneumatology in ecclesiology.”⁶⁵ This means both that the Church needs to be conditioned pneumatologically and that we need to see the Church in terms of her eschatological nature. It also means that we need to condition the Church via an ontology of communion. The twin ingredients of Pneumatology – communion and eschatology need to condition ecclesiology. This was Zizioulas’ key idea in his *pneumatologically conditioned ecclesiology* as he developed it in the following articles on the Church.

The first article was “The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church”⁶⁶ which argued that a synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology is necessary for a proper understanding of the Church.⁶⁷ When the pneumatological dimension of the Church is properly synthesized with Christology in the context of a trinitarian theology, a *double movement* in the Church’s existence is revealed, Zizioulas asserts.⁶⁸ The Holy Spirit creates “a centripetal movement by drawing the Church towards unity in and through a given structure.”⁶⁹ The Holy Spirit also “makes the Church *ek-static*, relational, and all-embracing towards everything not strictly enclosed by the given structures, even toward the whole of creation.”⁷⁰ Zizioulas, in the same Spirit as Irenaeus, reminds his readers that

These two movements belong together both in Christ and the Spirit: the Spirit by rendering the Church both a concrete structured community and a relational cosmic event realizes through the one divine energy the catholicity of Christ who is the recapitulation of all. It is thus that the unity of the divine economy is fulfilled in its Trinitarian character by being ultimately referred to the Father by both the Son and the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:28).⁷¹

That same year saw Zizioulas publishing another important work “Priesteramt und

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions,” in *The One and the Many*, 72-73.

⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 133-34.

⁶⁶ This first appeared in German “Die Pneumatologische Dimension der Kirche,” in *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift* 2 (1973): 133-47. It appeared in English in the forerunner to *Communio*, *International Catholic Review*, vol. II, no. 2. (1973): 82-90 and again in *International Catholic Review – Communio* 1 (1974): 142-58. Then it was published in Zizioulas’ *The One and the Many*, 75-90.

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 77.

⁶⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 89-90.

⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 89.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 89.

⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 89.

Priesterweihe im Licht der östlich-orthodoxen Theologie”⁷² This was his key paper on the relationship between ministry and communion in which Zizioulas argues, “There is no ministry in the Church other than Christ’s ministry” and that the Church’s ministry is identified with Christ’s ministry only if we let our *Christology be conditioned pneumatologically*.⁷³ In such a Christology, Christ is not understood as an individual; He ministers as the Church because the Spirit makes him the ‘one’ and the ‘many’ at the same time when the Spirit constitutes “the Body of Christ *here and now* by *realizing* Christ’s ministry *as* the Church’s ministry.”⁷⁴ Christ’s ministry in essence becomes the Church’s ministry through the Holy Spirit who is “*constitutive of the very relation between Christ and the ministry*.”⁷⁵

The following year, Zizioulas published a key paper “La Continuité avec les Origines Apostoliques dans la Conscience Théologique des Eglises Orthodoxes.”⁷⁶ This is the other major paper in which Zizioulas argues that true apostolic succession concerns not just a historical apostolic continuity but must also take into account the “Biblical image of the apostles as an indivisible college surrounding Christ in His Kingdom.”⁷⁷ Here, Zizioulas seeks to restore the long-lost tradition which applied this image of the apostolate to the concept of apostolic succession, a tradition which was established in the early Church in Syria and Palestine.⁷⁸

The above three papers (1973-74) form the basis for Zizioulas’ theory of the relation between ministry, the apostles and the Eucharist in an ecclesiology conditioned by Pneumatology. Later years saw Zizioulas working out the implications of his theory.

In 1981, Zizioulas published another major article to argue for a pneumatologically conditioned ecclesiology – “Christ, the Spirit and the Church.”⁷⁹ This article reflects his

⁷² This was first published in German as a contribution to the series edited by K. Rahner and H. Schlier, *Questiones Disputatae*, vol. 50, *Der priesterliche Dienst – V. Amt und Ordination in ökumenischer Sicht* (Freiburg-Basel-Wein: Herder, 1973): 72-113. It appeared for the first time in English as chapter six “Ministry and Communion,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 209-46.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 210. This is one of Zizioulas’ key theses in theology. It will be further discussed in chapter four.

⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 211. Italics original.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 212.

⁷⁶ This was originally given as a paper for the “Académie Internationale des Sciences Religieuses” and was published in the Proceedings of the Academy and in *Istina* 19 (1974): 65-94. It was also published as chapter four in J. Zizioulas, *L’être Ecclésial* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1981). In English, it was published as “Apostolic Continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a synthesis of two perspectives,” in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975): 75-108. More recently, it has also appeared as chapter five “Apostolic Continuity and Succession,” in Zizioulas’ *Being as Communion*, 171-208.

⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 204.

⁷⁸ Based on the witness of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the *Didascalia*, *Apostolic Constitutions* and Eusebius’ succession lists, etc.).

⁷⁹ This was first published as “Cristologia, pneumatologia e istituzioni ecclesiastiche: un punto di vista ortodosso,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 2 (1981): 111-27. It was later published by this English title in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123-42.

growing application of the fruits of his research to systematic theology, especially in the areas of ecclesiology and Pneumatology. It also displays a gradual maturing of Zizioulas' integrative systematic thought with respect to the importance of the Holy Spirit in shaping our understanding of Christ, the Church and the various Church ministries in relation to Christ. Zizioulas' key thesis here is that both Christology and ecclesiology needs to be *conditioned* by Pneumatology, which in itself has two elements – communion and eschatology.⁸⁰

D) Ecumenism

Zizioulas has applied the theological principles he developed over the years to his lifelong work on ecumenism.⁸¹ His initial two and a half years spent as a permanent member of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission in Geneva provided him with ample opportunities to meet Protestants, Catholics and even members of the pre-Chalcedonian Churches.⁸² The late 1960s was a time of strong grounding in the ecumenical movement for Zizioulas who helped the WCC draft some of its papers on the sacraments.⁸³

During the seventies and early eighties, Zizioulas continued to engage with the different Orthodox Churches⁸⁴ and in ecumenical discussions with the Protestant⁸⁵ and Roman Catholic Churches. He did so while mainly teaching at Edinburgh and Glasgow. In 1975, he was appointed a delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the central committee of the WCC and the Faith and Order Commission.⁸⁶ He was also appointed a member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate based in Istanbul, Turkey. In 1980, Zizioulas was actively involved in the international Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue where he collaborated with other members of this commission to produce its foundational agreed statement that elucidated an integrative vision of the Church: "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the

⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 139.

⁸¹ There are a set of ten studies on the ecumenical movement in Part Three of his book, *The One and the Many*, 309-413.

⁸² G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur L'Eglise-communion*, 43.

⁸³ Zizioulas helped to prepare many Faith and Order documents such as "The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought," in *Study Encounter*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1968). He has also published "The meaning of Ordination," in *Study Encounters* 4 (1968): 191-93. The latter was also a study paper of the Faith and Order Commission. He has also published "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist," which was prepared for the Study Commission on Worship of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. It was published originally in *Sobornost* 5 (1969): 644-52.

⁸⁴ He published "Ecclesiological Issues Inherent in the Relations Between Eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental Non-Chalcedonian Churches," in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 16 (1971): 144-62.

⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Orthodox-Protestant Bilateral Conversations: Some Comments," in *The Orthodox Church and the Churches of the Reformation: A survey of Orthodox-Protestant Dialogues*, Faith and Order Paper 76 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975), 55-60.

⁸⁶ P. Fox, *God as Communion*, 5. For a more detailed account of Zizioulas' ecumenical work until he became Metropolitan of Pergamon, see G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes*, 35-58.

Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.”⁸⁷

Zizioulas published numerous articles during this decade of ecumenical work (1975-85).⁸⁸ They reflect a range of topics on Christianity and the Church. The sheer quantity of theological writings produced in this period testifies to Zizioulas’ commitment to the ecumenical cause even in the face of many difficulties and challenges. Many of these challenges came not only from other church denominations but also from within Orthodox circles, and especially from the Greek Orthodox Church. However, in the face of these challenges, Zizioulas never lost sight of his ecumenical witness by pointing us to the fact that communion was the central aspect of the Church’s nature.

We conclude this section by emphasizing once more that in his early years as a lay theologian, Zizioulas made his key concept of communion *the ultimate ontological category* for his theology. The application of this ontological category of communion to ecclesiology is the distinctive feature of Zizioulas’ theology.⁸⁹ He maintains that the being of the Church is deeply bound to the Being of God who is communion.⁹⁰ This makes the Church herself an *image* of the trinitarian God.

1.4. Zizioulas’ Life as an Academic and Later as Bishop

1.4.1. Introduction

Many of Zizioulas’ papers were written in his primary role as a university academic which provided the platform and the occasion for him to publish his theological and philosophical ideas, chief of which were his ideas of personhood and communion that became the building blocks of his version of eucharistic ecclesiology. His interactions with Western academics and students provided opportunities for rich theological dialogues between the Church in the East and the West. The British theologian Gunton was to be his life-long friend, while the

⁸⁷ This was from the second plenary meeting held from 30 June to 6 July 1982 in Munich. The full text can be found at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/ch_orthodox_docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19820706_munich_en.html (last accessed 31 Mar 2017).

⁸⁸ Zizioulas has published at least 13 papers on Ecumenism over the years. Those published between 1975 and 1985 were written in the most fertile period of writing for Zizioulas before he was made Metropolitan of Pergamon in 1986. In total, there were no fewer than twenty-eight articles published between 1975 and 1985. A further six unpublished papers were also written in this period. Most significant was the publishing of a collection of articles written in 1969-81 in two books, one in French – *L’être Ecclesial* (1981) with an introduction, and the other in English – *Being as Communion* (1985).

⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 49-60. The Second Vatican Council had already introduced a theology of communion into ecclesiology but had not made it the central aspect in ecclesiology. See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141. Here, Zizioulas expresses his utmost desire for the notion of communion to be pushed to its ontological conclusions. He writes, “We need an ontology of communion. We need to make communion condition the very being of the Church, not the well-being but the being of it.”

⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15-17.

celebrated Scottish theologian, T. F. Torrance, was to be a key supporter.⁹¹

1.4.2. Lecturer in Scotland (1970-87)

Zizioulas came to Edinburgh in 1970 to teach at the university. He did so until 1973 when he moved on to the University of Glasgow where he held a personal chair in systematic theology for 14 years. He was very well received in Scotland.⁹² He also held concurrent visiting professorships at the Universities of Geneva, London and the Gregorian.⁹³ His gifts as a theologian were recognized very early on in his career by the recently glorified⁹⁴ Serbian theologian, the Venerable Justin Popovich, who called Zizioulas a “young, Christ-longing theologian” and “one of the most profound young theologians” he had ever met.⁹⁵ It was during this period in 1975 that he published a very key and influential article on a study of personhood. This paper was entitled “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood.”⁹⁶ It is one of his most philosophically and theologically profound papers in which he combines the religious thoughts of Fyodor Dostoevsky, the existentialism of Sartre and the best insights of Greek metaphysical tradition to explore the existential meaning of *theological* personhood using a “presence-in-absence paradox”⁹⁷ that shows that “personal presence *qua* presence is something that *cannot be extrapolated from created existence*. It is a presence that seems to come to us from outside this world.”⁹⁸ This paper contrasts two approaches to anthropology – a substantial approach and a personal-communion approach that was argued by Zizioulas to be the better way to determine the nature of the human being because this takes into account “his ability to relate to extra-human realities.”⁹⁹ In this paper are summarized Zizioulas’ main themes in his theology:

- A) Personhood and communion as *ekstasis* and *hypostasis* of being
- B) Personhood in relation to love and freedom
- C) Pneumatological conditioning of Christology

⁹¹ Unfortunately, Gunton passed away at the height of his career but Zizioulas’ friendship with Gunton was evident in the dedication of Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness* to the memory of Gunton who was mentioned in the same breath as Zizioulas’ teacher, Florovsky. It was T. F. Torrance who introduced Zizioulas to the Scottish theological scene.

⁹² T. F. Torrance was instrumental in bringing Zizioulas to Scotland and he recognized Zizioulas’ immense gifts. See J. Radcliff, *T. F. Torrance and the Church Fathers* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 138-39, n. 147.

⁹³ P. Fox, *God as Communion*, 5.

⁹⁴ The Eastern Church have a practice of declaring certain deceased persons saints. So, the term ‘glorified’ here means officially made a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

⁹⁵ This is recounted in Rev. Msgr. McPartlan’s introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xiv.

⁹⁶ This paper was initially read at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1972. This was first published in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 401-48. It was subsequently published as chapter six in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 206-49.

⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 222-24.

⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 224. Italics original.

⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 207.

Let us look at each in turn.

A) Personhood and communion as *ekstasis* and *hypostasis* of being

According to Zizioulas, there are two basic aspects of personhood: an ecstatic aspect and a hypostatic aspect.¹⁰⁰ Through man's ecstatic personhood, "man confronts nothingness as a painful absence which makes him long for presence."¹⁰¹ It is Zizioulas' contention that this *longing* for presence drives humanity towards *communion*. The person is not an individual or a personality. According to Zizioulas, the person cannot "be conceived in itself as a static entity, but only as it *relates* to. Thus, personhood implies the 'openness of being,' and even more than that, the *ek-stasis* of being, that is, a movement towards communion which leads to a transcendence of the 'self' and thus to freedom."¹⁰² At the same time, Zizioulas continues, "in contrast to the partiality of the individual which is subject to addition and combination, the person in its ecstatic character reveals its being in a *catholic*, that is, integral and undivided, way, and thus in its being ecstatic it becomes *hypostatic*, that is, the bearer of its nature in its totality."¹⁰³ According to Zizioulas, *ekstasis* and *hypostasis* have been historically applied to the concept of person, the notion of which "affirms at once both that personal being cannot be 'contained' or 'divided,' and that the mode of its existence, its *hypostasis*, is absolutely unique and unrepeatable."¹⁰⁴ Without these two conditions, Zizioulas maintains that "being falls into an a-personal reality, defined and described like a mere 'substance,' that is, it becomes an a-personal thing."¹⁰⁵

However, Zizioulas writes that human personhood has been perverted by the fall.¹⁰⁶ Drawing from the insights of Maximus, Zizioulas explains that the *ekstasis* of personhood consequently comes to be experienced as *apo-stasis* (distance) between person and nature.¹⁰⁷ Difference in persons becomes division of persons. Distance between persons then becomes separation of persons and the breaking of communion. This leads the human being to death and decomposition.¹⁰⁸ Restoration of true personhood is only possible in Christ through the Holy Spirit who vivifies being by restoring it to communion with God. This restoration of personhood in Christ thus leads inevitably to the community of the Church.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

¹⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 226.

¹⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 212-13.

¹⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

¹⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

¹⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

¹⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 229.

¹⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 229, esp. n. 33.

¹⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245.

B) Personhood in relation to love and freedom

Zizioulas maintains that love and freedom are “ontological notions *par excellence*”¹¹⁰ based upon which a person can be uniquely identified. He explains that

There is the presence of personal beings, which is not established on the basis of a *given* ‘nature’ of the being but of love and freedom: persons can neither be particular – and thus be at all – by way of a nature compelling them to ‘be’ so, nor be present, that is, recognized as being there, by compelling us to recognize them. In this case, ontology cannot ultimately take for granted the being of any being; it cannot attribute the ultimacy of being to a necessity inherent in the nature of a being; it can only attribute it to freedom and love, which thus become ontological notions *par excellence*. Being in this case owes its being to personhood and ultimately becomes identical with it.¹¹¹

Love and freedom are for Zizioulas two important aspects of personhood. It is only in a person that we can find love and freedom. This love is free and relational. It comes from the love of God the Father which causes the love for an ‘other.’ God’s free love for creation brought it into being by his will. In a sense, creation has come to be because of this love and freedom of God. This freedom is not a moral freedom, but an *ontological* one in which a person can become free to *be* himself and to be free *for* others. Zizioulas emphasizes that freedom is not “a choice among many possibilities but a movement of love.”¹¹² It is a freedom exercised in personhood and leads man to his true being – an image and likeness of God in Christ.

C) Pneumatological conditioning of Christology

Zizioulas argues that Christology must be conditioned right from the beginning by Pneumatology and ecclesiology. This is something theology has been reluctant to do, according to Zizioulas.¹¹³ Western theology has tended to build a Christology based on biblical and patristic witnesses to Christ alone without letting Pneumatology be foundational in its formation. In particular, these two ingredients of Pneumatology need to constantly shape Christology and ecclesiology – eschatology and communion. According to Aristotle Papanikolaou, this eucharistic-eschatological type of Pneumatology has often been neglected by exegetes of the early Christian texts.¹¹⁴ Zizioulas, however, constantly reminds us that

¹¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 219. Zizioulas understands freedom and love in ontological terms, an understanding which he concedes still needs to be worked out in order to find their proper places in philosophy and theology. He even goes so far as to say that an ontology of love is “the only way to understand the view of the Greek Fathers (e.g., Athanasius in his *De Incarn.*) that a break in communion with God means the return of the world to non-being.” See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 215, n. 15.

¹¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 218. Italics original.

¹¹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 237.

¹¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 243.

¹¹⁴ A. Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 34.

“Christology is pneumatologically conditioned in its very roots.”¹¹⁵

As can be seen from the above paper “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity,” Zizioulas had already in the early seventies been integrating many facets of theology into his anthropology that is based on the concept of personhood and a relational ontology of communion, freedom and love.¹¹⁶ He then applies this ontology of the person to his ecclesiology of communion.¹¹⁷

From the late seventies onwards, his theological research involved a more complex synthesis as is evidenced in three articles first published in the latter half of the seventies and which demonstrate Zizioulas’ maturing theological outlook and his synthetic approach to the study of the Church, personhood, communion and being. This culminated in a collection of studies relating being, truth and the Church to communion. The articles, all published in 1977 and written at a time when Zizioulas had assessed that respect for humanity’s “personal identity” was perhaps the most important ideal,¹¹⁸ are:

- 1) “From *Prosopeion* to *Prosopon*: The Contribution of Patristic Theology to the Concept of the Person”¹¹⁹

This is one of the most important foundational papers on the *concept of the person* in which he introduced the idea of the addition, through *baptism into Christ*, of an *ecclesial hypostasis* of man to his biological hypostasis given him at birth.¹²⁰ Here, Zizioulas gives credit to the Cappadocian Fathers for having introduced a revolution in ontology by bequeathing to humanity the concept of the person.¹²¹ This paper was followed soon after by an integrated study of the nature of truth in the early Church Fathers:

- 2) “Vérité et Communion dans la Perspective de la Pensée Patristique Grecque”¹²²

Expanding on his earlier paper “The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church,” Zizioulas

¹¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 244. Italics original.

¹¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 214.

¹¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 247.

¹¹⁸ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 27. Christos Yannaras quotes extensively from this paper in his book *The Freedom of Morality* (1984). A good theological reflection on the first part (from mask to person) of this paper can be found in D. Fisher, “Byzantine Ontology: Reflections on the Thought of John Zizioulas,” *The Diakonia* 29.1 (1996): 57-63.

¹¹⁹ This was first published in Greek in *Charisterion* (Institute of Patristic Studies, Thessalonica, 1977): 287-323 in honor of Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon. It then appeared in French as chapter one in J. Zizioulas, *L'être Ecclésial*. More recently, it has been translated from the original Greek into English by Norman Russell and published as chapter one “Personhood and Being,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 27-66.

¹²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 50-53.

¹²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 65.

¹²² This was first published in French in *Irénikon* 50 (1977): 451-510. It appeared in French as chapter two in J. Zizioulas, *L'être Ecclésial*. It has appeared in German as “Wahrheit und Gemeinschaft in der Sicht der griechischen Kirchenväter,” in *Kerygma und Digma* 26 (1980): 2-49. It was also published in Spanish in *Selecciones de Teología* 71 (1979): 251-71. It was also later translated from French to English by Dr. P. J. Bussey and published as chapter two “Truth and Communion,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67-122.

surveys various patristic approaches to truth (from Justin Martyr to Maximus the Confessor) and reflects on the relationship between truth and communion before concluding that they are identical if *being is constituted as communion*.¹²³ Zizioulas argues that once being is viewed as communion, there will no longer be a rupture between truth and communion.¹²⁴ Zizioulas then relates truth to ecclesiology in the light of a pneumatologically conditioned Christology in which the Holy Spirit “actually realizes in history that which we call Christ, this absolute relational entity, our Savior.”¹²⁵ Christ is the truth because He is full of the Spirit of truth who makes real “the Christ-event in history,”¹²⁶ i.e. the Eucharist where simultaneously Christ’s personal existence is also made real as a body or community. As Zizioulas claims, “Christ does not exist *first* as truth and *then* as communion; He is both at once. All separation between Christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit.”¹²⁷ In such a Christology, the Eucharist becomes “the locus of truth”¹²⁸ and reveals Christ as the truth in a eucharistic community which lives in an *epicletic* way.¹²⁹ Here, the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Church makes Christ the truth in communion with His Body. The local church community (which celebrates the Eucharist – the locus of truth) then becomes the truth.¹³⁰ In addition, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church embodies and expresses the truth through its councils of bishops in communion with each other.¹³¹

Zizioulas capped the year 1977 with an article on the nature of the local Church:

3) “The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective: An Orthodox Contribution”¹³²

Building upon the conclusions drawn from his doctoral dissertation *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001) in which Zizioulas highlighted the problem of the parish system, this article explores the basic Orthodox ecclesiological principle that wherever there is the Eucharist in one locality (city), there also is the Catholic Church as the Body of Christ in all its fullness (regardless of gender, race, language, age and professions) in that locality (city). It also

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101.

¹²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 102.

¹²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110-11.

¹²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111.

¹²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111. Italics original.

¹²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 114.

¹²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 122.

¹³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 114-15.

¹³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 116.

¹³² This was first published in English as a contribution to L. Newbegin (ed.), *In Each Place: Towards a Fellowship of Local Churches Truly United* (Geneva: WCC, 1977): 50-61. It was also published in French as chapter six in J. Zizioulas, *L'être Ecclésial*. It was later published as chapter seven “The Local Church in a Perspective of Communion,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 247-60. This paper contains one of Zizioulas’ bold suggestions to cut the size of the Diocese and create “small episcopal dioceses” so that the Bishop can be the head of the eucharistic community and pastor his flock more effectively by being able to be more personable and accessible to the members of his eucharistic community. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 251, n. 6.

highlights the challenges coming from confessional plurality and from the autocephalous churches.

All the above three articles published in 1977 would form more than half of the material for his book *L'être Ecclésial* (1981) first published in French.

***L'être Ecclésial* (1981)**

L'être Ecclésial (1981) comprised articles Zizioulas had written in 1968 and 1977 together with an introduction.¹³³ This introduction summarized the key ideas undergirding Zizioulas' theology of communion. Zizioulas' basic ideas of truth, personhood, otherness¹³⁴ and communion are to be found in this book.

After publishing *L'être Ecclésial*, the next phase is marked by two articles which show Zizioulas grappling with the ecumenical councils in relation to Christology and Pneumatology. Here we see Zizioulas focusing on the fourth-fifth century theological debates to further develop his theology of the person as well as his notions of God's freedom and love in creation. The two articles are the fruits of his research on the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon and on the earlier Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople: "Christologie et existence: la dialectique crée-incrée et le dogme de Chalcedoine"¹³⁵ and "The Teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective."¹³⁶ Both these key articles on Christology and on Pneumatology were later re-published in *Communion and Otherness* (2006).

***Being as Communion* (1985)**

1985 marked the very important year when Zizioulas published his most famous book *Being as Communion*, his first collection of studies centred on personhood and the Church

¹³³ This introduction was later translated into English and published as the introduction to J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15-26.

¹³⁴ This was introduced in his article "Truth and Communion," which became chapter 2 in *Being as Communion*, 106-07.

¹³⁵ This article appeared first in Greek as "'Created' and 'Uncreated': The Philosophical and Theological Background of the Doctrine of Chalcedon," in the periodical *Synaxi* (1981), and then translated by M. Stavros into French under the title "Christologie et existence: la Dialectique crée-incrée et le dogme de Chalcedoine," in the review *Contacts* 36 (1984): 154-72. The response of Zizioulas to the article was published in *Synaxis* (1982) and translated into French in *Contacts* 37 (1985): 60-72. It was also translated from French into English by McPartlan and published as chapter seven "'Created' and 'Uncreated,'" in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 250-69. Zizioulas' response to Dr. Philip Sherrard was later translated by Norman Russell into English and published for the first time as an appendix to chapter seven in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 270-85. This is an important article because it expounds on the existential significance of the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon where Christ was defined as one person in two natures that were indivisibly bound together without confusion. Zizioulas links this definition to the created-uncreated dialectic in creation which can only be saved from annihilation by Christ who also saves us from death. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 259-60 and 269.

¹³⁶ This was first published in the vol. 1, *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 29-54. It then appeared as "Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person," in J. Zizioulas' *Communion and Otherness*, 178-205.

published in English.¹³⁷ It made available in English four papers on personhood and the Church that were published from 1973-81 on how persons, truth, communion, the Spirit and the Church are related.¹³⁸ This book was described as propounding “a fresh understanding, based in the early Fathers and the Orthodox tradition, of the concept of person, and so of the Church itself” in the context of a “complete theology” including extended consideration of the major theological topics on the Trinity, Christology, eschatology, ministry, sacraments, and above all, the Eucharist.¹³⁹ In seven chapters, Zizioulas lays the groundwork for a work of synthesis to “enlarge, as much as possible, the horizon of ecclesiology in order to relate the theology of the Church to its philosophical and ontological implications as well as to the rest of theology.”¹⁴⁰ His aim was to “go beyond” what eucharistic ecclesiology (beginning with Nicholas Afanasiev) had said until then by trying to “widen both our theological and philosophical horizons.”¹⁴¹

1.4.3. Zizioulas in his early years as Metropolitan (1986-89)

By 1985, Zizioulas had cemented his reputation simultaneously in two specific roles: a) as an ecumenical theologian representing the Orthodox Church in ecumenical settings and b) as a university professor teaching in Britain. He had gained the necessary experience in ecclesiastical and theological matters to be made a bishop. The next year 1986 marked a watershed in the life of Zizioulas when he was called from the ranks of the laity at the age of 55 to be consecrated the Metropolitan of Pergamon on 22 June 1986 while still a professor of theology at the University of Glasgow and teaching part-time at the University of Thessalonica. As he was residing in Britain which already had an Anglican bishop of London, an Orthodox bishop of Great Britain and a Roman Catholic Cardinal of Westminster Cathedral, he was instead made a titular bishop of the ancient city of Pergamon. Zizioulas himself would have approved of the appointment as this was in keeping with his view that there should only be one bishop in a city.¹⁴² Besides, being a titular bishop of a city that no longer exists meant he was free from the normal daily ecclesiastical duties of a metropolitan of a big city. He could now better dedicate his time as a theological expert in the universities

¹³⁷ It has been reviewed by Rowan Williams in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42.1 (Feb 1989): 101-05, by Jonathan Draper in *Modern Theology* 5.4 (July 1989): 400-01, by McPartlan in *Sobornost* 9.1 (1987): 78-81 and by John Saward in *New Blackfriars* 67 (1986): 45-48.

¹³⁸ The four papers are a) Ministry and Communion (1973), b) Personhood and Being (1977), c) Truth and Communion (1977) and d) Christ, the Spirit and the Church (1981).

¹³⁹ A description on the back-cover of the *Being as Communion* (1985).

¹⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 23.

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 24.

¹⁴² This was in keeping with Canon 8 of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. See J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 318.

and in representing the Ecumenical Patriarch in theological dialogues with other churches. It was an ideal appointment for Zizioulas.¹⁴³

Zizioulas has published even more extensively as a bishop. By 1986, he had already generated quite some theological interest in his *relational ontology* in which the concept of communion constituted the main idea for ecclesiology and for anthropology.¹⁴⁴ This is evidenced in the many articles and dissertations written in response to him and his ideas. Much of Zizioulas' writing as bishop now concentrated on responding to key criticisms as well as developing his theology of communion through engagement with several key patristic Fathers such as Maximus the Confessor and the Cappadocian Fathers.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, Metropolitan Zizioulas continued to read and engage with the modern philosophers of Europe such as Buber, Levinas, Sartre and Heidegger.¹⁴⁶ In so doing, Zizioulas is sometimes misunderstood to be an existentialist and a personalist when he tries to dialogue with these philosophers in order to find points of convergence and fundamental differences between modern philosophy and patristic thought.¹⁴⁷ Zizioulas' theology was certainly aimed at being *relevant* to the "existential needs" of people today and that his theology was developed from a *trinitarian ontology* based on God as three persons, yet it would be a gross injustice to put such general labels on him as he is from a very different philosophical and theological tradition.¹⁴⁸ It is true that Zizioulas did wrestle with themes the existentialists grappled with (such as freedom, authentic being, tragedy and death), yet his approach was theological, ecclesial and therefore different from the phenomenological approach adopted by many modern existential thinkers.¹⁴⁹ It is also true that Zizioulas was concerned about human existence and its problems, very much like the Patristic Fathers who were interested in the existential problems of their day. Patristic theology was by nature existential, a view shared

¹⁴³ This must have contradicted his own thinking that a bishop needs to have presbyters, deacons and laity in a diocese. Zizioulas has noted this problem of titular bishops having no other members of the eucharistic community in their churches. It would seem that an ancient city like Pergamon (now non-existent) has only one member of the populace who does not even live there! This does raise the question of how Zizioulas can actually function as a bishop and a metropolitan when the eucharistic community of which he is a bishop and metropolitan is no longer existent. After all, a bishop is named after a particular city, something which Zizioulas has repeatedly emphasized in his essays in *Being as Communion* (1985).

¹⁴⁴ Preface to J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, xiii.

¹⁴⁵ The intellectual engagement with these Fathers and their ideas will be apparent in Chapter five of this dissertation.

¹⁴⁶ His dialogue with these philosophers on the topic of otherness and the self appears in his book *Communion and Otherness*, 43-55.

¹⁴⁷ Some of these criticisms from within his own theological tradition and from the Western world will be more specifically identified and addressed in Chapters five of this dissertation where I dwell on Zizioulas' sources. Chief amongst his critics is Turcescu who accuses Zizioulas of foisting onto the Cappadocian Fathers a modern existentialism. See L. Turcescu, "'Person' vs 'Individual', and other Modern Misreadings of the Gregory of Nyssa," *Modern Theology* 18.4 (2002): 527-38.

¹⁴⁸ I will be attempting to trace the formation of Zizioulas' philosophical thought by comparing him to key philosophers and religious thinkers whom he had studied and from whom he borrowed key ideas and concepts.

¹⁴⁹ John Macquarrie has also noted the phenomenological method of investigations into human existence adopted by some German existential thinkers like Husserl and Heidegger. See J. Macquarrie, *Existentialism* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1976), 21-24.

by Florovsky who was Zizioulas' teacher.¹⁵⁰ Yet Patristic theology is derived primarily from the study of the trinitarian God in relation to humanity and the world. Its starting point was God and not humanity. This is the key difference between Patristic theology and modern existential thought that begins with the study of humanity.¹⁵¹

Zizioulas was, in his early years as bishop, also a theological representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch and served on various Orthodox dialogues with the other Churches such as the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. In 1987, he was appointed a full-time professor at the University of Thessalonica. He also relinquished his professorship in Scotland and in 1989 moved on to England to teach as a visiting professor at King's College, London. This was to be the next phase of fruitful theological work done and made known to the theological community through numerous seminars and conventions at King's College, London.¹⁵²

As a bishop, Zizioulas has written extensively on ecclesiology and has proposed several guiding theological principles of Orthodox ecclesiology which are to be used by the Orthodox Church when engaging in dialogue with other church traditions. The first paper he published in the year he became a bishop was "The Mystery of the Church as a Possible Fundamental Difference between the Christian Communions."¹⁵³

Zizioulas was an Orthodox observer at the 1988 Lambeth Conference where he delivered an orthodox response to the proceedings held at Lambeth. This became a published paper under two different titles: "The Response of the Orthodox Observer"¹⁵⁴ and "Ecumenism and the need for vision."¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that in his response, Zizioulas made a plea to the Anglicans not to ordain women to the priesthood and the episcopate. His plea was based on the ensuing divisions that might cause difficulties to any reunification between Orthodox

¹⁵⁰ G. Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History. Vol. 4 in the Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1975), 17. How Florovsky influenced Zizioulas will be discussed in chapter five.

¹⁵¹ John Macquarrie has written a very insightful book *Existentialism* in which he noted that one of the distinctive styles of existential philosophizing was its beginnings "from man rather than from nature." See especially pages 14-15.

¹⁵² This was organized by his colleague Gunton who headed the Research institute in Systematic Theology at King's College, London

¹⁵³ This was a paper "Le mystère de l'Eglise dans la tradition orthodoxe," given at the 1986 Chevetogne Colloquium and published in French in *Irénikon* 60 (1987): 323-35 and in J. Zizioulas, *L'Eglise et ses institutions*, 89-102. The English original was first published in *One in Christ* 24 (1988): 294-303 with the additional paragraphs on 'the cosmic dimension of the Church.' The latest version can be found as a chapter "The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition," in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 136-46.

¹⁵⁴ This was a reply to the keynote address (18 July 1988) of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the 1988 Lambeth Conference. It was entitled "The Nature of the Unity We Seek – The Response of the Orthodox Observer." It was first published in *One in Christ* 24 (1988): 342-48 and in *Ecumenism* 93 (March 1989): 16-20. It was re-published in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 365-72. In French, it was published as "Un moment critique dans l'histoire du mouvement œcuménique," in *La Documentation Catholique* 1975 (1 Janvier 1989): 24-27.

¹⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Ecumenism and the need for vision," *Sobornost* 10.2 (1988): 37-43. This was published with the permission of the Anglican Consultative Council, in whom the copyright is vested.

and Anglicans. He pleaded with Archbishop Runcie to continue the theological debate on an ecumenical level to creatively come up with a solution to this problem. Zizioulas' question to Anglicans was: what is the nature of the priesthood that prevents women from being ordained as priests?¹⁵⁶ Zizioulas was trying to persuade Anglicans to debate this issue theologically at an ecumenical level.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, despite Orthodox opposition, the Anglican Communion went ahead with the decision in 1992 to ordain women priests. This has since sharpened the divide between the Anglican and the Orthodox Communions which had long existed due to the Filioque issue. On the Filioque controversy, in 1990 Zizioulas presented a paper to the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue – The Filioque in Relation to the Immanent Trinity.”¹⁵⁸ Despite the deep divisions caused by the *Filioque* and the ordination of women, official Anglican-Orthodox dialogues have continued to this day. Zizioulas co-chaired the International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue from 1989-2007. One of the fruits of this dialogue is the “Cyprus Agreed Statement.”¹⁵⁹ Many of Zizioulas' ideas on conciliarity, synodality and ministry are evident in this work.

Not content with dialoguing only with the Anglicans, in the late 1980s, Zizioulas published another article: *The Institution of Episcopal Conferences: An Orthodox Reflection (1988)*.¹⁶⁰ This was an Orthodox engagement with the Roman Catholics on their concept of episcopal conferences in the light of Orthodox ecclesiology and experience. Much of what he writes here reflects two earlier papers: “The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church”¹⁶¹ and “Episkope and Episkopos in the Early Church: A Brief Survey of the Evidence.”¹⁶² In these two papers written just a few years before he became a bishop, Zizioulas argues for the prime importance of the bishop in relation to the Eucharist and to the synod, and contends that the bishop is the indispensable unity in the Church by

¹⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Response of the Orthodox Observer,” in *The One and the Many*, 370.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Response of the Orthodox Observer,” in *The One and the Many*, 370.

¹⁵⁸ This remains an unpublished paper.

¹⁵⁹ International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue. *The Church of the Triune God. The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2006* (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2006).

¹⁶⁰ This was originally published as “Las conferencias episcopales – reacciones ecumenicas. Causa nostra agitur? Punto de vista ecumenico,” in *Naturaleza Y futuro de las Conferencias episcopales*, Actas del Coloquio internacional de Salamanca (Salamanca, 1988). This was published in English in *The Jurist* 48 (1988): 376-83 and re-published in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 254-61.

¹⁶¹ This was first published in Richard Potz (ed.), *Kanon VII* (1985): 23-35 and later appeared in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 236-53.

¹⁶² This was first published in *Episkope and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspectives*, Faith and Order Paper 102 (Geneva: WCC, 1980), 30-42. It later appeared in J. Zizioulas, “Episkope and Episkopos in the Early Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 221-35.

simultaneously being the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus*.¹⁶³ Zizioulas' historical research on the first few centuries of the Church reveals the fact that the episcopacy was the key institution of the Church that took the place of the apostolic ministry after the apostles had passed away. Changes that took place in the Church in relation to the episcopacy meant that the structure of the local Church was invariably affected, even to the point of the utter disintegration when *the bishop became redundant* in the celebration of every Eucharist. Following Ignatius of Antioch, Zizioulas closely associates the *episcopus* with the Eucharist.¹⁶⁴ Zizioulas maintains throughout his theology that only the bishop may preside over the Eucharist where he is surrounded by the presbyters, the deacons and the laity. The present system in many churches whereby a single presbyter presides over the Eucharist in a parish is not ideal because this is not truly reflective of a true Eucharist.

1.4.4. Bishop and Lecturer in England and in Greece from 1989

Zizioulas spent nearly a decade (1989-98) as a visiting Professor at King's College, London and as a Professor at the University of Thessalonica (1984-98) where he remained a prolific writer publishing many articles in Greek. Zizioulas published no less than 30 articles during this period 1989-98 focusing on four major areas: a) The Church, b) ecumenism, c) personhood and d) ecology.

From the 1990s Zizioulas turned his attention mainly to ecological issues in response to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's environmental call. He wrote at least ten articles in Greek on environmental issues during 1990-2003. Having developed his ontology of the person in relation to trinitarian theology, Zizioulas now attempted to relate the being of the world to man and to God through a *eucharistic cosmology* that involves man becoming a *liturgical being* and a "priest of creation."¹⁶⁵ The Eucharist was the key to this understanding and it also provided the setting for man to act as the priest of creation "*offering* back to God his own creation."¹⁶⁶ This was the theological solution to the present "ecological crisis" that Zizioulas traced to a crisis of culture.¹⁶⁷ Zizioulas articulated these ideas in a three-part paper on ecology: *Preserving God's Creation*.¹⁶⁸ This was a work that re-emphasized the cosmic

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, "Episkope and Episkopos," in *The One and the Many*, 226. See also J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 242-49.

¹⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, "Episkope and Episkopos," in *The One and the Many*, 233.

¹⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Proprietors or Priests of Creation?," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 133-41 and "Preserving God's Creation," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 143-75, especially 145 and 148.

¹⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 152.

¹⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 174.

¹⁶⁸ This was a three-part lecture published as "Preserving God's Creation. Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology," in *King's Theological Review* 12 (1989): 1-5, 41-45; 13 (1990): 1-5. This was also published as a three-part article in *Sourozh* 39 (1990):

aspect of the Eucharist that has been neglected especially in the West.¹⁶⁹ In addition, the liturgical dimension of a much needed new culture is emphasized throughout. According to Zizioulas, humanity as ‘priest of creation’ relates “in such a way as to create events of communion whereby individual beings are liberated from their self-centredness and thus from their limitations, and are referred to something greater than themselves, to a ‘beyond’ – to God.”¹⁷⁰ Zizioulas has since followed up with “Man the Priest of Creation.”¹⁷¹ This last article concentrates on a theme that Zizioulas was to develop throughout his eucharistic ecclesiology, namely, that humanity is to become a “priest of creation” *in the Church*. It is to undertake this task by referring creation to God, thus being the vital link between God and the world, and by restoring the “*sacrality* of nature in our culture.”¹⁷² These articles reflected Zizioulas’ concern for humanity in relation to his environment and the need to restore nature into communion with God so that nature will survive eternally. This formed the basis for his *ecological theology* that is further developed as a plea for change and repentance on the part of humanity, as is reflected in the article “Ecological Asceticism. A Cultural Revolution.”¹⁷³

The turn of the millennium saw Zizioulas retiring from teaching full-time but further engaging with academics on ecological issues, on the Church, and developing an ontology of otherness to complement his ontology of communion. One important article written was “Proprietors or Priests of Creation?”¹⁷⁴ Zizioulas here conveys the idea that humanity is not only a steward ruling over creation but also a “priest of creation.”¹⁷⁵ He not only has the responsibility to look after the environment but also to *offer* in the Church the world back to God.¹⁷⁶ This would be a theme recurrent in Zizioulas’ theology of ecology and in his ecclesiology.¹⁷⁷

1-11; 40 (1990): 31-40; and 41 (1990): 28-39. All three articles were also published in Greek in *E Ktise os eucharistia* (1992). It was later re-published in J. Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 143-75.

¹⁶⁹ This was noted by P. McPartlan in his article “Catholic Learning and Orthodoxy – The Promise and Challenge of Eucharistic Ecclesiology,” in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning. Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. Paul Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 160-75.

¹⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 145.

¹⁷¹ This was published in A. Walker & C. Carras (eds.) *Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World* (London: SPCK, 1996), 178-88.

¹⁷² J. Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 174-75.

¹⁷³ This was published in *Sourozh* 50 (1997): 22-25. It first appeared in *Our Planet* vol. 7/6 (1996), 7f.

¹⁷⁴ This was first given as a keynote address of the first plenary session of the *Baltic Sea Symposium on Religion, Science and the Environment*, 2003. It was later published in J. Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation?,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 133-42. It was a development of his theological anthropology first articulated in his concept of a person.

¹⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation?,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 137-41. This is not entirely an Orthodox concept. T. F. Torrance also refers to man as being a priest of creation. See T. F. Torrance, *The Ground of Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), 14. Zizioulas’ idea of the priestly act of offering to God the world is in line with the Orthodox tradition of re-capitulating all in Christ to God.

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 145.

¹⁷⁷ See also the Foreword to John Chrissagvis (ed.) *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer. The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), viii.

1.4.5. Orthodox Representation in Dialoguing with Other Christian Traditions

Zizioulas has been active as an orthodox representative in ecumenical dialogues. He was the founding member in 1979 of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁷⁸ He was also involved in dialogue with the Anglicans as the co-chairman of the international Anglican-Orthodox dialogue.¹⁷⁹ From the latter half of the 1990s onwards, Zizioulas developed an Orthodox approach in his published papers dedicated not only to resolving matters of theology and worship in the Church, but also matters involving the Law¹⁸⁰ and Personhood. In addition, using his ontology of communion, Zizioulas has also written to deal with the sticky issue of primacy in the Church in relation to the primacy of Rome.¹⁸¹ These articles (1998-2004) published just before the turn of the millennium and after his retirement from teaching at King's College include a wide variety of themes, the chief of which is the issue of primacy which was regarded by Zizioulas as "perhaps the most important ecumenical problem"¹⁸² and to which Zizioulas dedicates three major articles. These were "Primacy in the Church," "Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology"¹⁸³ and "Unitatis redintegratio: An Orthodox Reflection."¹⁸⁴ This final document echoes the Orthodox critique of the Catholic approach to ecumenism and challenges the Church to think of how far the idea of communion can affect the concept and practice of primacy.¹⁸⁵ Zizioulas also asks here the key question of how far eucharistic ecclesiology can be accepted by Roman Catholics and applied to ecumenism to further Church unity.¹⁸⁶ In 2006, having been a bishop for exactly twenty years, Zizioulas became the President of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. Even though he has been critical of some of the

¹⁷⁸ Zizioulas was one of the principal architects in the dialogue which quickly produced its foundational agreed statement: *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982).

¹⁷⁹ P. Fox, *God as Communion*, 5-6.

¹⁸⁰ Zizioulas defines law here in the sense of the Greek term *dikaion*, which can mean "right," not excluding human/or civil rights. See J. Zizioulas, "Law and Personhood in Orthodox Theology," in *The One and the Many*, 402.

¹⁸¹ Zizioulas is not against having the bishop of Rome as being the first amongst equals provided that the See of Rome respect the autonomy of the other churches in communion with him. This runs quite contrary to previous Orthodox rejection of the primacy of the See of Rome.

¹⁸² J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 263.

¹⁸³ This was first given as an address at an academic symposium held at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It was first published in *Il ministero petrino. Cattolici e Ortodossi in dialogo*, ed. Walter Kasper (Citta Nuova Roma, 2004), 249-64. Then it was re-published in English in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 274-87.

¹⁸⁴ This was Zizioulas' address given on 11 Nov 2004 at the 40th anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council. It was published in *Searching for Christian Unity*, eds. John Paul II et al. (New York: New City Press, 2004), 37-54.

¹⁸⁵ See J. Zizioulas, "Unitatis Redintegratio," in *Searching for Christian Unity*, 54.

¹⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, "Unitatis Redintegratio," 54. These two questions are singled out because the concept of communion in eucharistic ecclesiology is the key concept of Zizioulas' theology of the nature of the Church which he applies to his ecumenical vision of the union of the Church. See J. Zizioulas, "Unitatis Redintegratio," 53.

comments made by the Pope Benedict XVI on the Orthodox Church,¹⁸⁷ Zizioulas has been highly regarded as a leading spokesman for the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue.

1.4.6. Publishing *Communion and Otherness*

Encouraged by the reception accorded to his book *Being as Communion*, Zizioulas published *Communion and Otherness* (2006) which is his second collection of studies on the theme of personhood as otherness in communion and communion in otherness.¹⁸⁸ *Communion and Otherness* complements and balances his earlier book *Being as Communion* (1985) which emphasized “relationality and communion for unity.”¹⁸⁹ Together, these two books make up two sides of the same coin, one focusing on unity, the other focusing on the aspect of otherness.¹⁹⁰

Material for this book is made up of previous papers published spanning some thirty years with the oldest article first published in 1975!¹⁹¹ Central to this book is the concept of the person which is elucidated in another article published in the 1990s: “On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood.”¹⁹² The theme of personhood as otherness took shape in 1994 when Zizioulas published an article “Communion and Otherness” in two periodicals.¹⁹³ This article became the introduction to the book bearing the same title. Here Zizioulas explores first how otherness is *constitutive* of unity in the Trinity and that this otherness is absolute and ontological.¹⁹⁴ Zizioulas’ thesis is that if the Church wants to be faithful to its true nature, it must attempt to “mirror the communion and otherness that exists in the triune God.”¹⁹⁵ The Eucharist sanctifies both communion and otherness, according to Zizioulas.¹⁹⁶ Finally, Zizioulas contends that otherness is “of the essence of the ministry”¹⁹⁷ because a) ministry is the area of Church life where communion and otherness co-exist deeply and b) ministry “involves *charismata* of the Spirit” and there exists a variety of charisms (1 Cor.

¹⁸⁷ See *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* 20.8 (Oct 2007): 41.

¹⁸⁸ This has been reviewed by Dana Bates in *Transformation* 27.4 (2010): 284-86, by Thomas Finger in *Christian Century* 125.10 (2008): 208-10 and by Gill Goulding in *Theological Studies* 69.3 (Sep 2008): 725-26.

¹⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, xiii. Italics original.

¹⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, xiii.

¹⁹¹ This was “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood.”

¹⁹² This was first published in 1991 in *Persons, Divine and Human*, eds. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), and was published again in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99-112. Gordon Watson has written an insightful response to this paper. See his “Person and the Trinity: Comments on J. Zizioulas, “On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood,” in *Faith Matters. Theology for the Church and World*, eds. V. Pfitzner & H. Regan (Adelaide: Australia Theological Forum, 2000), 219-25.

¹⁹³ This article was published in *Sobornost* 16 (1994), and in *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly* 38 (1994). It was later published as an introduction to Zizioulas’ book *Communion and Otherness*, 1-12.

¹⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

¹⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

¹⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

¹⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*, 8.

12.29)¹⁹⁸ as well as absolute interdependence among members of the Church (1 Cor. 12.21).¹⁹⁹

Three of the chapters in *Communion and Otherness* are published here for the first time. The first chapter “On Being Other” examines the ontology of otherness.²⁰⁰ It is an important article that complements his ontology of communion. Zizioulas creatively engages modern philosophers such as Levinas, Buber and Sartre on the concept of “the other” in this work. The third chapter “The Father as Cause” argues that the person of the Father generates otherness.²⁰¹ It is a defense against those who disagree with his view that the Father is the sole ‘cause’ of the Son and of the Spirit.²⁰² The last chapter “The Church as the ‘Mystical’ Body of Christ” examines the case for an ecclesial mysticism based on the Christological ground already laid by Chalcedon.²⁰³

In addition, there is published for the first time an important article “Person and Individual – a ‘Misreading’ of the Cappadocians?” in which Zizioulas defends himself against Turcescu who accuses Zizioulas of misreading the Cappadocian Fathers and foisting a modern existential interpretation of the concept of person on them.²⁰⁴

1.4.7. Passing on the Baton

By 2006, Zizioulas had fully developed his relational ontology and, having turned 75, had passed on the baton to the younger theologians to continue his work over the next decade. Some of these younger theologians who studied Zizioulas include McPartlan, Knight and Luke Ben Tallon, all of whom have collaborated with Zizioulas to make known his writings by editing Zizioulas’ works and publishing them.

Lectures in Christian Dogmatics (2008)

As we approach the final phase of Zizioulas’ work, we encounter the writings based on his lectures on dogmatic theology given at the University of Thessalonica. His ex-Greek students compiled his lectures and circulated them before a group of scholars later worked them into a book *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (2008) that was edited by Knight. This is a systematic approach to Zizioulas’ theology that summarizes and simplifies for his readers the major

¹⁹⁸ Zizioulas cites St. Paul who asks the question, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all... have the charism of healing?”

¹⁹⁹ Zizioulas again cites St. Paul who emphasized that no member of a church can say to the other “I have no need of you.”

²⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 13-98.

²⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54.

²⁰² Zizioulas’ defends himself here against A. J. Torrance and to a lesser extent T. F. Torrance. This is further discussed in chapter six.

²⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 286-307.

²⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 171-77. I will deal with Turcescu’s criticism in chapter five.

themes in Zizioulas theological project. It is Zizioulas' attempt at “*dogmatic hermeneutics*” and aims to answer the question: what would the Fathers have said to us today in response to the Western culture that has so shaped our lives?²⁰⁵

Remembering the Future (2009)

Remembering the Future (2009)²⁰⁶ is Zizioulas' planned synthesis of an eschatological ontology that was developed from his initial ideas on the Eucharist in his book *Being as Communion* (1985).²⁰⁷ An essential aspect of the Eucharist, according to Zizioulas is the *remembering of the future* as we remember Christ.²⁰⁸ This theme can be found in the ancient liturgies of John Chrysostom and Basil. “Remembering” in the Eucharist refers not only to past events of salvation history but also to the *second coming*.²⁰⁹ As such, truth lies in the future *eschata* which is anticipated at the Eucharist. This was a project that started in the 80s and 90s when he wrote the two articles: “Déplacement de la perspective eschatologique”²¹⁰ and “Towards an Eschatological Ontology.”²¹¹

In the mid-80s, Zizioulas had been wrestling with the dialectic between eschatology and history when he published, in addition to these papers, a paper entitled “Eschatology and History” in which he traced the difference between the Eastern and the Western theological traditions to this dialectic.²¹² Since then, he has continued to reflect on eschatology as evidenced in his work on “Eschatology and Persons.”²¹³ It remains to be seen how Zizioulas' so-called “Eschatological ontology” will impact the study of ontology as the book is not yet in circulation. Suffice to say that it is a fresh way to view the being of entities as related to

²⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. D. Knight (London: T & T Clark, 2008), x. This culture that Zizioulas is engaging with is what he had lived in for many years as a student and a teacher of theology. It is Western in the sense of geographical location (the US, the UK and in some respects, continental Europe). This culture is also associated with individualism and rationality. In some quarters, it is also associated with a culture of death and godlessness.

²⁰⁶ This book (in a red cover) was first published in 2009 by T & T Clark, London. It is currently out of print as I have earlier noted. However, it will be published again in 2021.

²⁰⁷ This theme is recurrent in Zizioulas' writings – the “*anamnesis* of the future” when the Eucharist is celebrated.

²⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 180, 240 and 254.

²⁰⁹ It is worth noting that the eucharistic prayers offered to God the Father includes the proclamation, “Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.”

²¹⁰ The article was first published in G. Alberigo et al. (eds.), *La chrétienté en débat: histoires, formes et problèmes actuels* (Théologies, Paris: Cerf, 1984), 89-100.

²¹¹ This paper was presented in 1999 at King's College London. It was first posted online on 3 May 2004 by Douglas Knight, *Resources for Christian Theology*. <https://www.resourcesforchristiantheology.org/towards-an-eschatological-ontology/> (Last accessed 15 Aug 2018). It is also available in <https://www.scribd.com/document/250093758/Towards-an-Eschatological-Ontology> (Last accessed 15 Aug 2018).

²¹² The article was first published in T. Weiser (ed.), *Cultures in Dialogue: Documents from a Symposium in Honor of Philip A. Potter* (Geneva: WCC, 1985) and in T. Weiser (ed.), *Wither Ecumenism?* (Geneva, WCC, 1986).

²¹³ Posted in 10 June 2008 by Douglas Knight in *Resources for Christian Theology*. *Did it first appear in print somewhere?* <https://www.resourcesforchristiantheology.org/zizioulas-on-eschatology/#more-268> (Last accessed 02 October 2016).

There is another more recently posted on 24 June, 2015 by Douglas Knight commenting on Zizioulas' Eschatology. <https://twruston.wordpress.com/2015/06/24/zizioulas-on-eschatology/> (Last accessed 02 Oct 2016) It doesn't appear that Zizioulas' article has been posted here. Rather it is Knight's discussion of the article.

their end by their being ‘caused’ by what *is to be*.²¹⁴ In contrast to the usual historical cause of being, one can now envision an eschatological cause of being by relating the end result of being to being itself, a kind of “being in becoming.”²¹⁵

The One and the Many (2010)

The biggest collection of Zizioulas’ writings appears in *The One and the Many* (2010) which is an anthology of thirty-three of Zizioulas’ published papers. This book contains studies in triadology, in ecclesiology and in the ecumenical movement.²¹⁶ Zizioulas’ attempts to define an orthodox position in regard to ecclesiology, ecumenism and issues of primacy in the universal Church are also in this book.

The Eucharistic Communion and the World (2011)

More recently, Tallon has edited another book *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (2011) which consists of most of Zizioulas’ studies on the Eucharist.²¹⁷ This book points to the Eucharist as the overall context for Zizioulas’ teachings on personhood, communion and otherness.²¹⁸ All the articles in this collection had been earlier published in various journals. Together, they show that besides an ontology of love, the heart, goal and basis of his theology is ultimately the Eucharist.

McPartlan, Knight and Tallon are key figures in the propagation of Zizioulas’ theology.²¹⁹ Together, they have edited and published in three books, around fifty articles²²⁰ written by Zizioulas throughout his career. They have also made accessible to English readers in the West the systematic theology of Zizioulas.²²¹ We in the English-speaking world must acknowledge our immense debt to them and to those who translated his works into English.²²²

²¹⁴ This approach has also been utilized by Wolfhart Pannenberg. See his *Systematic Theology*.

²¹⁵ This concept of “being in becoming” is not entirely novel. Some scholars have contemplated God’s being as becoming.

²¹⁶ For the full list of studies and their sources, see J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, v-viii and 415-17.

²¹⁷ This book has been reviewed in David Nelson in the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* (1 July 2015): 365-68 and also by David Belcher in the *Anglican Theological Review* 95.1 (Winter 2013): 207-09.

²¹⁸ This is noted by Tallon in his introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, viii.

²¹⁹ There have been many doctoral dissertations on Zizioulas, either comparing him with other theologians or researching his personal ontology or eucharistic ecclesiology. These dissertations have been listed in the Introduction of this dissertation.

²²⁰ Recently, about fifty of Zizioulas’ papers have been gathered in three major volumes: *Communion and Otherness* (2006), *The One and the Many* (2010) and *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (2011). This represents roughly half of Zizioulas’ theological output.

²²¹ Zizioulas’ systematic theology based on his university lectures to students in Greece was published in *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (2008).

²²² Translators from French to English include John Clark, Elizabeth Templeton, P. J. Bussey, McPartlan and Tallon. Translators from original Greek to English include Norman Russell and Elizabeth Theokritoff who translated *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001).

1.4.8. Most Recent Publications

Besides re-publishing twenty-four of his French articles on ecclesiology in a book, *L'Eglise et ses institutions* (2011)²²³ and re-stating his trinitarian relational ontology in dialogue with scientists and theologians,²²⁴ Zizioulas has most recently turned his attention to the issue of primacy in the Church. From the years 2010-11, he published an article entitled “The future exercise of papal ministry in the light of ecclesiology: An Orthodox approach.”²²⁵ In 2013, he published “Primacy and Nationalism”²²⁶ in which he outlined how primacy can function in the Orthodox Church in the face of nationalism. It is to the Eucharist that he points as the focal point for primacy in the Church in order to unite the Church in communion through conciliar structures such as synods.²²⁷ This synodal structure has also been expounded most recently in another article “Conciliarity and Primacy”²²⁸ in which Zizioulas argued that the synodal system requires primacy for it to work well.

He has also kept up other theological interests, specifically in Maximus the Confessor on whom he relies in developing his eschatological ontology. He was a participant at an International Symposium on St. Maximus held at Belgrade in 2012.²²⁹ Here, he re-iterated his view on the importance of the bishop in the eucharistic community and that primacy (of hierarchs in councils) naturally follows from eucharistic theology.²³⁰ He also presented a paper “Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor”²³¹ that sums up his views on person versus nature and responds to some recent critics.

Not content with merely defending Orthodox theology, Zizioulas has been active in

²²³ J. Zizioulas, *L'Eglise et ses institutions* (Paris: Cerf, 2011). This work includes articles written or translated into French and groups them into seven categories.

²²⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought” in *The Trinity and an Entangled World. Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, ed. J. Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company, 2010), 146-56. See also J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom. Is God Free in Trinitarian Life?,” in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, eds. G. Maspero & R. Wozniak (London: T & T Clark International, 2012), 193-208.

²²⁵ This was published in J. Puglisi, *How can the Petrine ministry be a service to unity of the universal Church?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsman, 2010), 169-79. This is a re-publication of a 1999 article “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach.”

²²⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy and Nationalism,” *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 57.3-4 (2013): 451-59.

²²⁷ In 2015, Zizioulas also published a Greek article “Conciliarity and Primacy,” in *Theologia* 86.2 (2015): 19-33. Here he stresses that the Church as a communion of local Churches needs synodality at the universal level where primacy in the Church is exercised. See J. Zizioulas, “Conciliarity and Primacy,” 31. See also A. Papanikolaou, “Primacy in the Thought of John Zizioulas,” in *Primacy in the Church*, ed. J. Chrysavgis (New York: SVSP, 2016), 274.

²²⁸ This was published in Greek in *Theologia* 86.2 (2015).

²²⁹ This was a symposium to commemorate the 1,350th year since the death of St. Maximus the Confessor. It is held once every fifty years (the last in 1980 to commemorate the 1,400th year since the birth of St. Maximus) and drew together all the leading philosophers and theologians who had been influenced by him. These included Christos Yannaras, Aristotle Papanikolaou and other eminent academics all over the world who came to experience the mystery of “knowing the purpose of creation through the Resurrection.”

²³⁰ http://www.spc.rs/eng/international_scientific_symposium_saint_maximus_confessor_belgrade (last accessed 25 Feb 2017).

²³¹ This was published in Maxim Vasiljevic (ed.), *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection. Proceedings of the Symposium on St. Maximus the Confessor* (California: Sebastian Press, 2013), 85-113.

ecumenical work. One can still detect the spirit of ecumenism in Zizioulas as he wrote the foreword to *Dialogue of Love: Breaking the Silence of the Centuries* (2014).²³² As of late, Zizioulas has been involved in representing the Ecumenical Patriarch in major church events such as the launch of Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology in 2015.²³³ Here, he introduced the concept of an “*existential ecumenism*”²³⁴ based on ecology. He has most recently also published an important paper outlining the task of Orthodox theology in today's Europe which faces the challenges coming from secularization and religious plurality.²³⁵ Zizioulas recommends the approach of *theological dialogue at all levels* to face these challenges, a task to which he has dedicated his whole life in the service of theology and the Church.²³⁶

As he approaches his nineties, Zizioulas is preparing for a re-print of *Remembering the Future* which is due for re-publication in 2021.²³⁷ It seems Zizioulas is keen to buttress his *eucharistic ontology* based on communion with an *eschatological ontology* based on what is to come. His late 2015 publication, “La Fin est notre point de départ: Pour une ontologie eschatologique,” bears witness to his commitment to an eschatological ontology.²³⁸

1.5. Conclusion

Zizioulas theological career has spanned both East and West. Apart from the Russian theologians such as Afanasiev, Florovsky and Lossky who left Russia after the Russian Revolution to pursue theological work in the West, Zizioulas is one of the very few orthodox theologians who have had the opportunity to teach theology outside of their own theological and ecclesial tradition.²³⁹ He stands in line with an Orthodox tradition that, thanks to theologians like Florovsky, has broken out of its own geographical boundaries and planted itself firmly in the West. The influence of Florovsky upon Zizioulas during his study in the United States was immense. In turn, Zizioulas' influence on the Western world has also been

²³² See John Chryssavgis (ed.), *Dialogue of Love: Breaking the Silence of Centuries* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), ix-xii.

²³³ Zizioulas is widely known for his writings on ecology. Perhaps that is why he was invited to give an address on 18 June 2015 where he said that the encyclical came at a very critical moment in human history when the environmental crisis, spiritual problem, has been caused by the rise in individualism and greed for personal happiness. The content of this address was published in “A Comment on Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* by Elder Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 60.3/4 (Fall/Winter 2015): 184-91.

²³⁴ This is in addition to the usual forms of ecumenism in space and in time.

²³⁵ J. Zizioulas, “The Task of Orthodox Theology in Today's Europe,” *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 6.3 (2015): 9-17.

²³⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Task of Orthodox Theology in Today's Europe,” 16. This was an address to the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich on the occasion of his being awarded the university's *doctor honoris causa* on 4 Nov 2015.

²³⁷ This was due for publication in 2018 but, according to Bathrellos, publication has been delayed till 2021.

²³⁸ J. Zizioulas, “La Fin est notre point de départ: Pour une ontologie eschatologique,” *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 147.4 (2015): 305-24. As of most recently, Zizioulas has also published a book entitled *Illness and Healing in Orthodox Theology* (Sebastian Press, 2016).

²³⁹ For this reason, he is often labelled a “western theologian” by more conservative Orthodox circles.

very great, as is evident in the growing list of students doing doctoral dissertations on Zizioulas' theology in the West. Gunton is one famous Western theologian who was been greatly influenced by him. So too have younger theologians such as Knight and Tallon.

As John Meyendorff has remarked, it is often very difficult to find a theologian who does justice to both the historical *and* systematic parts of theology.²⁴⁰ Zizioulas has done the work of a historical theologian by beginning with a historical study in *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. Through his extensive research on the ecumenical councils (especially the 1st, 2nd and 4th) we have seen that he progressed from being a historical theologian, giving due credit to the historical processes of the past, to being a creative systematic theologian, bringing his historical insights to bear on contemporary and existential issues in the world and in the Church. He has singled out key patristic theologians (Ignatius, the Cappadocian Fathers and Maximus)²⁴¹ for detailed study and he has applied their teachings to the formation of a systematic theology of communion based on a relational ontology of the person. Never afraid of employing philosophy as a *tool* to articulate theology, especially the theology of the person and its ontological relation to the Church, Zizioulas has shown himself to be a theologian-philosopher who dares to revitalize theological Tradition by applying philosophical concepts to interpret Christian Tradition. He does so while keeping the Eucharist and the Church firmly in view as a basis for his theological considerations. In almost all his works, one can recognize the *eucharistic ethos* that characterizes both Zizioulas himself and his predecessor, Afanasiev. Followers of Zizioulas will note that Zizioulas' theology has many similarities with Afanasiev's.²⁴² Zizioulas acknowledges that Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology bears much resemblance to his own ecclesiology based on communion.²⁴³ However, a careful reader of both Afanasiev and Zizioulas will also discover some fundamental differences between their ecclesiologies. Before examining how much further than Afanasiev Zizioulas goes in relation to eucharistic ecclesiology, we also need to know a little more about the life and works of Afanasiev. It is thus to Afanasiev that we turn in the next chapter to understand the "eucharistic ecclesiology" that is foundational to Zizioulas' ecclesiology.

²⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 11.

²⁴¹ McPartlan has also noted Zizioulas' interest in these patristic Fathers who feature the most prominently in Zizioulas' writings. See P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 124. We shall take a closer look at each in chapter five to determine their individual contributions to Zizioulas' theology.

²⁴² Meyendorff has noted the similarity of thought in Afanasiev and Zizioulas in the foreword to J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 12. Zizioulas himself acknowledges that fact that one can recognize in his own writings the fundamental presuppositions of the "eucharistic ecclesiology" of Afanasiev. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23.

²⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23.

The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we surveyed Zizioulas' theological output. We also broadly categorized his work according to the various phases of his life and we have briefly noted how his earlier works influenced his later works. The development of his ideas has also been traced chronologically within the appropriate historical contexts. We noted that Zizioulas' theology involves the integration of the respective theological fields of Christology, Pneumatology and ecclesiology to form a distinctly trinitarian ontology of the Church based on a relational ontology of communion and love. We have also noted the influence of Afanasiev on his work especially in respect to the being of the Church in relation to the Eucharist. In this chapter, we will explore in greater detail Afanasiev's distinctive "eucharistic ecclesiology" and consider how Zizioulas appropriates Afanasiev's theology in his own theological system while at the same time pointing out what he considers to be Afanasiev's deficiencies.

2.1.1. The Life and Major Works of Nicholas Afanasiev

Afanasiev is an important figure in ecclesiology having been an Orthodox representative at Vatican II and having helped the Council develop its constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. After the Council, until his death in 1966, he published numerous articles assessing the Council's accomplishments and failures.¹ Some of these articles contain key ideas that would appear in two books, *The Lord's Supper*² and *The Limits of the Church*.³ His other

¹ A full bibliography of Afanasiev's published and unpublished writings can be found in Aidan Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora. Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev, 1893-1966* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 227-37. Two articles relating to the Church were written in response to Vatican II. They were "Una Sancta," where Afanasiev promoted his eucharistic ecclesiology and "The Eucharist: The Principal Link Between the Catholics and the Orthodox," *Irénikon* 3 (1965): 337-39. Both these articles are available in M. Plekon, *Tradition Alive* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2003), 3-30 and 47-49.

² A good review of this work can be found in M. Plekon, "'Always Everyone and Always Together': The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev's *The Lord's Supper* Revisited," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 41.2-3 (1997): 141-74. Many of the ideas in this article on liturgical renewal appeared in Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit* which was published in 1971 after his death. This article by Plekon is essentially a summary of Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit*. It throws further light on the Eucharist. It has three themes: a) the eucharistic assembly, its circumstances and unity, b) eucharistic celebration by bishops, presbyters and people and c) eucharistic communion, participation at the Lord's Table. See also Aidan Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 114-17.

³ *The Limits of the Church* was unfinished at the time of Afanasiev's death. However, most of the book had already been written. It is yet to be published in English. A summary of his ideas in this book can be found in N. Afanasiev, "Una Sancta" *Irénikon* 36 (1963): 436-75.

important work, on the primacy of St. Peter, was “The Church that Presides in Love.”⁴ He was justifiably a recognized “expert” at the council; his vision of the Church was expressed in the council’s documents and credit was given to him in the Conciliar *Acta*.⁵

Afanasiev, like Florovsky, was born in 1893 in Odessa. He lived through the Russian Revolution and, together with many of the Russian intelligentsia, was forced to leave Russia in 1920. He then lived in Serbia from 1920-29 where he obtained a doctorate from the University of Belgrade.⁶ He specialized in history and canon law.⁷ He then taught canon law from 1930 at the Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris. Many of the professors teaching there represented the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement.⁸ Here, according to Michael Plekon, he came under the strong influence of Father Sergius Bulgakov from whom he acquired “a sense for the centrality of the Eucharist as well as a thorough return to the sources in understanding the Church and its relationship to the world.”⁹ During the Second World War, Afanasiev was a pastor to a small church in Tunisia where he was a faithful shepherd to the flock in his care until 1947. Cut off from university libraries and academic colleagues, he nonetheless continued to write based on his experience there in looking after people of every creed. *The Church of the Holy Spirit* was first written at that time and defended as a second doctoral thesis in 1950 after he had returned to St. Sergius where he remained for the rest of his life teaching the sources, history and pastoral implications of canon law.¹⁰ He also taught Greek and, according to Plekon, his work on the New Testament

⁴ This was initially a contribution to a symposium as an essay “L’église qui préside dans l’armour,” in N. Afanasiev *et al.*, *La Primauté de Pierre dans l’Eglise orthodoxe* (Neuchâtel, 1960), 7-64. It was later translated into English, German and Italian. The English translation can be found in N. Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 57-110. It is inspired by St. Ignatius’ letter to the Church in Rome which, according to St. Ignatius, “presided in love.”

⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xiii-xiv.

⁶ His first doctoral dissertation was entitled “The Power of the State in Ecumenical Councils.” His teacher A. P. Dobroklonsky had taught him to examine not just the outcomes of the ecumenical councils but also to look beneath the surface for the social, political and cultural factors behind the canons and the decisions of the ecumenical councils. See M. Plekon’s introduction to *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xi.

⁷ Afanasiev published in Russian a paper “The Church’s Canons: Changeable or Unchangeable?,” in *Zhivoe Predanie* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1937): 88-96. It was translated into English by James LaBeau and published in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 11.2 (November 1969): 54-68. It has also appeared in *Tradition Alive*, ed. M. Plekon (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2003), 31-46.

⁸ A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, 34-61.

⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xi. Some scholars such as Bathrellos and Loudovikos believe that Khomiakov was instrumental in shaping Orthodox ecclesiology and thus Afanasiev was also part of this tradition. See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 66 and 69. But I have distanced Afanasiev from Khomiakov because I do not think that Afanasiev was influenced so much by philosophy as by Scripture. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 316-19 for Afanasiev’s vast citations from Scripture. Even though Afanasiev emphasizes the coming together of the members of the Church in one place, the context of this is the Eucharist which is the Body of Christ and not just a society or community of a specific people such as the Russian peasants living together as a community of love and freedom in a spirit of *sobornost* as emphasized by Khomiakov. See also N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 61, which I have relied to make this observation of Khomiakov.

¹⁰ *The Church of the Holy Spirit* is considered his most major work which has imprints of his earlier scholarly works such as “The Power of the State and the Ecumenical Councils,” “The Provincial Assemblies of the Roman Empire and the

further enhanced his reputation as an exegetical expert.¹¹

2.1.2. Afanasiev's ecclesiology

The key feature of Afanasiev's ecclesiology is his proposal of a eucharistic ecclesiology over and against a universal ecclesiology. According to Afanasiev, the several systems of ecclesiology that have grown up in the course of history can be reduced to these two fundamental types.¹² Eucharistic ecclesiology focuses on the local eucharistic community which is considered the Church in the fullest sense. Universal ecclesiology focuses on the sum total of all local churches that form the universal Church. Afanasiev argues that the early Church up until the middle of the third century was of the eucharistic model. It was only after the time of Cyprian that the Church took on a universal model whereby the universal Church was considered to be the summation of all the local churches which were considered *parts* of the universal Church.¹³ In other words, the universal Church has catholicity as one of its attributes and "is a single being divided into various parts."¹⁴ Afanasiev disagrees with this model of Church because he claims it did not exist in the primitive Church at all.¹⁵ Rather, the universal Church model replaced what Afanasiev calls the eucharistic model and became the dominant ecclesiology especially in Western Churches following Cyprian.¹⁶ It also gave rise to the papacy for, according to Afanasiev, Cyprian constructed this model with the idea of primacy in mind.¹⁷ In universal ecclesiology, the principle of the Church's unity does not lie in the Church herself but in one of her elements – the episcopate.¹⁸

The alternative eucharistic model proposed by Afanasiev is very different. Every local church that gathers for the Eucharist is the catholic Church. Afanasiev explains, "As the Body of Christ, the Church manifests herself in all her fullness in the eucharistic assembly of the local church, because Christ is present in the Eucharist in the fullness of his body."¹⁹ This is his key thesis in several of his works.²⁰ Afanasiev's ecclesiology has thus been broadly summed up as follows: "*The Church makes the Eucharist, the Eucharist makes the*

Ecumenical Councils," and "Ibas of Edessa and His Era." See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xi.

¹¹ See M. Plekon's introduction to *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xii.

¹² N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 58. Here, Afanasiev sees the universal model being the dominant ecclesial model, especially in Catholic doctrine.

¹³ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 58-59, 61. See also Cyprian, *Epist.* L.V, XXIV, 2 and 3.

¹⁴ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 61.

¹⁵ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 64.

¹⁶ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 73.

¹⁷ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 65.

¹⁸ N. Afanasiev, "*Una Sancta*" in *Tradition Alive*, ed. M. Plekon, 15.

¹⁹ N. Afanasiev, "*Una Sancta*" in *Tradition Alive*, ed. M. Plekon, 14.

²⁰ See N. Afanasiev, "*Una Sancta*" and "The Church Which Presides in Love," 82. On eucharistic ecclesiology, see N. Afanasiev, "Le Sacrement de l'Assemblée," *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 4 (1956); "L'Apôtre Pierre et l'évêque de Rome," *Theologia* XXVI (1955) and "La doctrine de la primauté à la lumière de l'ecclésiologie," *Istina* 4 (1957): 401-20.

Church.”²¹

Afanasiev returns to the ante-Nicene churches, especially the early churches spoken of in the book of Acts and those in the sub-apostolic age, in order to find the original church.²² This original Church was a Church that was free of the legalism that bound it in Roman civilization.²³ Central to the life and times of the early Church was the continual presence and work of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ Guided by this discovery, Afanasiev developed an ecclesiology that was, in Plekon’s opinion, truly pneumatological.²⁵

Afanasiev contends that in the apostolic age and throughout the second and the third centuries, it was a historical fact that “every local church was autonomous and independent; autonomous, for it contained in itself everything necessary to its life; and independent by not depending on any other local church or any bishop whatever outside itself.”²⁶ The concept of the universal Church did not exist from the very beginning of the early Church. The early local Church was the church of a city, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, and later, the seven Churches in the book of Revelation. In every city, there was a eucharistic gathering that was called the Church. This Church consisted of the people of God who are the royal priesthood.²⁷ Every baptized member of the Church is ordained to the ministry²⁸ and may minister as a priest offering spiritual sacrifices.²⁹ According to Afanasiev, it is in the *eucharistic assembly* that the *priestly ministry* of all members of the Church finds expression.³⁰ He argues that the Church is made up of “the people of God formed for himself in Christ. Viewed from this perspective, the Church is God’s flock.”³¹ Afanasiev writes, “All of the faithful celebrate the Eucharist in the assembly but this celebration of all is manifest through one person. This is

²¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xiv. Afanasiev himself has written, “Where the Eucharist is, there is the fullness of the Church; *vice versa*, where the fullness of the Church is not, there no Eucharist can be celebrated.” See N. Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 76. Some, like Zizioulas, quote Afanasiev’s axiom as “wherever the Eucharist is, there is the Church.” See J. Zizioulas, “Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” in *The One and the Many*, 280.

²² Plekon observes that “Afanasiev was not alone in his efforts to ‘return to the sources’ of the Church’s life. In this he was accompanied by that ecumenical *ressourcement* group of scholars whose work later shaped much of the thinking of Vatican II. These included Jean Daniélou, Yves Congar, Oscar Cullman, Gregory Dix, Bernard Botte, I.-M. Dailmaïs, M. D. Chenu, and Henri de Lubac, among others.” See Plekon’s Introduction to Afanasiev’s *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xv.

²³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 257.

²⁴ In the book of Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the ministry of the apostles, dictating where they should go (Acts 16.6-7) and whom they should choose for ministry (Acts 13.2).

²⁵ M. Plekon in his introduction to N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xvii.

²⁶ N. Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 73.

²⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 9-21.

²⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 23-31.

²⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 33-79.

³⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 4. See also M. Plekon, “The Russian Religious Revival and its Theological Legacy” in *In God’s Hands. Essays on the Church and Ecumenism in Honour of Michael A. Fahey, S.J.*, eds. J. Skira & M. Attridge (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 283-305.

³¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 5.

the nature of any celebration in the Church.”³² This one person – the bishop-presbyter³³ was, according to Afanasiev, the one who was chosen to “preside in the Lord”³⁴ and “the one who offers thanksgiving.”³⁵ He was usually the senior (or chief) presbyter.³⁶ Afanasiev insists, “He was always one and always the same but also always together with all. The people of God could neither celebrate without him nor could he celebrate without them, for not only he himself but all were priests of the Most High God.”³⁷ It was only after the apostolic period that the bishop came into prominence replacing the senior or chief presbyter.³⁸ Afanasiev maintains that it was during the immediate period after the apostles had passed away that the ministry of the bishop and the presbyters became separate, the bishop having the “higher degree of priesthood” while the priestly ministry of the presbyters became “a second degree of priesthood.”³⁹ All these ideas of the Church, the ministry and the priesthood were first defended in his 1950 doctoral thesis before being published posthumously, first in Russian (1971), in French (1975)⁴⁰ and then subsequently in English as *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007).⁴¹

2.2. The Church of the Holy Spirit (2007)

In *The Church of the Holy Spirit* Afanasiev defines the Church as follows: “The Church is *ekklesia* because it is the assembly of God’s people in Christ rather than a random mob or a gathering of Christians who came together by chance. What manifests the Church as a gathering in Christ is the eucharistic assembly because Christ is present there.”⁴² This follows very closely Ignatius’ well-known maxim, “Wherever Christ is, there also is the Catholic Church.”⁴³

³² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 6.

³³ This term bishop-presbyter arises from the difficulty in distinguishing between the two in the early Church of the New Testament when, according to Afanasiev, the terms bishop and presbyter were used inter-changeably. He also holds that in the New Testament Church, the presbyter-bishops who headed the eucharistic communities “were neither bishops nor presbyters but bishop-presbyters and nothing else.” See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 159-71.

³⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 133-68.

³⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 169-215.

³⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 212. Afanasiev thinks it would be unlikely the senior-presbyter who presides over the eucharistic assembly bore the title of bishop. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 192-93.

³⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 6.

³⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 217. Afanasiev’s idea of the bishop here is that of those referred to by St. Ignatius of Antioch.

³⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 218.

⁴⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xv.

⁴¹ This has been reviewed by Andrew Cuneo in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61.1 (Jan 2010): 215-16 and by George Demacopoulos in *Theological Studies* 70 (March 2009): 238-39.

⁴² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 136.

⁴³ Ignatius, *Smy.* 8.

The Church is also “the place of the Spirit’s activity.”⁴⁴ Without the Spirit, there is no Church, no life, ministry and activity in the Church. Founded by Christ at the Last Supper but *actualized at Pentecost* “by the Spirit and in the Spirit,”⁴⁵ the Church continues to live by the Spirit as the Spirit lives in the Church.⁴⁶ The Church of the Spirit was identical with “the Church of God in Christ.”⁴⁷ Afanasiev writes,

We believe that in the Church the Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled: ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh’ (Acts 2:17). God pours out his Spirit not just upon a certain number but upon all His people. All are charismatics since all have received the Spirit as a “pledge” (*arrabon*) of the new age to which the Church belongs while still abiding in this old age. The Church is the beginning of the “last days” (*eschatai hemerai*).⁴⁸

The central thesis in Afanasiev’s book is that the Holy Spirit lives in the Church today just as it did in the early Church of the apostolic times.⁴⁹ The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are still sent down upon the members of the Church today as they were in the apostolic age. The charismatic age has taken a new form in the present and *continues to exist* within the Church of our times.⁵⁰ The Church’s very existence is tied to the presence of the Holy Spirit in this charismatic age. Thus, Afanasiev maintains that “the Church was and still is a charismatic organism.”⁵¹

2.2.1. The people of God as a Royal Priesthood

A further principal contention in *Church of the Holy Spirit* is that all the people of God are the *royal priesthood* of God.⁵² Even if direct scriptural evidence of this priestly ministry of all members of the church is scarce,⁵³ Afanasiev contends it is never ambiguous.⁵⁴ For the Apostle Peter addresses all Christians,

And like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a royal priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God’s people... (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10a)

⁴⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 1.

⁴⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 257.

⁴⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 2.

⁴⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 2.

⁴⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 3.

⁴⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 134.

⁵⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 2-3.

⁵¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 134.

⁵² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 9-10. See also pages 3-4.

⁵³ Other biblical references to the royal priesthood can be found in *Revelations* 1.6, 5.10, 20.6.

⁵⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 9.

Afanasiev is in no doubt that the “spiritual sacrifices” offered through Jesus Christ signify the Eucharist referred to by Peter in the preceding verses.⁵⁵ He writes, “Instituted at the Last Supper, the Eucharist is actualized at Pentecost. It is accomplished by the Spirit and therefore is itself spiritual.”⁵⁶ In the Eucharist, as noted earlier, the priestly ministry of all members of the Church finds expression.⁵⁷

For Afanasiev, there is no *ontological* distinction between the clergy and the laity.⁵⁸ All the members of the Church are priests. Their difference is to be understood in *functional* terms. They have different ministries because they have been given different gifts. Although there are different ministries, there is only one priesthood and one Spirit who gives spiritual gifts to the people of God in full measure as promised by God through the prophet Joel,

... your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.⁵⁹

The one Spirit distributes diverse gifts giving rise to different functions of the people of God in the eucharistic assembly.⁶⁰

The ministry of the Church is to be exercised by all the people of God who are given different gifts by the *same* Spirit for the unique purpose of serving the Church. In Afanasiev’s view, the concept of “consecration” to a particular ministry or a particular priesthood has been unhelpful in the past because it “de-consecrated” the people of God and made ministry the prerogative only of the so-called “consecrated” clergy.⁶¹ Thus, the Church was starved of the ministry of the many – the whole people of God who are called to serve in the Church. The diversity of the ministries in the Church does not divide the Church because the Church is ultimately united in Christ, as his Body.⁶²

2.2.2. The ‘Ordination’ and Ministry of the Laics

Afanasiev pays very careful attention to the rites of baptism. He does say however that all who are baptized into the Church are what he terms *laics* (people of God) who have been

⁵⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 13.

⁵⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 13. cf. page 2 where Afanasiev writes that the Church was actualized at the Pentecost. Afanasiev’s identification of the Church with the Eucharist is very clear.

⁵⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

⁵⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 14-17.

⁵⁹ Joel 2.28b-29.

⁶⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 6.

⁶¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 19.

⁶² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 15.

“ordained” to specific ministries in the Church.⁶³ The ministry of the Church is to be exercised by the laics and the ministry belongs to them as a *whole*. This is because the people of God are the royal priesthood and when they were baptized, they were “ordained” so to speak to exercise the priestly ministry. In effect, every baptized person is a prophet, priest and king. They are consecrated to exercise their ministry in the Church in whatever capacity according to the gifts that God the Holy Spirit had given them. Not all have received the same gifts, yet it is the One Spirit who has given them to God’s people for priestly ministry for the profit of all.⁶⁴ Yet the laics have received neither the gift of administration (governing the Church) nor of teaching, specifically reserved for the bishop and presbyters. However, laics do have the gift of discernment and examination *entrusted to all the people of God*.⁶⁵

2.2.3. The Eucharist

According to Afanasiev, “The Eucharist is the *leitourgia* celebrated by God’s people gathered in the temple of Christ’s body.”⁶⁶ Therefore, according to Afanasiev, only the baptized and the initiated members of God’s people can participate in it.⁶⁷ “Every one of the faithful stands before God as a *leitourgos*, but does so only when the Church is gathered *epi to auto*, i.e., when the people of God, assembled by Him, minister to Him.”⁶⁸ Afanasiev stresses that in the New Testament,

Every one of the faithful in the eucharistic assembly stands before God as a liturgical minister (*leitourgos*). The whole life of the faithful is an unceasing ministry (*latreia*) to God, but in a particular way, intimately related to the ministry (*leitourgia*) at the eucharistic assembly where everything begins and ends. This is why every ministry in the Church is closely connected with the eucharistic assembly.⁶⁹

Afanasiev considers the problem of whether the bishop or presbyter can celebrate the divine services alone, as was sometimes done in the medieval Church in the West.⁷⁰ His answer is in the negative. Bishops and presbyters need the people of God (*laics*) gathered in the

⁶³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 31. For Afanasiev, there are no lay people in the Church. All the baptized are ordained and consecrated to the service of God. To support this contention, Afanasiev cites from the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome where the baptized were prayed over by the one who presided, the bishop, who laid his hands on them and prayed that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would send his gifts down on them for their ministry in the Church. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 25.

⁶⁴ 1 Cor. 12.4-7, 28-30.

⁶⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 61. Here, Afanasiev cites 1 Cor. 14.29 and 1 Thess. 5.21 in support of the common discernment of all the people of God. See 69-78, esp. 69-70 and 76. Here, Afanasiev appeals to canon 64 of the council of Trullo which cites Gregory the Theologian who quoted from 1 Corinthians 12 in support of the distinction of teachers from learners.

⁶⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 33.

⁶⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 34.

⁶⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 35.

⁶⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 34.

⁷⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37.

eucharistic assembly to first make up the Church before any divine services can proceed. This communal character of the liturgy and the sacraments makes clear that “it is the Church itself that accomplishes all things.”⁷¹

2.2.4. The Bishop

The bishop is of paramount importance in the Church. Afanasiev cites Ignatius of Antioch’s claim that “wherever the bishop is, there is the Church and conversely, wherever the Church is, there is the bishop.”⁷² The bishop a) belongs to the Church which incorporates him, b) is indispensable for celebrating the sacraments because the Church does not exist without him, c) presides over those who con-celebrate the Eucharist with him, and d) is the one without whom no church activity can be done.⁷³

Afanasiev suggests that the figure of the bishop in Ignatius’ letters was preceded by the figure of a senior or chief presbyter in the apostolic age.⁷⁴ The senior presbyter was the one who occupied a central place in the eucharistic assembly and who “offered thanksgiving.” This was a high-priestly ministry that emerged out of the priestly ministry of the people.⁷⁵ The early church knew this single ministry of the senior presbyter whom Afanasiev calls the first amongst the bishop-presbyters who presided over the rest of the bishop-presbyters.⁷⁶ However, by the time of Ignatius of Antioch, Afanasiev concludes, the office of the senior presbyter had started to transform into the office of the bishop.⁷⁷ This process of transition also “happened surreptitiously, so that”, according to Afanasiev, “the church might not have noticed the change.”⁷⁸ Yet it was an important transition that singled out the bishop for the

⁷¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37.

⁷² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37. Afanasiev quotes from Ignatius, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 8.2.

⁷³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37-38.

⁷⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 217. Afanasiev concedes that it is speculation that there was a senior presbyter because there is no clear indication from any early Christian literature of such a person. But Afanasiev comes to the conclusion that there must have been such an office by considering the nature of the early Church. He argues for the existence of the senior presbyter from the fact that James was the head of the Church in Jerusalem as its senior presbyter. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 191-93, 305 esp. n. 43. Here, Afanasiev notes that from the evidence of sources such as Eusebius, Epiphanius and John Chrysostom, James was a bishop of Jerusalem. But Afanasiev thinks that this is from a later tradition. James was not known as a bishop by those of his own time. Afanasiev also refers to 3 John for evidence of the existence of the senior presbyter in the churches outside of Palestine. He names Diotrophes and Gaius as senior presbyters. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 193-95.

⁷⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 218. The ministry of the senior presbyter is to offer God thanksgiving to manifest the priestly ministry of the whole of God’s people. He also had the gift of administration which his fellow presbyters also had and which the people did not have. He offered priestly worship due to his charism of presiding over the eucharistic assembly rather than the charism of priesthood. Apart from him, no one else “offered thanksgiving.” See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 202-04.

⁷⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 253. Afanasiev uses these two terms bishop and presbyter synonymously. See his *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 149-51.

⁷⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 225-27. This is based on Ignatius’ understanding of himself as “a bearer of a special ministry that set him apart from the rest of the presbyters.” In his letter to the Ephesians (3.2), Ignatius also stated that bishops exist in all local churches.

⁷⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 237.

special ministry of high priesthood.⁷⁹ This high priestly ministry is reflected in the letters of Ignatius where Ignatius uses the term *synedrion* to designate both the presbyteral college and the congregation of the apostles. The *topological* role of the presbyteral college, as *synedrion*, presupposes the topological high priestly role of the bishop.⁸⁰

Afanasiev considers it unfortunate that when scholastic theology detaches the bishop from the Church by regarding him as the only celebrant of the Eucharist, it robs him of his *episcopal* status by neglecting the indispensability of the rest of God's people who con-celebrate the Eucharist and over whom he presides.⁸¹ The role of the bishop as *overseer* of the whole assembly of God is thus emphasized.⁸² In Afanasiev's scheme of things, *everyone* in the eucharistic assembly celebrates the Eucharist in his respective order. This *con-celebration* of the Eucharist makes the Church local and catholic at the same time.

2.2.5. The three-fold ministry in the Church

Afanasiev identifies three aspects of the Church's ministry according to contemporary dogmatic teaching: a) sacramental ministry, b) administration and c) teaching.⁸³

In each of these, he stresses the participation of all the people of God in each of these priestly ministries that over time had become the prerogative only of the clergy who had been "consecrated" to the priesthood. Afanasiev contends that what he calls "scholastic systems of theology" sucked "the life out of the common ministry of God's people" and disassociated it from "the special ministries in the Church" by turning "laics into 'lay people.'" This deprived them of the common charism of their ministry as kings and priests" and endowed "their work with the wrong intentions."⁸⁴ Whenever the doctrine of the royal and priestly ministry of God's people was cast aside, the 'lay people' could not act on the basis of their own charisms

⁷⁹ Afanasiev concedes that it is difficult to understand why this special ministry of high priesthood emerged because the high priesthood of Christ ruled out any such special ministry of high priesthood in the Church. Afanasiev opines that the idea of high priesthood could have come to the Church from Judaism given the esteem the Old Testament writings enjoyed in the early Church. But this came only in the second stage of the emergence of the ministry of high priesthood in the Church. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 232. The idea of the high priesthood of the bishop came earlier in the typological doctrine of St. Ignatius which transposed the high priestly ministry of Christ to the figure of the senior presbyter. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 233. Later, the doctrine of apostolic succession gave the finishing touches to the doctrine of the high priesthood of the bishop which in turn confirmed the doctrine of apostolic succession. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 241.

⁸⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 308-09, n. 42. See also Ignatius, *Phil.* 8.1 where he designates the presbyteral college as "*synedrion tou episkopou*," and *Magn.* 6.1 where he designates the congregation of the apostles as "*synedion ton apostolon*." Ignatius also refers to the apostles as the presbyteral college of the Church (*Phil.* 5.1). By this, Afanasiev opines that Ignatius connects the presbyteral college with the apostolic college at the eucharistic assembly.

⁸¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37.

⁸² This is based on the biblical notion of the bishop as *episkopos* in 1 Tim. 3.1-7. Afanasiev stressed the functional aspect of the bishop rather than the ontological aspects, as Zizioulas does. For Zizioulas, the bishop not only oversees the people of God in his care, he is the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus* in addition to his functional roles of being the sole ordainer and the main celebrant of the Eucharist. See J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 226.

⁸³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 35.

⁸⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 35-36.

but only on “a basis of law.”⁸⁵ The Church has turned from being a charismatic organization to one that is bound by law.

a) Sacramental ministry

Afanasiev insists that all the people of God, because of their royal priesthood, can participate as con-celebrants of the Eucharist together with those who preside over them.⁸⁶ In fact, he opines that the ministry of laics is most intensely expressed in worship.⁸⁷

b) Administration

Afanasiev is of the view that only those ordained for the ministry of administration, defined as “the keeping of divinely established order and structure in ecclesial life” and “the administering of human souls on their way to God (2 Cor. 10.8),”⁸⁸ should govern as this ministry requires special gifts.⁸⁹ Afanasiev asserts that “Church administration is a pastoral ministry and those who administer the house of God are pastors.”⁹⁰

c) Teaching

Likewise, Afanasiev is insistent on the teaching office as belonging only to those who have “received the grace of the teaching word.”⁹¹ In Afanasiev’s words, “The office of the teacher does not belong to laics.⁹² They are not able to teach in the ecclesial assembly and to instruct the people of God.” However, they can have their individual views and may express their own opinions privately.

2.2.6. Special ministries in the Church

Afanasiev bases his understanding of special ministries in the Church on the so-called five-fold ministries meant to be fulfilled, in his view, not by all but only by a few.⁹³ This five-fold ministry can be found in St. Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians:

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (*eis oikodomen tou somatos tou Christou*). (Eph. 4.11-12)

Afanasiev also uses the *Didache* as a basis for teaching about the ministries in the early Church.⁹⁴ However, he regards this testimony as of less historical value than the apostolic

⁸⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 36.

⁸⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 37-57.

⁸⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 78.

⁸⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 139.

⁸⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 59-61.

⁹⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 139.

⁹¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 70.

⁹² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 76.

⁹³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 82.

⁹⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 86-89.

epistles.⁹⁵ The special ministries of the Church include the apostolic, prophetic and the teaching ministries.⁹⁶ These were to be fulfilled not by all but only by the few who had the special gifts of these ministries.⁹⁷

Even if there were these special ministries in the Church that were to be fulfilled by those specially called to these offices, all the people of God were called to be the royal priesthood to serve in the Church according to the diverse gifts distributed to them by the one Holy Spirit. These gifts are to be used for the edification of the Church. Afanasiev emphasizes that among the differing gifts of the Holy Spirit available in the ministry of the Church, the greatest charism is that of love and this charism is available to all.⁹⁸ Afanasiev thus follows closely what the apostle Paul had written,

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.... If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Cor. 12.31, 13.2)⁹⁹

From this biblical passage, Afanasiev argues in his final chapter in *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007) that the greatest power in the Church is not the law;¹⁰⁰ it is the kenotic love of Christ that moves us to serve one another in love.¹⁰¹ “Without love, every ministry is nothing and is outside of the Church, for the Church is love.”¹⁰²

2.2.7. Summary – The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist

Afanasiev has explicitly stated that his study in *The Church of the Holy Spirit* is “an attempt to revise the history of the primitive Christianity from the perspective of eucharistic ecclesiology. In the light of this,” he continues, “it will be shown that the basis of this life was grace and grace alone. Familiar facts then acquire new meaning and importance.”¹⁰³ The Church consists of the people God has “formed for himself in Christ.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, the Church is Christological. At the same time, Afanasiev insists that right from the Pentecost, “the Spirit

⁹⁵ According to Afanasiev, Adolf Harnack had combined data from the New Testament and the *Didache* to conclude that there existed two primary types of organization in the Church in the primitive era: a charismatic institution and a secular organization managing the local church. Afanasiev disagrees with Harnack based on evidence from both the apostolic epistles and the *Didache*, which do not speak of this opposition of two types of organization. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 87.

⁹⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 106-32.

⁹⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 82.

⁹⁸ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 273.

⁹⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 273.

¹⁰⁰ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 255-75.

¹⁰¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 272. Here Afanasiev quotes from 1 John 4.9, 11 to support his contention that the ministry of Christ is the model for all other ministries.

¹⁰² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 273.

¹⁰³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 7. This is the key objective of Afanasiev's book *The Church of the Holy Spirit*.

¹⁰⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 5.

lives in the Church and the Church lives by the Spirit.”¹⁰⁵ This means that for Afanasiev, the Church is also pneumatological – a charismatic organism whose members have all received the Holy Spirit “as a ‘pledge’ (*arrabon*) of the new age to which the Church belongs while still abiding in this old age. The Church is the beginning of the ‘last days’ (*eschatai hemerai*).”¹⁰⁶ Hence, the Church is not only pneumatological, it is also eschatological. In addition, all members of the Church have a priestly ministry that finds expression, according to Afanasiev, in the eucharistic assembly which was

An assembly of the priestly people who offered sacred service to God ‘in Christ.’ Sacred service was an ecclesial ministry for the eucharistic assembly itself, was a manifestation of the Church of God in all its fullness. The Church is where Christ is, but Christ is always present in the fullness of the unity of His body in the Eucharist. Empirically, the unity and fullness of the Church of God are expressed through the multiplicity of the local churches, each of which manifests not a part of but the fullness of the Church of God. For this reason, the multiplicity of the local churches, in empirical reality, guards the unity and fullness of the Church, that is, its catholicity. The unity of the local church itself is manifest in its one eucharistic assembly. The Church is one since it has one eucharistic assembly in which God’s priestly people are gathered. Since Christ yesterday, today and forever is one and the same, the multiplicity of the Eucharist in time does not divide the one body of Christ. In the same way, the multiplicity of eucharistic assemblies does not destroy the unity of God’s Church, for in both space and time the eucharistic assembly remains one and the same. For primitive Christian consciousness the unity of the Church was not merely a dogmatic statement but a lived experience. Despite the increase of the number of local churches, the unity of the Church remained undisturbed, for they did not have different eucharistic assemblies but one and the same. Unity and fullness were not contained in the sum total of local churches nor in their confederation (which never existed), but rather in each local church. Being one in its fullness the Church always retained its internal universality, for each local church contained in itself all remaining churches. What was done in one church was done in all remaining ones, for everything was done within God’s Church and in Christ. Due to this catholic universality, the local churches were absolutely devoid of any isolation and provincialism. No single Church could separate itself from the others for it could not separate itself from Christ. All were united to one another through love. Each of the churches was loved by all and all were loved by each one of them.¹⁰⁷

What Afanasiev affirms is simply this: if the Eucharist is essentially a gathering together of all the people of God in the Body of Christ, then it constitutes the Church in its fullness (catholicity). The structure of the Eucharist is identical to the structure of the Church.¹⁰⁸ Without the Church, which according to Afanasiev, is essentially “a divine establishment” of the people of God who are called according to God’s will into His Kingdom, there is no

¹⁰⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 2.

¹⁰⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 3 and 7.

¹⁰⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 4-5.

¹⁰⁸ This is possible when the Eucharist and the Church are both referring to the Body of Christ.

Eucharist to be celebrated.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, what Ignatius wrote is right: wherever there is the Eucharist, there is the catholic Church. This is the basic thesis of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology.

2.3 A General Critique of Afanasiev's Eucharistic Ecclesiology

Eucharistic ecclesiology teaches us that the fullness and the unity of the Church is to be found in the local churches and not in the universal Church.¹¹⁰ The sum of one local church and another local church still equals one church in eucharistic ecclesiology.¹¹¹ Every local church is not simply a part of the Catholic (universal) Church, it is the Catholic Church in all its fullness because wherever there is the Eucharist, there is the Body of Christ and consequently, the catholic Church is there.

In my opinion, Afanasiev's greatest contribution is to bring back to the modern ecclesial consciousness the very eucharistic nature of the Church which had so characterized the early churches. By returning to the Biblical and Patristic sources,¹¹² he has re-discovered the *eucharistic ethos* in the Churches of the first three centuries. I agree with Zizioulas that this eucharistic ethos was lost when the Church ceased thinking canonically of itself as the Body of Christ¹¹³ and when the Eucharist was relegated from being a fundamental constituting element of the Church to merely being *one* of the sacraments of the Church.¹¹⁴ This has great ramifications in both Orthodox and Roman Catholic circles which had viewed the Church as an institution based on fixed canons and laws rather than on the *event* of the gathering of the people of God who together formed the New Testament priesthood. The concept of the Church as an *event* as well as an institution is recovered by linking the Divine Liturgy celebrated by all God's people to the very being and constitution of the Church.

Afanasiev's other enduring contribution is his refusal to use traditional methods employing law and the canons of the Church to define what the nature of the Church is, despite him being an expert at canon law which he taught at St. Sergius. Instead he looks to the Holy Spirit's work of forming the Church in love through her members who are the New Testament people of God. After all, the Church is the Church *of* God. Particularly for

¹⁰⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 7.

¹¹⁰ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 75-76.

¹¹¹ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 75.

¹¹² Afanasiev has researched early church documents such as the *Didache*, the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the *Canons of the Council of Trullo* (689) etc. He has also consulted with the Divine Liturgies of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil as well as Justin Martyr's works.

¹¹³ A. Schmemmann, *The Eucharist. Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 1987), 34.

¹¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 290.

Afanasiev, the Church of God is the Church of the Holy Spirit who is communion and the bond of love.

I believe that Afanasiev deserves credit for not subjecting ecclesiology to a philosophical system or situating it within certain modern theological presuppositions.¹¹⁵ He has resisted the temptation so common among Russian Orthodox intellectuals to theologize using Russian philosophy along with concepts derived from systematic thinkers on the European continent such as Hegel. Instead, Afanasiev's primary sources are the Bible and Patristic texts. Other sources include early church documents – *Didache*, *Canons of Hippolytus*, *Canons of Trullo*. Being also a historian, Afanasiev studied the social and cultural factors that shaped the canons and councils of the Church.¹¹⁶ He was a systematic theologian who paid careful attention to the historical circumstances that shaped the Church.¹¹⁷ His legacy lives on in his students, especially in Alexander Schmemmann.¹¹⁸

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has praised Afanasiev for illuminating what the Church is fundamentally – the Church of God – “the community assembled by divine initiative and divine love above all else.”¹¹⁹ Afanasiev's distrust of power and law in the Church may raise a few traditional ecclesiastics' eye-brows, but his return to the New Testament and the patristic evidence to draw out a Christian account of the community that gathers around the Lord's Table is, according to Williams, certainly praiseworthy.¹²⁰

Scholarly criticisms of Afanasiev address a whole range of issues starting from the discipline of the Church to the structures and ministries that constitute the Church. Meyendorff agrees with Zizioulas' criticisms of Afanasiev as one who overlooked the “trinitarian and anthropological dimensions of ecclesiology, focusing his thoughts on the “local” nature of the eucharistic community and somewhat excluding the problems of truth and of the universal presuppositions of unity.”¹²¹ Others like Plekon wonder if Afanasiev's interpretation of Cyprian's “universal ecclesiology” is wrong because one cannot take

¹¹⁵ The theological presuppositions that Afanasiev adopt are in line with the Orthodox Church's interpretation of the sources. There are only two sources: The Bible and the Fathers. See J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition,” in *The One and the Many*, 136. Afanasiev's ecclesiology is distinctly from the Orthodox point of view.

¹¹⁶ This is noted by Plekon in his introduction to N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xi.

¹¹⁷ Plekon has also noted Afanasiev's methodological precision and rigour in historiography in Plekon's introduction to N. Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, x.

¹¹⁸ Schmemmann has written many books on the Eucharist. An important example where Afanasiev is credited explicitly is A. Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, 14 and 17. Another important book on the theology of the Divine Liturgy is A. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*. 3rd edition (Crestwood, New York: SVS Press, 1986).

¹¹⁹ R. Williams in his Foreword to N. Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, vii.

¹²⁰ Rowan Williams wrote the Foreword to Afanasiev's book *Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007) in which he lauds Afanasiev's keen insights on eucharistic ecclesiology gained from researching the evidence gathered from the New Testament and patristic sources.

¹²¹ J. Meyendorff in his Foreword to J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 12.

Cyprian's view of the Church from the standpoint of the local Church in Carthage to be universally true.¹²²

Afanasiev might also be criticized, particularly by evangelical Protestants, who may note, as Plekon has done, the lack of attention to mission and evangelical outreach in his ecclesiology.¹²³ But mission can also take the form of social and cultural engagement by the local churches. In this respect, Plekon has rightly observed that the "local churches" Afanasiev was involved in (the Exarchate of Paris and the Orthodox Church in America) have always engaged with society.¹²⁴

From a Protestant point of view, one may be shocked to learn from Afanasiev that participating in the Eucharist is strictly only for those who have been initiated into the mysteries of the Church. How could one witness Christ to another by bringing him to participate in the Divine Liturgy if the Eucharist is only to be participated in, according to Afanasiev, by "one who is "ordained for the 'high calling' of being a member of God's people"?¹²⁵ It would seem that the Orthodox Church is weak in personal one on one evangelical witness. Yet Orthodox mission had been conducted in the way the Church witnesses to the world through her unity. And for the Orthodox churches, this unity of the Church in the Eucharist is her evangelical witness. Without this unity, there is no evangelical witness. So, evangelism in the Orthodox Church is primarily done not at the level of individuals but at the level of the Church as a *corporate* witnessing body. The unity of the Church is one key area of witness. Divisions in the Church destroy the witness of the Church.¹²⁶

In summary, the biggest strength of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology is found in its emphasis on the full ecclesial status of the local Church wherever the Eucharist is celebrated. The Church is not defined in terms of some institutional super-structure. In simple terms, the Church is defined as the local church. The biggest weakness, on the other hand in this scheme of things is this: the local Church can become so self-absorbed to the point that it fails to relate to and be associated with the other local churches that equally have a claim to the status

¹²² M. Plekon's Introduction to N. Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xv.

¹²³ M. Plekon's Introduction to N. Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xiv.

¹²⁴ M. Plekon in his Introduction to N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, xiv.

¹²⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 33-34.

¹²⁶ This is why unity in the Church has always been central to the Orthodox Church and why theologians like Meyendorff lament the state of ecumenical witness in the modern Orthodox Church. He writes, "Unless the visible reality of our Church life becomes consistent with that communion which is revealed to us in the Eucharist, unless our ecclesial structures – especially here in the West – conform themselves to that which the Church truly is, unless the eucharistic nature of the Church is freed from under the façade of anachronism, and ethnic politics, which hide it today, no ecumenical witness, no authentic mission to the world is possible." See Meyendorff's Foreword to J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 12.

of being the Church.¹²⁷ There is only one Church and as such, all the local churches, when added together, must still be one Church. How is this possible? This is where Zizioulas' concept of communion can prove very helpful in explaining how the many local churches are indeed one Church.¹²⁸

2.4. Zizioulas' correction of Afanasiev's Ecclesiology

2.4.1. Zizioulas' criticisms of Afanasiev¹²⁹

Zizioulas' ecclesiology in his book *Being as Communion* (1985) has elements very similar to Afanasiev's eucharistic vision. Zizioulas first studied Afanasiev in his doctoral research and wrote a critique of his eucharistic ecclesiology in his 1965 doctoral dissertation entitled *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*.¹³⁰ Over the next twenty years, Zizioulas continued to critique Afanasiev on two very key points:¹³¹

1. The parish in which the Eucharist takes place is not, as Afanasiev and those who follow him seem to imply, the complete and "catholic" Church.¹³² This is because the parish does not include all Christians in one city. Neither does it consist of the presbyterium with the bishop at its head.
2. Afanasiev's principle "wherever the Eucharist is, there is the Church" risks suggesting that each church could on its own be the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church." Zizioulas thinks that no local church can be the Church when it is independent of the other local churches.¹³³ There could also easily be a misunderstanding of the priority of the local church over the universal.¹³⁴

Zizioulas has generally charged Afanasiev and his supporters with promoting the eucharistic presuppositions of the Church over the ecclesiological presuppositions of the Eucharist, thereby leading to a "one-sidedness" in eucharistic ecclesiology that fails "to do

¹²⁷ Some Orthodox theologians such as N. Loudovikos argue that what is not sufficiently developed in Afanasiev's ecclesiology is "the theology of the mode of communion between the charisms." See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality*, 71-72.

¹²⁸ This is sometimes referred to as the theme of the 'one' and the 'many' in Zizioulas' ecclesiology. See J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many* (2010).

¹²⁹ V. Aleksandrov has written an excellent paper on critics of Afanasiev in his "Nicholas Afanasiev's Ecclesiology and Some of its Orthodox Critics," *Sobornost* 31.2 (2009). This can also be found in www.golubinski.ru/afanasiev/critics.html (last accessed 16 Feb 2019).

¹³⁰ Zizioulas' assessment of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology can be found on pages 256-59 of *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001).

¹³¹ Criticism of Afanasiev can be found in many works of Zizioulas. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23-25 and 132-33; *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 256-59 and "Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement" in *The One and the Many*, 311-13.

¹³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 24.

¹³³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

¹³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 133.

full justice to the patristic roots of Orthodoxy.”¹³⁵ Zizioulas’ position is that “*the Church constitutes the Eucharist while being constituted by it.*”¹³⁶ Zizioulas is interested in both the eucharistic nature of the Church and the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist.¹³⁷

Zizioulas also charges Afanasiev with failing “to appreciate the indivisibility of the apostolic college in succession.”¹³⁸ According to Zizioulas, Afanasiev put forth this view which was “incompatible with the eschatological image of the Church” – that the bishop was not the successor of the apostles in general but of a particular apostle.¹³⁹ Zizioulas’ position is that every bishop is the successor of *all* the apostles.

A further criticism Zizioulas makes of Afanasiev is that he reads universalistic ideas back into Cyprian.¹⁴⁰ Contrary to Afanasiev’s contention Zizioulas argues that Cyprian did not conceive of the synods and councils of the early church as establishing a universal catholicity above the local churches.’ Rather, Zizioulas contends, Cyprian held that the bishop ‘always remained directly responsible to God for his own community.’¹⁴¹ Zizioulas notes that “for St. Cyprian *each* episcopal throne is a *cathedra Petri*. This is significant because it implies that the Ignatian view of the indivisibility of the apostolic college in its eschatological nature, as it is manifested in the eucharist, is preserved fully for each episcopal Church.”¹⁴²

Zizioulas has also charged Afanasiev with failing to see the implications of the fact that episcopal ordinations took place when two or three bishops from neighboring Churches took part.¹⁴³ This “tied the episcopal office and with it the local eucharistic community in which the ordination to it took place with the rest of the eucharistic communities in the world in a fundamental way.”¹⁴⁴ At the ordination of a bishop, the bishop not only became the head of

¹³⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 104. This has also been noticed by A. Mong who writes that Zizioulas gives priority neither to the Church nor to the Eucharist. They are inter-dependent and even identical. See A. Mong, “The One and the Many. An Examination of John Zizioulas’ Ecclesiology,” *The Canadian Journal of Orthodox Christianity* 9.3 (Fall 2014): 53-54 and J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 105.

¹³⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 105. Italics original.

¹³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 17. Here, Zizioulas writes that Afanasiev’s eucharistic ecclesiology is important in his own studies because it brings to light “the ecclesiological character of the Eucharist and also the eucharistic character of the Church.”

¹³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 194, n. 83.

¹³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 194, n. 83. Zizioulas notes here that Afanasiev has written, “l’évêque devient par son Eglise, le successeur de tel on tel apôtre, et non pas des apôtres en général,” in “Réflexions d’un Orthodoxe sur la collégialité des évêques,” *Le Messager Orthodoxe* (1965): 7-15.

¹⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 200-01, n. 107. This has been done, according to Zizioulas, in N. Afanasiev, “La doctrine de la primauté à la lumière de l’ecclesiologie,” *Istina* 2 (1957): 401-20.

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 155-56. To support this contention, Zizioulas quotes from Cyprian, *Ep.* 55 (52), 21.

¹⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 200. Italics original.

¹⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 155, n. 57.

¹⁴⁴ Zizioulas is responding to the views expressed by Afanasiev in his article “*Una Sancta*,” *Irénikon* 36 (1963): 436-75, and elsewhere.

his own local Church community, he also became related together with his community to the other eucharistic communities in the whole world.

Unfortunately, Afanasiev did not have the chance to defend himself against all Zizioulas' charges before passing away in 1966.¹⁴⁵ It is also important to note that when Zizioulas began his criticism of Afanasiev in his doctoral dissertation, he acknowledged that he had not read many of Afanasiev's works, especially those that were published in Russian.¹⁴⁶ Afanasiev's most important work on the Church was not even published in the 1960s.¹⁴⁷ So, criticisms of Afanasiev may indeed be unjust because these critics (Zizioulas included) had not read all Afanasiev's works. However, based chiefly on his *Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007), one can surmise that Afanasiev did focus more on the local structure of the Church and tended to neglect the conciliar structures of the Church comprising of synods local and regional. How the bishops of the Church were a unity is also not specifically addressed by Afanasiev. Zizioulas provides a more comprehensive picture of how the structure of the entire eucharistic assembly, comprising of the bishop, the priests, deacons and the laity, points to the structure of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

2.4.2. How Zizioulas improves on Afanasiev's Ecclesiology

Afanasiev clearly favours a eucharistic ecclesiology over a universal ecclesiology.¹⁴⁸ He is suspicious of any form of universal ecclesiology that makes the local church subordinate to and merely a part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. By so doing, Afanasiev has focused very much on the local eucharistic assembly and paid far less attention to conciliar structures which he associated with a universal ecclesiology that was incompatible with the eucharistic ecclesiology he expounded. This exposes him to Zizioulas' charge of being too

¹⁴⁵ Modern students of Afanasiev such as Anastasia Wooden has defended Afanasiev by writing that some critics such as Zizioulas have been too harsh on Afanasiev. She points out that very often, the critics of Afanasiev have not been able to read many of his works (many of which are still unpublished) but have made their assessments of Afanasiev based on other critics, principally Zizioulas and Meyendorff. As a result, they are not able to directly quote from Afanasiev's writings in support of their criticisms. See A. Wooden, "Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev and its Ecumenical Significance: A New Perspective," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45.4 (Fall 2010): 544-45 and "Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev and Catholic Ecclesiology: History of Interaction and Future Perspectives." Paper presented at a theology symposium, International Eucharistic Congress (June 2012).

¹⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 17. Zizioulas has indicated that he had in the 1960s only read the following existing articles by N. Afanasiev, "L'Apôtre Pierre et l'évêque de Rome," *Theologia* 26 (1955): 464f; "La doctrine de la Primauté à la lumière de l'ecclésiologie," *Istina* 4 (1957): 401-20; "Le Concile dans la Théologie orthodoxe russe," *Irénikon* 35 (1962): 316f; "Una Sancta," *Irénikon* 36 (1963): 436; "The Church that Presides in Love," in *The Primacy of Peter* (London: The Faith Press, 1963), 57-110. See also J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 36, n. 47.

¹⁴⁷ Many scholars such as M. Plekon and A. Wooden regard *The Church of the Holy Spirit* as the most important work Afanasiev has produced.

¹⁴⁸ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," in J. Meyendorff, A. Schmemmann, N. Afanasiev, & N. Koulomzine. *The Primacy of Peter* (London: The Faith Press, 1963), 57-110. Zizioulas has referred to the articles in this book in "Recent Discussion on Primacy in Orthodox Theology," in *The One and the Many*, 281-83. Particularly, Zizioulas has noted the danger of isolationism in Afanasiev's ecclesiology that, in Zizioulas' view, tends to make "the local Church self-sufficient and independent in relation to its sister Churches." See J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 281.

focused on the local Church to the neglect of its relation to the rest of the Church. This is a charge that is justified on account of the fact that *churches are interdependent*. This is precisely what Zizioulas stresses in his ecclesiology of communion and conciliarity.

Zizioulas credits Afanasiev with bringing the ecclesial use of the term ‘body of Christ’ into connection with the Eucharist.¹⁴⁹ This brought back the eucharistic understanding of Christ’s Body which is the Church and once again united the Eucharist with the Church through what is now known as ‘eucharistic ecclesiology.’ What Afanasiev did not do, according to Zizioulas, was to enter into any serious systematic theological reflection on this matter. As a corrective measure, Zizioulas’ doctoral dissertation investigates more deeply the implications of a eucharistic ecclesiology, particularly the eschatological structure of the Eucharist which is constituted by the Church, and the eschatological community that is in communion with God through the Person of Christ in the eucharistic celebrations with the bishop as the principal celebrant at the eucharistic assembly.¹⁵⁰

While Afanasiev looks backwards in time to the first three centuries for an ideal form of Church in the celebration of the Eucharist,¹⁵¹ Zizioulas does not let the past be a hindrance to what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Church today, “for the Holy Spirit can point to new ways at different times.” What the Church did in the first three centuries is not obligatory for the Church today, according to Zizioulas.¹⁵² Even a return of the Church to the structure of the New Testament times is according to Zizioulas, “the most deadly method to be adopted by the Church that wishes to be alive.”¹⁵³ This is because those times are long past and the apostles are irrevocably gone and cannot be reproduced. Zizioulas thus looks to the post-apostolic age for a new model of the Church. Zizioulas cites Ignatius as a bishop “who *can* be reproduced in that he could claim no more access to the Lord than a modern bishop can.”¹⁵⁴ Zizioulas’ proposal of a “truly eucharistic ecclesiology” draws on the eucharistic vision given

¹⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 291.

¹⁵⁰ See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001). See also N. Afanasiev, “*Una Sancta*” and “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 82. On eucharistic ecclesiology, see N. Afanasiev, “Le Sacrement de l’Assemblée,” *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 4 (1956) ; “L’Apôtre Pierre et l’évêque de Rome,” *Theologia* XXVI (1955) and “La doctrine de la primauté à la lumière de l’ecclesiologie,” *Istina* 4 (1957): 401-20.

¹⁵¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 256-57. Here, Afanasiev uses the time of early Christianity as an ideal against which we must check our present ecclesial life. He acknowledges that we cannot return to the time of early Christianity because the Holy Spirit’s guidance over the entire course of the Church’s history cannot be laid aside. Afanasiev writes, “As with all of history, that of the Church is irreversible.” Yet external factors belonging to the former age – the law, has found its way into the Church and has become her organizing principle. This is what Afanasiev is reacting against – the domination of the Church by ecclesiastical law.

¹⁵² J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope and Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 233.

¹⁵³ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope and Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 233.

¹⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope and Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 233. Italics original. In fact, it was Kierkegaard who expressed a similar sentiment in his *Philosophical Fragments* in which he argued that the immediate followers or contemporaries of Jesus have no significant advantage of knowing the truth compared to those who came after them. In other words, immediate contemporaneity was not an advantage at all for knowing the truth.

to the apostle John on the island of Patmos.¹⁵⁵ In this vision, God is seated on the throne surrounded by the elders and the multitude of peoples of all nations.¹⁵⁶ According to Zizioulas, the Eucharist takes its structure from this eschatological model proposed by St. Ignatius, with the *bishop as the icon of Christ* with a college of presbyters surrounding him just as Christ will be surrounded by the apostles in the last days.¹⁵⁷ This “truly eucharistic ecclesiology” based on the image of the Kingdom of God in the *eschaton* more fully reflects the Church than Afanasiev’s position of “wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, there is the Church.” This is because it considers the *structure* of the entire eucharistic community that includes the bishop and the deacons, which makes the Eucharist more complete as compared to a parish communion in which only the priest and the laity participate. Zizioulas’ ecclesiology also takes into more serious consideration the eschatological community of which the Church is an image. It also enables one to speak of a universal communion among the churches through the bishop. Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is therefore also universal in the sense of his accounting for the unity of the churches through communion in the Eucharist and through the bishops who are the heads of their eucharistic communities. Zizioulas’ communion-based ecclesiology is therefore *both eucharistic and universal at the same time*. One need not be forced to choose between either a universal or eucharistic ecclesiology in order to expound a doctrine of the Church. The Church actually has both dimensions which account for her *simultaneous* universal and eucharistic (as well as eschatological) nature. It must be stressed that what is critical for Zizioulas is the presence of the bishop who is an *organic part of the eucharistic assembly* without whom there is no valid Eucharist and thus, no valid local church. In other words, the bishop, in Zizioulas’ view, forms part of the *esse* of the local church and not just her *bene esse*, for without him, the local church cannot be in communion with the rest of the churches in order to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Both Zizioulas and Afanasiev stress the identical likeness of the Church and the Eucharist. Their ecclesiologies are based on the early church’s eucharistic experience. It might appear that we are now in a position to synthesize their ecclesiologies in order to develop a better understanding of the Church and to develop a truly Orthodox ecclesiology that takes into consideration the four marks of the Church as expressed in the Apostles’ Creed.¹⁵⁸ However, as we have already noted, Zizioulas has pointed out deficiencies in

¹⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 313.

¹⁵⁶ Revelation chapters 4 and 7.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 312-13.

¹⁵⁸ Zizioulas had identified that one of the dangers of Afanasiev’s eucharistic ecclesiology is a tendency to prioritize the local church over the universal and thus lead to a form of “congregationalism.” This is due, in Zizioulas’ opinion, to the current

Afanasiev's model of the Church which cannot be addressed using the usual ecclesiological studies and methods which have not properly synthesized Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology. Zizioulas' instead seeks to enlarge the horizons of ecclesiology to relate ecclesiology to its "philosophical and ontological implications as well as to the rest of theology."¹⁵⁹ He does not seek to develop a eucharistic ecclesiology merely from the concept or on the basis of the celebration of the sacramental act.¹⁶⁰ Instead, Zizioulas seeks to make "fundamental corrections" to the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev and his followers.¹⁶¹ How Zizioulas does this will be the subject of the next two chapters. The historical studies on the ante-Nicene Church done by Afanasiev are a complement to Zizioulas' early studies on the early church and the councils in the first three hundred years. Even if the liturgical and historical sources were the same, it was Zizioulas who reflected more systematically and widely than Afanasiev had done about eucharistic ecclesiology *in the context of ecumenism*, thus building upon the work that Afanasiev had already begun but had not completed.

Roman Catholics, especially before Vatican II, have tended to favor the "universal church" model (identifying the "catholic Church with the "universal Church")¹⁶² while Afanasiev's eucharistic model resounds with certain Protestant churches of the independent and congregational kind who think that the local Church or congregation retains priority over the universal Church. This "congregationalism" would be rejected by the present day Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches based on what Zizioulas would call "an inadmissible 'localism' in ecclesiology."¹⁶³ Clearly, there is still an impasse.

So, Zizioulas proposes a solution to this impasse by using the *structure of the Eucharist* as a guide to express simultaneously both the "localization" and the "universalization" of the mystery of the Church.¹⁶⁴ It was for the sake of pointing his readers in this direction that Zizioulas wrote his first compendium of articles that focused on the ontological category of communion and compiled them into his first major published book *Being as Communion* (1985). One can easily recognize the fundamental pre-suppositions of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology in this book where Zizioulas aims to improve on Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology

lack of a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in Orthodox ecclesiology. J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 133.

¹⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Zizioulas is guarding against making Orthodox ecclesiology merely "a sacramentalization of theology" when referring to eucharistic ecclesiology. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23.

¹⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 24.

¹⁶² An observation shared by Zizioulas who conceded that this tendency has begun to fade amongst certain groups of Roman Catholic theologians. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

¹⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

2.5. Conclusion

Afanasiev's *eucharistic ethos* is particularly important in defining the Church and her mode of unity. It demonstrates the full *catholicity* of the local church that celebrates the Eucharist.¹⁶⁵ However, by stressing the local character of the church, Afanasiev may perhaps be viewed as having neglected the importance of other church structures (canons, councils and synods) that facilitate "communion between local Churches."¹⁶⁶ His eucharistic vision is in Zizioulas' estimate, still too narrow and restricted with regard to:

- a) dealing with issues such as *truth* and *unity* in the Church,¹⁶⁷
- b) how the local church is linked to the universal church to form the *one* Church of God, and
- c) how this one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is related to the world.

Meyendorff is probably right to say that Afanasiev has also overlooked the "trinitarian and the anthropological dimensions of ecclesiology" by focusing exclusively on the "local" nature of the Church.¹⁶⁸ By rejecting the universal Church model, Afanasiev has restricted himself to defining the Church in terms of the local Church. Even if the local Church were truly catholic in the sense of being fully Christ's Body, the question still remains of how it is catholic in the sense of being Christ's Body *together with the rest of the Church*.

These apparent deficiencies in Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology are redressed in Zizioulas' trinitarian and anthropological ecclesiology. Like Afanasiev, Zizioulas emphasizes that the Church "must in all respects and above all in her being, in her ontology, be the 'Church of God' as St. Paul calls it, which means an image or sign of the Trinity."¹⁶⁹ How is this all possible? For Zizioulas, if the Church is to be of God, then we need also to answer the

¹⁶⁵ St. Ignatius of Antioch says, "Where Jesus (the Body of Christ) is, there is the Catholic Church." (*Sm.* 8.2) The Eucharist is where the members of Christ's Body gather as a local community, and as such, the local Church is fully catholic because Christ is fully present. However, there is one more condition that Afanasiev has not specified. This is the condition of the Eucharist as a gathering of all peoples in a locality, regardless of ethnicity, gender or age. Zizioulas particularly notes that a Eucharist that is restricted to the young or to members of a particular ethnic group is not really a true Eucharist.

¹⁶⁶ Synods, councils of all forms, regional and ecumenical, all possess *ecclesiological significance* but they still cannot be regarded as forms of Church. They lack the participation of all the orders of the Church. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 259.

¹⁶⁷ See J. Zizioulas, "Truth and Communion," in his *Being as Communion*, 67-122.

¹⁶⁸ J. Meyendorff in his Foreword to J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today," in *The One and the Many*, 16. Here, Zizioulas agrees with L. Cerfaux who regards the expression "Church of God" as the earliest biblical ecclesiological title. He cites from L. Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'Eglise suivant St. Paul* (Paris, 1942), 91ff. See also L. Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St. Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959). This book by Cerfaux is important for the idea expressed in page 263 whereby the unity of Christians is through the (eucharistic) body of Christ.

Christ is fully present in the local Church that celebrates the Eucharist. However, there is one more condition that Afanasiev has not specified. This is the condition of the Eucharist as a gathering of all peoples in a locality, regardless of ethnicity, gender or age. Zizioulas particularly notes that a Eucharist that is restricted to the young or to members of a particular ethnic group is not really a true Eucharist.

question: Of what kind of God is she the Church?¹⁷⁰ This leads us to consider the Trinity and its relationship to the Church. Zizioulas contends that the Church can be conceived as an *image* or *sign* of the Trinity. To mirror the Trinity, the Church needs to be understood as a *community of persons* in God. In Zizioulas' scheme, what Afanasiev lacks in his eucharistic ecclesiology is the *trinitarian concept of the person* that could be used as an ontological category together with the concept of communion to relate the very being of the Church to God and to the world through the Eucharist. This Zizioulas has done by applying these ontological concepts to the bishop, the Eucharist and to the Church. And if the Church is the "Body of Christ" and the "Temple of the Spirit", her nature will surely depend on a Christology that is conditioned fundamentally by pneumatology¹⁷¹ and, in my opinion, vice versa.¹⁷²

It is now fitting to turn in the next two chapters to discover how Zizioulas' unique concept of the person derived from the trinitarian concept of the Person according to the Cappadocian Fathers, and how, together with his *ontology of communion*, this shapes his unique eucharistic vision of God, humanity, the Church and the world in relation to God.¹⁷³ This will also shed light on the nature of the Church in relation to Christ and the Spirit.¹⁷⁴ We will also see how this has important ramifications in the controversy regarding the primacy of the church of Rome. While Afanasiev remained unconvinced there could be such a primacy in a eucharistic ecclesiology,¹⁷⁵ Zizioulas takes a different stand that allows for the possibility of the Eastern and Western churches coming into full communion again based on the primacy of the bishop of Rome.¹⁷⁶ This vision is made possible by modifying certain elements in Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology to take into account an ontology of communion in the Church that allows for the bishop of Rome who is able, as Afanasiev had earlier emphasized, to preside over the Church in love as the universal primate.¹⁷⁷ In Zizioulas' view, the

¹⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 265.

¹⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 265.

¹⁷² It will be apparent that Zizioulas does not focus too much on the conditioning of Pneumatology by Christology. As can be seen by the number of articles he has written on the Church, we can see that his interests are more directed towards ecclesiology. Since his aim is to condition the Church via communion, he naturally will gravitate towards writing about the Spirit's conditioning of the Church rather than Christ's conditioning of the Spirit. Zizioulas opines that much of the ecclesiology after Vatican II has been constructed purely out of Christological material and before the Holy Spirit is considered. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123.

¹⁷³ See J. Zizioulas, "The Eucharistic Vision of the World," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 123-32.

¹⁷⁴ See J. Zizioulas, "Christ, the Spirit and the Church," in *Being as Communion*, 123-42.

¹⁷⁵ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 108-09.

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 273. See also J. Zizioulas, "Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology," in *The One and the Many*, 274-87 and J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach," in *The One and the Many*, 262-73.

¹⁷⁷ Afanasiev maintains in his article "The Church that Presides in Love," that a doctrine of primacy derives only from a universal ecclesiology and not from a eucharistic ecclesiology. See N. Afanasiev, "The Church that Presides in Love," 72-73. Zizioulas does not think this is necessarily so. He demonstrates that it is possible to allow for primacy also in a eucharistic

achievement of this ecclesial unity will largely depend on whether the Church can be conceived of as communion and find a “proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology.”¹⁷⁸ In search of such a synthesis, we will now investigate in detail Zizioulas’ trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology.

ecclesiology by widening its base to take into account the eschatological and communion aspects of ecclesiology. Zizioulas argues that a eucharistic ecclesiology can lead to a universal primate based on an *ontology of communion* that conditions the very nature and being (not just the well-being) of the Church. This will be further discussed in chapter four.

¹⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 142.

Zizioulas' Anthropology and Trinitarian Ontology

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology and noted Zizioulas' main concerns with the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev and his followers. In this chapter, we will explore in detail Zizioulas' fundamental ontology of personhood, otherness and communion which he uses to modify Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology in order to take into account the anthropological and trinitarian dimensions of ecclesiology. The canonical unity of the Church in the bishop and in the Eucharist¹ will then be discussed in the next chapter.

It is useful to introduce a few themes that Zizioulas constantly repeats as points of reference around which his theology revolves. These include the themes of personhood, communion and otherness.² Sometimes these are referred to as *basic ontological categories*. They serve as the building blocks of Zizioulas' theological system. The theological concept of communion³ is by far the most basic for Zizioulas because the very "*nature of God is communion*."⁴ In fact, Zizioulas draws from Basil of Caesarea that communion is an ontological category.⁵ Zizioulas then links the Church to this concept of communion by remarking that the Church exists in and as communion.⁶ If the nature of God and the nature of the Church are communion, the Church of God becomes the icon of the communion of the persons of the trinitarian God who is love. With communion and love in mind, we are inevitably led to the Eucharist which is celebrated in the Church and called "Holy

¹ This is Zizioulas' central thesis in his doctoral dissertation.

² Tallon has also identified these three "more well-known" elements of Zizioulas' teaching. Tallon highlights that it is the Eucharist that is the context for these themes. See his introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, viii.

³ This concept of communion emerged as a key notion in the theological language of the Faith and Order Commission, WCC. *Koinonia* is explained by Zizioulas to be derived from faith and is decisive for understanding the Person of Christ. See J. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," in *The One and the Many*, 49-51.

⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

⁵ St. Basil, *De Sp. S.* 68. See St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 1980), 102-03.

⁶ The ecclesiastic concept of the Church as *koinonia* is stressed by Zizioulas as the key to the Church's self-understanding of her own identity. He backs this contention by noting that the identity and the structure of the Church are relational. So are authority and mission in the Church. The Church as a relational entity in time and space can thus be spoken of as a communion. See J. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," in *The One and the Many*, 52-57.

Communion” or “Love Feast.”⁷ Zizioulas’ key ecclesiological idea here is that the Eucharist, con-celebrated by *all orders* (bishop, presbyter, deacon and laity) and comprising *all ethnicities, social classes and age groups*, constitutes the Church.⁸

This chapter is divided into four sections:

- A) Zizioulas’ Ontology of Communion and Otherness – Towards Being as Communion
- B) Zizioulas’ Anthropology – Towards Personhood in Communion and Otherness
- C) Zizioulas’ Trinitarian Ontology – Towards the Father as ‘Cause’
- D) An Ontology of Love

3.2 Zizioulas’ Ontology of Communion and Otherness – Towards Being and Truth as Communion

3.2.1. Communion

Zizioulas makes extensive use of the concept of communion in theology. According to Zizioulas, this communion “derives not from sociological experience, not from ethics, but from *faith*.”⁹ As Zizioulas explains, “We are called to *koinonia* not because it is ‘good’ for us and the Church, but because we believe in a God who is in His very being *Koinonia*.”¹⁰ This is Zizioulas’ core pre-supposition in his ontology of communion: “It is communion which makes things ‘be.’”¹¹ Zizioulas states at the outset, “There is no true being without communion. Nothing exists as an ‘individual,’ conceivable in itself. Communion is an ontological category.”¹² First, Zizioulas asserts that communion itself is an *ontological category* that,¹³ because of their ontological monism, no classical Greek could accept. Then, Zizioulas argues that without the concept of communion, it is not possible to speak of the being of God.¹⁴ He argues by saying that “God is God” is akin to saying that “A” equals to “A”, a tautology and a “dead logic” when speaking of God “and consequently a denial of being which is life.”¹⁵ It would be unthinkable to speak of the ‘one God’ before speaking of

⁷ Zizioulas points to the interesting fact that in many languages, including Modern Greek, *koinonia* or communion is a synonym for the partaking of the Eucharist. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 59.

⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 51.

¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 51.

¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

the God who is ‘communion,’ that is to say, of the Holy Trinity.”¹⁶ What then is God? For Zizioulas, “God is not alone; He is *communion*.”¹⁷ More specifically, “God is Trinitarian.”¹⁸ This is God’s mode of being – the ‘how’ of His existence.

Communion is found first of all in the Trinity which is to be understood as a communion between the Persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God, as the Trinity, *is* communion. Communion is thus an ontological category when we speak of the trinitarian God. When Zizioulas says, “The being of God is a relational being”, he is not merely attributing the quality of relationality to God.¹⁹ He is emphasizing that without relationality, he cannot be the trinitarian God. He cannot exist apart from *being in relation*. His oneness or unity is, according to Zizioulas, safeguarded by the *monarchia of the Father*.²⁰ He is one in being many.²¹ In order to exist, the one requires the many from the start.²² However, the many are not simply modes of being. They are distinct persons who have a common nature but different origins.

Like many of the Orthodox theologians, Zizioulas has taken great pains to preserve the doctrine of God the Father being the *sole cause* of the trinitarian God. It is the Father who “begets” the Son and “brings forth” the Spirit.²³ In so doing, Zizioulas is confronted by many critics, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. But there is no doubt that Zizioulas stands on the same side as many Orthodox theologians who maintain that the Spirit proceeds *only* from the Father and definitely *not* from the Son. Zizioulas is concerned to preserve this *single source* of the Spirit because it is only from this single Person, God the Father, who freely wills the Spirit, that we have communion. Communion is thus *from* the *hypostasis* of the Father²⁴ through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. In this economy of the Trinity, the initiative starts with the Father.²⁵ As Basil of Caesarea put it, “... the natural goodness and natural sanctification and the royal dignity comes from the Father and passes through the only-begotten on to the Spirit.”²⁶ This economic Trinity is derived from a thoroughly trinitarian

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 166.

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 51

¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

²² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 159.

²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44.

²⁴ Zizioulas writes that in the Trinity, communion comes from a “hypostasis,” a concrete and free person, and leads to “hypostases,” concrete and free persons. This communion is an “image” of the being of God. See *Being as Communion*, 18.

²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 188.

²⁶ Basil of Caesarea, *De Spir. S.* 18.47. Quoted from J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 188.

order of being as evidenced in Basil's justification of his doxology: Glory be to the Father with the Son, and with the Holy Spirit.²⁷

If communion is an ontological category when speaking of the Trinity, Zizioulas stresses that communion is also an ontological category in ecclesiology.²⁸ He backs this up by referring to Basil. According to Zizioulas, communion is for Basil an ontological category.²⁹ Basil replaces substance with *koinoinia* in his ontology. Therefore, we can speak of God as communion and even the Church of God as communion. This ontology of communion presupposes the idea of the personhood of God. Zizioulas has strongly maintained that the nature of God the Trinity is communion,³⁰ but hastens to add that this “does not mean that the persons have ontological priority over the one substance of God, but that the one substance of God *coincides* with the communion of the three persons.”³¹ He then extends the concept of communion to the relationship between the local and the universal Church. According to Zizioulas, there is one Church just as there is one God and the expression of this one Church is the *communion* of the many local Churches. Zizioulas notes that this is how communion and oneness “coincide in ecclesiology.”³²

We conclude this section by stressing the importance of the concept of communion as an ontological category which is applied to God and to the working out of an ecclesiology of the unity of the many churches in the one Church of the trinitarian God.³³ It is this concept of communion that leads Zizioulas to conclude that there is an exact correspondence between trinitarian theology developed by the Cappadocian Fathers and Orthodox ecclesiology.³⁴ This was the great contribution of the Cappadocian Fathers, according to Zizioulas – a concept of God, “who exists as a communion of free love of unique, irreplaceable and unrepeatable identities, that is, true persons in the absolute ontological sense.”³⁵

²⁷ Basil of Caesarea, *De Spir. S.* 1.3f; 7.16; 25.58ff. This doxology replaced an earlier doxology, probably of Alexandrian origin, “Glory be to the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.” See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 187.

²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134. Zizioulas cites Basil, *De. Sp. S.* 18 (PG 32, 194C).

³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 135.

³³ This concept of communion is repeated over and over again throughout Zizioulas' works on the Trinity and the Church. See his “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 49-60 and his Introduction to *Being as Communion*, esp. 17-18.

³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168.

3.2.2. Otherness

Together with the concept of communion, the concept of otherness features prominently in Zizioulas' ontology.³⁶ Zizioulas has stated, "The theme of otherness is a "fundamental aspect of theology. Being 'other' is part of what it means to be oneself, and therefore to be at all, whether reference is made to God or to humanity or to anything that is said to exist."³⁷ Without otherness, there can be no being. This is because being is unique in relation to the other. Without otherness, there is no uniqueness and consequently no true being. By denying otherness, we deny being and existence itself. This is especially evident in the modern world where, according to Zizioulas, we live in an age of the "*fear of the other*."³⁸ For Zizioulas, the essence of sin is "fear of the other,"³⁹ which is partly a "rejection of the Other *par excellence*, our Creator, by the first man, Adam – and before him by the demonic powers that revolted against God."⁴⁰ To take it to the extreme, Hell is, according to Sartre, other people.⁴¹ Typical of western culture, individualism is one of the symptoms of this culture of regarding the other as an enemy. This mode of thinking is represented by thinkers such as Sartre, who called the other "my original sin."⁴² However, Zizioulas counters Sartre by saying that sin is "fear and rejection of the other" as experienced even in the Church.⁴³ All this started because Adam, the first man, rejected God, "the Other *par excellence*."⁴⁴ Ever since the Fall of man, this fear of the 'other' and the rejection of the 'other' has led to the *break in communion* between all beings. This is evident in the division of the entire cosmos on account of the rejection of the 'other,' "turning difference into division" according to Zizioulas.⁴⁵ It is therefore Christ's saving work to bring all things back into communion in God.

Zizioulas also contends,

Otherness is not secondary to unity; it is primary and constitutive of the very idea of being. Respect for otherness is a matter not of ethics but of ontology: if otherness

³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1-12. See also J. Zizioulas, "On Being Other: Towards an Ontology of Otherness" in *Communion and Otherness*, 13-98. This is where Zizioulas expounds his ontology of otherness.

³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 13. This is the opening statement in J. Zizioulas, "On Being Other: Towards an Ontology of Otherness," in *Communion and Otherness*, 13- 98. In this chapter, Zizioulas argues that otherness is *constitutive* of the Being of God and of the being of man. He uses Maximus' theological anthropology to defend an ontology where otherness and communion coincide. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23-26.

³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1. Italics original.

³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1-2.

⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1. Italics original.

⁴¹ J-P. Sartre, *No Exit*. T. S. Eliot has rightly refuted Sartre in *The Cocktail Party* that hell is *not* other people but it is oneself. See K. Ware, "'In the Image and Likeness': The Uniqueness of the Human Person," in *Personhood: Orthodox Christianity and the Connection Between Body, Mind and Soul*, ed. J. T. Chirban (London: Bergin & Garvey, 1996), 5.

⁴² J. P. Sartre, *L'être at le néant*, 1949, 251. This is from Sartre's greatest work – *Being and Nothingness*.

⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1.

⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2-3.

disappears, beings cease to be. In Christian theology there is simply no room for ontological totalitarianism. All communion must involve otherness as a primary and constitutive ingredient. It is this that makes freedom part of the notion of being. Freedom is not simply ‘freedom of will’; it is the freedom to be other in an absolute ontological sense.⁴⁶

Here, we note that for Zizioulas, otherness and communion co-exist in free beings, the prime example is the Trinity. By studying the Trinity, we discover that “otherness is *constitutive* of unity and not consequent upon it. God is not first one and then three, but simultaneously one and three.”⁴⁷ Otherness is absolute – God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are absolutely different (*diaphora*). However, they are not divided, but united in one God who is “simultaneously one and three”⁴⁸ and whose unity is safeguarded “by the *monarchia* of the Father.”⁴⁹ This unity is expressed through “the unbreakable *koinonia* that exists between the persons, which means that otherness is not a threat to unity but a *conditio sine qua non* of it.”⁵⁰ Otherness therefore does not lead to division but to unity in the Holy Trinity.

This applies also to the mystery of being a person where Zizioulas opines otherness and communion coincide.⁵¹ He explains,

Truth as communion does not lead to the dissolving of the diversity of beings into one vast ocean of being, but to the affirmation of otherness in and through love. The difference between this truth and that of “nature in itself” lies in the following: while the latter is subject to fragmentation, individualization, conceptualization, comprehension, etc., the person is not. So, in the context of personhood *otherness* is incompatible with *division*.⁵²

Otherness means difference (*diaphora*) which is good, but not necessarily division (*diairesis*) which “is a perversion of *diaphora*, and is bad.”⁵³ Zizioulas considers Maximus’ distinction between ‘otherness’ and ‘division,’ and come to the conclusion that difference need not necessarily lead to division.⁵⁴ So, otherness as a consequence of difference is also not necessarily divisive but actually leads to communion and unity, especially in the Eucharist which not only “affirms and sanctifies communion; it also sanctifies otherness.”⁵⁵ For Zizioulas, the Eucharist is the place where “difference ceases to be divisive and becomes

⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5. Italics original.

⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 106.

⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 106-07. Italics original. Maximus develops the difference between otherness and division based on Chalcedonian Christology. See J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 107, n. 102.

⁵³ St. Maximus, *Ep. 12* (PG 91, 469AB). See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

good. *Diaphora* does not lead to *diairesis*, and unity and communion does not destroy but rather affirms diversity and otherness in the Eucharist.”⁵⁶

In addition, otherness is not moral or psychological but ontological. We cannot tell *what* each person is, but only *who* he is. “The other” becomes an ontological part of one’s own identity.⁵⁷ “Communion must involve otherness as a primary and constitutive ingredient. It is this that makes *freedom* part of the notion of being.”⁵⁸ Zizioulas opines, “By freely granting being to something naturally other than himself, God sanctified otherness and raised it to full ontological status.” In other words, for something to be, it has to freely be an “other.”⁵⁹ As Zizioulas writes, “If otherness disappears, beings simply cease to be.”⁶⁰

It is this ‘other’ that calls one to love. Love originates from the ‘other’ and causes one to come into being through the *ek-stasis* of the love of the ‘other.’ One’s being is established by this love. In the Patristic Fathers, it is the love of God, the ‘Other’ *par excellence*, that established the identity of a person, calling him into being and making him a unique being by virtue of his being loved by God. This love is the ecstatic love of God that moves him freely to embrace and contain ‘the other’ of all creation. This love has its source in the person of God the Father (1 John 3.1) who grants freedom to being and is the ‘cause’ of all being.⁶¹

In conclusion, Zizioulas contends that otherness is an important concept in theology because it is *constitutive* of the unity of God in the doctrine of the Trinity.⁶² This unity is in Zizioulas’ opinion, safeguarded not by what is commonly espoused by Western theologians, “the unity of substance” but by “the *monarchia* of the Father” who is the sole cause and origin both of the Son and of the Spirit who are freely and uniquely generated.⁶³ The Father stands in mutual relations with the Son and the Spirit without whom God the Father does not exist. By making otherness constitutive of being, Zizioulas has made the uniqueness of a person fundamentally depend also upon the ‘other.’ Our very identity is derived from the “other.” Personhood is constituted by communion and otherness, the two basic ingredients of Zizioulas’ *ontology of personhood*.

⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3, 7-8.

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 6.

⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 19.

⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 121.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

⁶³ This is a controversial issue: Zizioulas’ insistence on the *monarchia* of the Father. He insists upon this throughout his writings See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40-41 and *Communion and Otherness*, 131-32. I will deal with how Zizioulas defends this thesis in chapter six and make an evaluation in chapter seven. Meanwhile, let us assume it is true first to see how it fits into Zizioulas’ overall scheme.

3.2.3. Truth as Communion

Besides an ontology of personhood, Zizioulas uncovers an *ontology of truth* through his exploration of *how* the early Church Fathers arrived at the truth. Zizioulas' sole starting point for the truth is Jesus Christ who proclaimed himself to be the truth (John 14.6) and left Pilate's question on the nature of truth unanswered (John 18.38).⁶⁴ Thus, for Zizioulas, truth is first and foremost *Christological*.⁶⁵ Zizioulas goes further to consider this question:

*How, in other words, can truth be considered simultaneously from the point of view of the "nature" of being (Greek preoccupation) from the view of the goal or end of history (preoccupation of the Jews), and from the viewpoint of Christ, who is both a historical person and the permanent ground (the logos) of being (the Christian claim) – and all while preserving God's "otherness" in relation to creation?*⁶⁶

With the aid of Greek patristic thought, Zizioulas works out an answer using the idea of "communion" which Zizioulas believes "has been the decisive tool in the hands of the Greek Fathers to allow them to answer this question and that it continues to be the key to our own answer to the problem today."⁶⁷ For Zizioulas and the Greek Fathers, truth is identified with communion when we perceive "being is *constituted* as communion."⁶⁸

What is unique about Zizioulas' conception of the truth is this: Truth is the result of what Zizioulas calls a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in the conception of the Church as the "Pillar of Truth" (1 Tim. 3.15).⁶⁹ For Zizioulas, truth is neither logical nor *propositional* truth that is expressed or heard. It is "something which *is*, i.e. an ontological truth: the community itself becoming the truth."⁷⁰ Zizioulas continues, "Yet this truth is not the product of a sociological or group experience; it comes clearly from another world, and as such is not produced by ourselves."⁷¹ This truth does not come to us simply as the result of *historical* transmission. Truth comes from the Holy Spirit who is called "the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 14.17, 15.26, 16.13).⁷² Zizioulas writes, "Truth is conditioned epicleitically and cannot be objectified and transmitted in isolation from the community either through individuals or systems of ideas."⁷³ Truth is to be found in a Spirit-filled eschatological

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67.

⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67.

⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 71-72. Italics original.

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 72.

⁶⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101. Italics original.

⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 85.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 115. Italics original.

⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 115. It is for this very reason that Pontius Pilate could not comprehend the truth that confronted him in the face of Christ.

⁷² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimension," in *The One and the Many*, 86.

community that receives the truth and appropriates it for itself. It is the community that re-receives tradition and therefore is the bearer and pillar of truth.⁷⁴ In particular, Zizioulas notes that the bishop was from the earliest days associated with the *veritas* for Irenaeus speaks of bishops possessing a certain *charisma veritatis* received, according to Zizioulas, “only within the eucharistic community, and as a Pentecost-event.”⁷⁵ Zizioulas highlights this important fact shows that “the apostolic succession has to pass to the community through communion. *The bishop in his function is the apostles’ successor inasmuch as he is the image of Christ within the community... Similarly, the councils (involving the bishops) were expressions of the truth simply because the bishops were the heads of their communities.*”⁷⁶ This close connection between truth and the bishop and his eucharistic community is key in Zizioulas’ ontological and eucharistic conception of truth which he expounds from the early Church Fathers. For them, truth lay within the Church, as Gregory the Great remarked, “only from the catholic church does truth shine forth.”⁷⁷

Zizioulas also draws many of his ideas on communion, truth and life from Ignatius of Antioch. He notes that from the writings of Ignatius, “it is made clear that the idea of truth is not primarily a matter of epistemology – in the strict sense of the word – but is connected with what we might call *life*... For Ignatius, life signifies not only *praxis* but *being for ever*: i.e. that which does not die. Here we have the first profound identification of being with life.”⁷⁸ It is now easier to see why the Greek Fathers identified truth with communion.⁷⁹ As Zizioulas explains,

Christ is the truth not because he is an epistemological principle which explains the universe, but because he is life and the universe of beings finds its meaning in its incorruptible existence in Christ, who takes up into Himself (*anakephalaiosis*) the whole of creation and history. Being is inconceivable outside of life, and because of this the ontological nature of truth resides in the idea of life.⁸⁰

To be is to have life and thus, to be in communion. This is only possible because, as Zizioulas maintains, “being is *constituted* as communion.”⁸¹ Only thus can truth and communion be mutually identified. According to Zizioulas, “This identification forms theology’s hardest problem because after the fall, man approached the truth from the position that “being is

⁷⁴ According to St. Paul, the Church is the bearer and pillar of truth. See 1 Tim. 3.15.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 116.

⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 116. Italics original.

⁷⁷ Gregory, *Mor.* 35.8.13 (PL 76:756-57). Cited in J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 334.

⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 78-80. Zizioulas cites Ignatius’ letters to *Magesium* 1, 2; *Eph.* 3.2, 7.2, 20.2; *Sm.* 4.1.

⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101.

⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 80.

⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101. Italics original.

constituted *before* communion.”⁸² This results in a rupture between truth and communion because being is no longer dependent on communion but has precedence over communion. Consequently, the truth of being has priority over the truth of communion. Viewed from the point of ontology, Zizioulas describes the fall as consisting in humanity’s “*refusal to make being dependent on communion*, in a rupture between truth and communion.”⁸³ After all, humanity was created in communion with God. When this break in communion occurs, humanity experiences the fall as separation from God and as a result, humanity loses its very identity and being because it is no longer constituted by communion with God. One of the casualties of this break in communion is truth. Humanity no longer approaches truth from the angle of communion with God. Otherness no longer constitutes being in communion. As a result, difference becomes division and individualization in humanity and ultimately, death and decomposition. This is the real tragedy of the fall, according to Zizioulas. The restoration of the identification of truth with communion as worked out by the Greek Fathers is what is required in reversing the effects of the fall.⁸⁴ If humanity is to regain the eternal being to which it is called, the relation between truth and communion must be restored. The way to do it is to view truth in Christ as the Christ-truth. Truth is first and foremost Christological as Christ is the truth.⁸⁵ Zizioulas asks, “How should one understand Christ to be the truth?”⁸⁶ Firstly, Zizioulas reminds us, “In the Bible Christ becomes a historical person only *in the Spirit* (Matt. 1.18-20; Luke 1.35) which means that Christology’s very foundations are laid pneumatologically.”⁸⁷ Secondly, Zizioulas explains that the mystery of Christology is such that “the Christ-event is not an event defined in itself – it cannot be defined in itself for a single instant even theoretically – but is *an integral part of the economy of the Holy Trinity*.”⁸⁸ When we speak of Christ, we speak of the Father and the Holy Spirit *simultaneously* for the Incarnation “is formed by the work of the Spirit, and is nothing else than the expression and realization of the will of the Father.”⁸⁹ Zizioulas explains further that

The mystery of the Church has its birth in the entire economy of the Trinity and in a pneumatologically constituted Christology. The Spirit as “power” or “giver of life” opens up our existence to become relational, so that he may at the same time be “communion” (*koinonia*), cf. II Cor. 13:13). For this reason the mystery of the Church is essentially

⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101. Italics original.

⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 102. Italics original.

⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 92 and 101.

⁸⁵ John 14.6.

⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67.

⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111. Italics original.

⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111. Italics original.

⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111-12.

none other than that of the “One” who is simultaneously “many” – not “One” who exists first of all as “One” and *then* as “many, but “One” and “many” at the same time.⁹⁰

Zizioulas concludes, “In the context of a Christology constructed in this pneumatological manner, truth and communion once more become identical.”⁹¹ Truth itself “is inevitably and constantly realized in the Spirit, i.e. in a pentecostal event.”⁹² The outpouring of the Holy Spirit ushers in the last days into history and “this takes place in Christ viewed both historically and anthropologically, as a here-and-now reality.”⁹³

The objectivization and individualization of historical existence which implies distance, decay and death is transformed into existence in communion, and hence eternal life for mankind and all creation. In a like manner, the individualization of human existence which results in division and separation is now transformed into existence in communion where the otherness of persons (“on each of them separately,” Acts 2:3) is identical with communion within a body.⁹⁴

Christ’s existence in the Spirit together with the Father is made historical and personal through the same movement of the Holy Spirit. Zizioulas declares that

The truth seen as Christ and the truth seen as the Holy Spirit are identical, and therefore the Spirit himself is called “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). Only the mode of the operation of truth differs, a Christ-mode and a Spirit-mode, such that the one divine love may accommodate itself (the economy) to our needs and limitations.⁹⁵

Zizioulas proceeds to argue that

Christ’s existence is applied to our historical existence not *in abstracto* or individualistically, but in and through *a community*. This community is formed from out of ordinary existence, through a radical conversion from individualism to personhood in baptism. As death and resurrection in Christ, baptism signifies the decisive passing of our experience from the “truth” of individualized being into the truth of personal being. The resurrectional aspect of baptism is therefore nothing other than *incorporation into the community*. The existential truth arising from baptism is simply the truth of personhood, the truth of communion.⁹⁶

This requires a new birth of baptism as a “birth in the Spirit” so that “each baptized person can himself become ‘Christ,’ his existence being one of communion and hence of true life.”⁹⁷

This application of Christ’s existence to humanity amounts to the “realization of the

⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112. Italics original. This is discussed in detail in Zizioulas’ “The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 75-90. This is Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of “the one and the many.”

⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112-13.

⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113. Italics original.

⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113.

community of the Church”⁹⁸ born as the Body of Christ and which lives out the same communion found in Christ’s historical existence.⁹⁹ Christ’s

“True life” is identical with the eternal life of the Triune God; the community itself thus becomes the “pillar of truth” in an existential sense. All this, having its *aletheia* in the *eschata*, is given to it sacramentally as an “eikon,” so that it may realize in itself the truth of Christ in the form of faith, hope and love, as a foretaste of eternal life, making it aspire towards the configuration of the world within this communion which the Church herself experiences.¹⁰⁰

Zizioulas contends that this experience of truth in the Church’s existence is realized most fully in the Eucharist. He writes,

The eucharistic community is the Body of Christ *par excellence* simply because it incarnates and realizes our communion within the very life and communion of the Trinity, in a way that preserves the eschatological character of truth while making it an integral part of history. So if we wish to see how Christ the truth is united to the Church we can only begin by considering the holy eucharist.¹⁰¹

Here, we encounter Zizioulas’ eucharistic conception of truth which “shows how truth becomes *freedom* (John 8:32).”¹⁰² The freedom given by the Christ-truth to creation is, according to Zizioulas, “precisely this freedom from division and individualization, creating the possibility of otherness within communion.”¹⁰³ This freedom is to be found within the Church. It is a new concept of freedom that according to Zizioulas is

Determined not by choice but by a movement of a constant affirmation, a continual ‘Amen’. The people of God gathered together in the eucharist realize their freedom under the form of affirmation alone: it is not the ‘yes’ and the ‘no’ together which God offers in Christ, but only the ‘yes,’ which equates to the eucharistic ‘Amen’ (II Cor. 1:19-20). So it is clear that the eucharist contains an idea of truth which is not of this world, and which seems unrealistic and inapplicable to life.¹⁰⁴

This eucharistic conception of the truth, the foundation of which is built on freedom within the Church, has cosmic dimensions because “the Christ of the eucharist is revealed as the life and recapitulation of all creation”¹⁰⁵ according to Zizioulas. Humanity’s responsibility is thus “to make a eucharistic reality out of nature, i.e. to make nature, too, capable of communion.”¹⁰⁶ If this is done, Zizioulas writes, “then truth takes up its meaning for the whole cosmos, Christ becomes a cosmic Christ, and the world as a whole dwells in truth,

⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113.

⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113.

¹⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 114.

¹⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 114. Italics original.

¹⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 120.

¹⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 121.

¹⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 121-22.

¹⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 119.

¹⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 119.

which is none other than communion with its Creator. Truth thereby becomes the life of all that *is*.”¹⁰⁷

In summary, truth as communion affirms otherness “in and through love.”¹⁰⁸ Truth cannot exist apart from communion in God and apart from the Church. This is Zizioulas’ *eucharistic* conception of truth that is identified with communion when “being is *constituted* as communion.”¹⁰⁹

3.3. Zizioulas’ Anthropology – Personhood in Communion and Otherness¹¹⁰

3.3.1. Introduction – Emergence of an Ontology of the Person

The person is a most necessary but highly difficult concept in anthropology and theology. As noted by Nellas, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware found that it was very difficult to render the Greek terms relating to the human person into English when he was translating the *Philokalia*. This is because the modern understanding of the person is significantly different from that of the Patristic theologians and other Christian writers of the past. This led Ware to realize how “delicate is the question of the human person, and how central to all theology.”¹¹¹

Contrary to modern day thinking where the concept of the person has been detached from theology and instead has been united to the idea of an autonomous morality or a purely humanistic existential philosophy, Zizioulas asserts that “the concept of the person is indissolubly bound up with theology.”¹¹² In fact, the person as a concept and as a living reality is, according to Zizioulas, “purely the product of patristic thought.”¹¹³ This is a bold claim that makes theology the defining condition and key source for understanding the concept of person. How is this so?

¹⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 119. Italics original.

¹⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 106.

¹⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 92; 101; 120-21. This is the central thesis of “Truth and Communion,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67-122.

¹¹⁰ Anthropology usually begins with the study of man. However, Zizioulas’ anthropology is clearly a Christian one that begins with the study of God. See J. Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 163-64. It is a theological anthropology. See J. Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation?,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 135-37. This runs through to his concept of personhood. Zizioulas’ concept of personhood is derived from the study of the trinitarian God which is then applied to human personhood. In some respects, it is an orthodox anthropology that begins with the fundamental concept of the “image” and progresses on to themes such as “likeness,” “kinship,” “grace,” “adoption” and “deification.” See P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 22.

¹¹¹ P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 13-14.

¹¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 27.

¹¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 27.

We begin by looking at the Greek term for person – *prosopon*. According to Zizioulas, this is a relational term in Greek thought.¹¹⁴ In ancient Greek usage, it was a term to denote an actor’s mask that was used in the theatre.¹¹⁵ In the ancient Greek world, “for someone to be a person means that he has something added to his being.”¹¹⁶ The second term that needs to be defined is *hypostasis*. This term meant nature or substance in ancient Greek thought.¹¹⁷ Because the Greek term *prosopon* meant a mask, this term for person meant that *prosopon* did not in itself have any ontological content. In ancient Greek thought, a *prosopon* was something that did not reflect true *hypostasis*.

Zizioulas contends that the Cappadocian Fathers associated *prosopon* with *hypostasis* to give *prosopon* ontological content and change the meaning of *hypostasis* from its original meaning of nature to that of person.¹¹⁸ The term *hypostasis* now meant a *relational* person. This “identification of the ‘*hypostasis*’ with the ‘person’” was a “revolution in Greek philosophy”, according to Zizioulas.¹¹⁹ For the first time in history, Zizioulas claims, the Cappadocian Fathers said that firstly, a *prosopon* is neither secondary to nor an adjunct to being, but its *hypostasis*.¹²⁰ Secondly, they said that a *hypostasis* is relational in its very nature. Furthermore, Zizioulas claims, the person is “the *ultimate* ontological category we can apply to God.”¹²¹ This is because the person “becomes the being itself” and most significantly, the person is simultaneously “the *constitutive element* (the ‘principle’ or ‘cause’) of beings.”¹²² Substance is not ontologically prior to person but its real existence is to be found in the person. Against Modalism, the Cappadocian Fathers made *hypostases* identical with *prosopa* and dissociated *hypostasis* from *ousia*.¹²³ According to Zizioulas, the Cappadocian Fathers thus developed an anthropology of true and full personhood.¹²⁴

¹¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 176.

¹¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 31-32. *Prosopon* originally referred to the part of the head that is below the cranium. An etymological analysis of the word yields the part defined by the eyes. The word can also be broken up into *pros-opon* to mean towards a face.

¹¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 33.

¹¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 33.

¹¹⁸ Zizioulas contends that St. Athanasius was clear that *hypostasis* did not differ from *ousia*. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 158.

¹¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 36. This is elaborated in his papers “The Trinity and Personhood: Appreciating the Cappadocian Contribution,” and “Pneumatology and the Importance of the Person: A Commentary on the Second Ecumenical Council,” in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 155-70; 178-205.

¹²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39 and *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

¹²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

¹²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 158.

¹²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168.

Zizioulas contends that we can now apply this concept of personhood to trace the source of all beings to a person, God the Father.¹²⁵ God as the *hypostasis* of the Father “makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God.”¹²⁶ The person of the Father is also the *cause* of communion.¹²⁷ This cause is outside of time and non-substantial. God owes his existence to the *Father* whom the Bible and the Greek Patristic Fathers identified with God, according to Zizioulas.¹²⁸ The *ultimate ontological category* in theology is not substance but the *person* – “the *hypostasis* of the Father *alone*.”¹²⁹ The person is the *source* of divine existence. This source is complemented by the notion of *aitia*. The *aitia* of God’s being is the *Father*.¹³⁰

Zizioulas contends that Augustine and “Western” theologians have got it wrong when they say that the unity of God is safeguarded by the unity of *substance*.¹³¹ He argues that the unity of God is expressed instead through the “unbreakable *koinonia*” that exists between the three persons. God as person – the *hypostasis* of the Father – makes the one divine substance to be that which it is.¹³² A substance does not exist on its own, without a mode of existence, a *hypostasis*. “The one divine substance is consequently the being of God only because it has these three modes of existence, which it owes not to the substance but to the person, the Father.”¹³³ Zizioulas strongly maintains that it is not the one divine substance that makes God who he is. Rather, God is the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit who constitute God together in communion and in otherness.

3.3.2. – Humanity created in the image and the likeness of God¹³⁴

Although it is true that Zizioulas’ interest is mainly in theology – the study of God, yet because Zizioulas believes that the being of the world, the being of humanity and even the being of the Church are deeply bound to the being of God,¹³⁵ we will first attempt to sketch

¹²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17-18.

¹²⁶ This crucial point is the most controversial aspect of Zizioulas theology -- the person of God the Father is the *cause* of all beings including the persons of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Zizioulas has vigorously defended this thesis in “The Father as Cause: Personhood Generating Otherness,” in his *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54. I will deal with this criticism of Zizioulas in chapter six.

¹²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

¹²⁸ Zizioulas also claims that K. Rahner has also identified God with the Father in his book *The Trinity*, 1970, 58f.

¹²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 196. Italics original.

¹³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

¹³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5. See also St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 1.4.7 and also S. Bulgakov, *The Comforter* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 41.

¹³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41.

¹³³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41.

¹³⁴ Critics of Zizioulas’ anthropology include Elizabeth Lee (2010), from a feminist approach.

¹³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

Zizioulas' study of the being of humanity in relation to God.¹³⁶ Here we will consider Zizioulas' key questions (in relation to creation) of What? Who? How? – What is humanity? Who is humanity? How is humanity? As we shall see, the answers to these searching questions are not obvious.¹³⁷ In fact, Zizioulas goes so far as to say that humanity has difficulty in defining even itself.¹³⁸ Seeking to overcome this difficulty, Zizioulas attempts to approach the being of man through the concept of personhood. In his words, “There is no higher and fuller anthropology than this anthropology of true and full personhood.” This is a key statement of Zizioulas' anthropology – an anthropology of personhood.¹³⁹ In this section, we will see how this is defined in relation to the biblical concept of the “image of God.”

Zizioulas favors an approach to man as an *indefinable* being who can only be understood in *relation* to “extra-human” realities.¹⁴⁰ He argues that personhood “is the mode in which nature exists in its ecstatic movement of communion in which it is hypostasized in its catholicity” and this “is what has been realized in Christ as the man *par excellence* through the hypostatic union.”¹⁴¹ Zizioulas opines that every man can attain to this personhood and so “may *become Christ* (according to the Fathers)¹⁴² or ‘put on Christ’ (according to St. Paul).”¹⁴³ This is the highest form of capacity for man – to be the *imago Dei*. The word *Dei* refers to the trinitarian God with whom humanity can have communion.¹⁴⁴ Zizioulas calls humanity the *imago Trinitatis* and makes clear that this is possible because of humanity's

¹³⁶ Some have criticized Zizioulas' attempt to connect anthropology with trinitarian theology deeming it to be philosophical “personalism” that also smacks of “existentialism.” See I. Panagopoulos, “Ontology or Theology of the Person?,” (*Synaxis*, 13-14), and S. Agouridis, “Can the Persons of the Holy Trinity provide the Basis for Personalistic Views of Man?,” (*Synaxis*, 33), cited in J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 17, 19-20. Zizioulas counters these criticisms with an article “The Being of God and the Being of Man: An Essay in Theological Dialogue,” in J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 17-40. Here Zizioulas dialogues with critics of his controversial view that anthropology is deeply connected to trinitarian theology and that the meaning of the person can be understood in the light of the dogma of the Holy Trinity. See J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 17. I shall deal more with this important defence against a one-sided criticism of Zizioulas in chapter six.

¹³⁷ Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia has noted in a Foreword to P. Nellas' *Deification in Christ*, (page 9) that even if the Greeks agreed that the greatest knowledge was self-knowledge (as Socrates had prescribed), yet this very knowledge is hard to attain. The answers to simple questions like “Who am I?” and “What is my true self?” are far from obvious.

¹³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 206.

¹³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168.

¹⁴⁰ In “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity,” Zizioulas explores two anthropological approaches to the problem of human capacity and human incapacity as they are reflected in the theological discussions on the relation between God and man. It is a profound Christian view of man in relation to God Christologically and Pneumatologically, at the same time taking into consideration the Christian concept of the Fall and the doctrines of sin and redemption. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 206-07.

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245.

¹⁴² For example, St. Ignatius of Antioch pleads with the Romans to let him attain unto Jesus Christ. See St. Ignatius, *Letter to Romans* 5.

¹⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245. Italics original. See also Gal. 3.27. It is important to note here that every baptised Christian becomes Christ in the sense of *sharing in His divine nature*. The baptised Christians do not become Christ in the sense of “*isochristoi*.”

¹⁴⁴ In communion with God, humanity is capable of everything, according to Zizioulas. See Mark 9.23 and Phil. 4.13. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 249.

ability to be a person.¹⁴⁵ This personhood is characterized by freedom and communion.¹⁴⁶ It demands a “new birth” from on high – a baptism. This is realized only in the Church, according to Zizioulas. He writes,

But patristic theology insisted from its origins on something very significant: man can approach God only through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiology which uses the notion of the “image of God” cannot be founded simply on triadology. The fact that man in the Church is the “image of God” is due to the *economy* of the Holy Trinity, that is, the work of Christ and the Spirit in *history*. This economy is the *basis* of ecclesiology, without being the *goal* of it. The Church is built by the historical work of the divine economy but leads finally to the vision of God “as He is,” to the vision of the Triune God in his eternal existence.¹⁴⁷

It is clear that Zizioulas ties the being of humanity closely to the Church in which humanity can become the image of God through the work of God. *Personhood can never be fully realized without the Church*, the place where humanity becomes a person and lives as a person *freely* in communion with God and with other persons.

In the Patristic tradition, the link between divine Persons and humanity is found in the key phrase “in the image and likeness of God” with which man was created according to the Bible.¹⁴⁸ Within this same tradition, Zizioulas begins his study of humanity from the Bible and from God’s declaration, “Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness.”¹⁴⁹ As we shall see, this is Zizioulas’ foundational theological presupposition – *the human being, as a member of the Church, becomes an icon of the trinitarian God*.¹⁵⁰

He exists as God Himself exists, he takes on God’s “way of being.” This way of being is not a moral attainment, something that man *accomplishes*, It is a way of *relationship* with the world, with other people and with God, an event of *communion*, and that is why it cannot be realized as the achievement of an *individual*, but only as an *ecclesial* fact.¹⁵¹

A further point about man being in the image of God is that this “is to be understood relationally rather than in terms of the possession of fixed characteristics such as reason or will.”¹⁵² *The image is clearly a relational term* because it is the “image of” another being. This for Zizioulas is the most important point about humanity being an *icon of the Trinity*. Humanity is created in the image of the God who, Zizioulas has argued, “exists as a

¹⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 249.

¹⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18-19.

¹⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 19. Italics original.

¹⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 33.

¹⁴⁹ Gen. 1.26. J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 33.

¹⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

¹⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15. Italics original.

¹⁵² C. Gunton, *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity: The 1992 Bampton Lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.

communion of free love of unique, irreplaceable and unrepeatable identities, that is, true persons in the absolute ontological sense.”¹⁵³

More specifically, Zizioulas adopts as the Fathers do, the teachings of St. Paul as a starting point and core of his theology of man as the “image” of God. For St. Paul, the “image of God” is none other than Christ.¹⁵⁴ This is the Christology of St. Paul. So, it is in Christ that we find that man is what Nellas calls, an “image of the image,” the image of the archetype – Christ.¹⁵⁵ As is written in the first chapter of St. Paul’s letter to the Colossians, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... All things were created through Him and for Him.”¹⁵⁶ Humanity was made in the image of God. Humanity, for the Fathers, is the ‘image of God,’ not by nature because he is created and has a beginning and an end. Man cannot overcome in himself the limitations of time and space. Nevertheless, he is called, as Zizioulas writes, “to exist in the way God exists”¹⁵⁷ and to take on God’s “way of being.”¹⁵⁸ This means that in order to know humanity, we first need to know the ‘how’ of God – how does God exist? Thereafter, we can determine *how* humanity is created in the image of God. Zizioulas highlights that

The ‘image of God’ in man has precisely to do with this *how*, not with the *what* man is; it relates not to nature – man can never become God by nature – but to personhood. This means that man is free to affect the *how* of his existence either in the direction of the way (the *how*) God is, or in the direction of *what* his, that is, man’s, nature is. Living according to nature (*kata physin*) would thus amount to individualism, mortality, and so on, since man is not immortal *kata physin*. Living, on the other hand, according to the image of God means living in the way God exists, that is, as an image of God’s personhood, and this would amount to ‘becoming God’ This is what the *theosis* of man means in the thinking of the Greek Fathers.¹⁵⁹

So, for Zizioulas, the idea of the *theosis* of humanity is found in the thinking of the Greek Fathers, especially in the Cappadocian Fathers who developed a concept of God as a *communion* of free love in relation to whom man was made an image.¹⁶⁰ To be saved from death, man is to be *deified through communion* with the un-created.¹⁶¹ This is the work of the

¹⁵³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168. Here, Zizioulas gives credit to the Cappadocian Fathers for developing and bequeathing to us this trinitarian concept of God, of whom humanity is an image.

¹⁵⁴ O. Cullman, *Die Christologie des Neuen Testament* (Tubingen, 1958), 152.

¹⁵⁵ P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 23-24.

¹⁵⁶ Colossians 1.15-17.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 165.

¹⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

¹⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 165-66. Italics original.

¹⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 166.

¹⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 204.

Holy Spirit who is the Lord and the giver of life. *Pneumatology is one of the key features of Zizioulas' anthropology.* It is the Spirit who gives life to man, making him survive ontologically and eternally in communion with God as a pneumatological man just as Christ is the pneumatological man. Humanity is defined pneumatologically in relation to and in communion with God.

3.3.3. The 'What' and 'How' of Humanity¹⁶²

What is humanity and how is he, meaning how does humanity exist? *From a Christian perspective* adopted by Zizioulas, these are indeed difficult questions especially after the fall when sin (as idolatry) made it difficult for man to define himself introspectively in relation to God.¹⁶³ To recapitulate Zizioulas' Christian concept of man: A human being is an "image of God" existing as God Himself exists and taking on God's "way of being" so to speak.¹⁶⁴ Being is neither moral attainment nor physical achievement. According to Zizioulas, it is "a way of relationship with the world, with other people and with God, an event of communion."¹⁶⁵

How is this possible? The key is to return to the biblical narrative in the Old Testament where it is written that God made the first man out of some soil. When the Spirit of God entered him, the man became a living soul.¹⁶⁶ Yet after the Fall when God proclaimed that man shall return to the earth from which he was made because God's Spirit will no longer contend with him, *the problem of death entered the world.*¹⁶⁷ As the Scripture says, "Because of one man's sin, death entered the world" and "for as in Adam all die."¹⁶⁸ Death became the main enemy of the human race, a perpetual problem that needs a final solution for each human being brought into the world.¹⁶⁹ Zizioulas explains that death exists because

¹⁶² J. Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 165-69. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 42. Here, Zizioulas is more interested in the 'how' of humanity than the 'what' of humanity. Zizioulas extends this to ontology which consists of the twofold question "in asking *what* something is and also *how* it exists." In Zizioulas' terms, "the *what* question refers to the substance (*ousia* or *physis*), while the *how* question applies to the way something *relates*." See J. Zizioulas "Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought," in *The Trinity and an Entangled World. Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, ed. J. Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 149. Here, Zizioulas cites Basil, *Contra Eunomium* 1, 14-15 and Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theol. Or.* 3, 16 in support of his contention.

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 206-07.

¹⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 165.

¹⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

¹⁶⁶ Gen. 2.7.

¹⁶⁷ Gen. 3.19.

¹⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 15.22.

¹⁶⁹ Zizioulas states emphatically that death is a real problem for man. It shows us how important Christ is to man. Zizioulas writes that "if Christ saves us from anything, it is from death." He asserts that this was also St. Athanasius' stand in his *De Incarnatione*. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 269, esp. n. 22.

“communion and otherness cannot coincide in creation.”¹⁷⁰ The entire world is divided because of difference. Parts of the world are also different because of division. “Different beings become distant beings: because difference becomes division, distinction becomes distance.”¹⁷¹ Distance leads to separation and ultimately, death and annihilation. Therefore, the only way for a being to survive is to be in communion with what has ‘caused’ its being. In other words, man can only survive eternally as a being in communion with God. The fall has ruptured that communion and made human beings individuals apart from communion with God. Salvation therefore involves the restoration of this communion. In the words of Zizioulas, “To the question: ‘What is humanity?’, [the Divine Liturgy] responds by showing Christ as the human *par excellence*, that is to say as the human united to God, *deified*... [In Christ] humanity, through Holy Communion, becomes what it truly is: catholic humanity.”¹⁷²

But how do human beings actually exist in this world? According to Zizioulas, humanity can be conceived in terms of two basic modes of existence, a *biological hypostasis* by birth and an *ecclesial hypostasis* by baptism. Zizioulas contends that the problem about the biological hypostasis is that it suffers from two “passions” that prevent it from becoming a true person. The first passion is *ontological necessity*. The other passion is *individualism*.¹⁷³ These naturally lead to division and hence death.¹⁷⁴ Man as a biological hypostasis is thus essentially a “tragic figure.”¹⁷⁵ Zizioulas’ solution is that he needs a *new birth*, which leads us to ecclesiology.¹⁷⁶ In the Church, the hypostasis of ecclesial existence is constituted by the new birth of man through baptism.¹⁷⁷ Baptism leads to a new mode of existence through a regeneration of the old biological self into a new “hypostasis.”¹⁷⁸ This involves being “born again” of the Spirit and not having to be bound by ontological necessity and suffer from createdness.¹⁷⁹ This is what patristic Christology strives to proclaim.¹⁸⁰ How is man’s

¹⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

¹⁷¹ This is Zizioulas’ interpretation of Maximus the Confessor who had analyzed the cosmic and universal dimensions of difference and division. See Maximus Conf., *Theol. Pol.* 20 (PG91, 249C); *Amb.* 67 (PG 91, 1400C). According to Maximus, difference (*diaphora*) is good and must be maintained in the cosmos. Division (*Diairesis*) is a perversion of difference and thus is bad. Maximus Conf., *Ep.* 12 (PG 91 469AB). See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

¹⁷² J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharistic Vision of the World,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 128. Italics original.

¹⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 50-53.

¹⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

¹⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 52. We may recall here that Sartre had called man “a useless passion.” Zizioulas here appears to agree with Sartre’s point of view if man were purely a biological hypostasis. But Zizioulas does not stop here. He presents the alternative meta-biological body, the eschatological ecclesial body which is achieved by Christ’s and our resurrection. This is God’s arrangement to “nullify and redeem our fallenness.” See D. Knight, “John Zizioulas on the Eschatology of the Person,” 191.

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 3.

¹⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 53.

¹⁷⁸ 1 Pet. 1.3, 23.

¹⁷⁹ John 3.3, 7.

¹⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54.

biological hypostasis to be realized in history? Zizioulas' answer is simply this, "In the Church."¹⁸¹ The Church gives birth to ecclesial being just as a mother gives birth to a child – a biological being.¹⁸² After baptism, humanity's biological being can exist in conjunction with ecclesial being which "'hypostasizes' the person according to God's way of being. That is what makes the Church the image of God."¹⁸³ Man in the Church is thus the image of the Image – Christ. This image is perfected only in Christ. As Zizioulas writes,

Thanks to Christ man can henceforth himself "subsist," can affirm his existence as personal not on the basis of the immutable laws of his nature, but on the basis of a relationship with God which is identified with what Christ in freedom and love possesses as Son of God with the Father. This adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism.¹⁸⁴

Baptism for anyone is always into Christ, that is, into His Body.¹⁸⁵ According to Zizioulas, "Baptism is essentially nothing other than the application to humanity of the very filial relationship which exists between the Father and the Son (note the narratives of Christ's baptism in the Bible and the baptismal rites of the early Church)."¹⁸⁶ Baptism leads the newly baptized to a new ecclesial hypostasis that is in the image of the hypostasis of the Son of God. The newly baptized do not lose their biological hypostasis. Christians retain their biological *nature*.¹⁸⁷ Instead, they obtain what Zizioulas has called a sacramental or "eucharistic hypostasis" which expresses the relationship of the biological and the ecclesial hypostases to each other.¹⁸⁸ This encounter between the ecclesial and the biological hypostases "creates a paradoxical relationship in human existence. Man appears to exist in his ecclesial identity not as that which he is but as that which he *will* be; the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, that is, with the final outcome of his existence."¹⁸⁹ The ecclesial hypostasis thus has an eschatological character revealing humanity "as a person, which, however, has its roots in the future and is perpetually inspired, or rather maintained and nourished, by the

¹⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56.

¹⁸² In early patristic literature, the image of the Church as mother is often used, as noted by Zizioulas. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56. Cyprian's often quoted dictum, "You cannot have God for your Father if you do not have the Church for your mother" comes immediately to mind.

¹⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 19.

¹⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56. See also Rom. 8.15 and Gal. 4.6-7.

¹⁸⁵ Gal. 3.27.

¹⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 241.

¹⁸⁷ Every baptized Christian retains his biological *nature* in that every human being has a beginning and will have an end. This is unlike the divine nature of the Son of God who lives forever and who has never had a beginning. Thus, the baptized Christian's hypostasis is still different from that of Christ's simply because humanity's hypostasis is created while the hypostasis of the Son of God is uncreated.

¹⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59.

¹⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59. Italics original.

future. *The truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future.*”¹⁹⁰

3.3.4. Who am I? Who are You? Who is he/she? (Metaphysics of Particularity)¹⁹¹

The question ‘who am I?’ points to the need for a *personal* ontology, to what Zizioulas calls, “a metaphysics of particularity.”¹⁹² The word ontology is applied by Zizioulas to the specific problem of personal *identity* – What does it mean when we say that someone *is* rather than *has* a person?¹⁹³ To pose this question philosophically, *are* we persons or do we acquire personhood as a quality added to our being? Zizioulas argues that man is first a person, a unique identity independent of qualities borrowed from other ‘beings.’¹⁹⁴ To understand what humanity is and who a person is, Zizioulas proposes that one must approach humanity through an ontology of personhood “with reference to the Christian doctrine of God.”¹⁹⁵ This ontology of personhood is the key building block of Zizioulas’ theological anthropology.¹⁹⁶

Zizioulas gives personhood the following definition: Personhood “is the total fulfilment of being, the catholic expression of its nature.”¹⁹⁷ This is evidenced in the person who, according to Zizioulas, does not simply want to exist eternally, but wants “to exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity.”¹⁹⁸ As Zizioulas writes, “The person cannot be understood simply as the “ecstasy” of the substance’ it must necessarily be regarded also as a *hypostasis* of the substance, as a concrete and unique identity.”¹⁹⁹ This is what Zizioulas has termed, the hypostatic and ecstatic aspects of personhood.²⁰⁰ Zizioulas explains how personhood is different from individuality,

In contrast to the partiality of the individual which is subject to addition and combination, the person in its ekstatic character reveals its being in a *catholic*, that is, integral and undivided, way, and thus in its being ekstatic it becomes *hypostatic*, that is, the bearer of its nature in its totality.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62. Italics original.

¹⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99-113.

¹⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 100-01.

¹⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99.

¹⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99-100.

¹⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 100.

¹⁹⁶ This ontology of the person is expounded in J. Zizioulas, “On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood,” in *Communion and Otherness*, 99-112.

¹⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 47.

¹⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

¹⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46-47.

²⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

²⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213. Italics original.

A person bears his own nature so that nature becomes enhypostasized i.e. it exists in the hypostasis which Zizioulas has described as the “ontological ‘principle’ or ‘cause’ of being.”²⁰²

From whom is true personhood revealed? According to Zizioulas, the triune God is the revelation of true personhood.²⁰³ Personhood in Orthodox theology is *relational* and not individualistic or subjective.²⁰⁴ Zizioulas states categorically that the concept of human personhood is to be drawn only from the study of the Holy Trinity.²⁰⁵ True personhood is according to Zizioulas, “*only* what we observe in the Trinity, not in humanity, and this *excludes* individualism, conscious subjectivity, concurrence of natural or moral qualities, addition, combination, and so on.”²⁰⁶

Zizioulas cautions us that our own way of being persons cannot be transferred or projected onto God.²⁰⁷ Existentialist philosophy can only help us appreciate the limitations, the anti-nomies and the tragic experience of personhood.²⁰⁸ We cannot transpose our concept of person to the being of God.²⁰⁹ Instead Zizioulas proposes that *true personhood should be derived from God’s way of being*.

Man’s personhood should not be understood in terms of ‘personality’, that is, of a complex of natural, psychological or moral qualities which are in some sense ‘possessed’ by or ‘contained’ in the human *individuum*. On the contrary, being a person is basically different from being an individual or ‘personality’ in that the person cannot be conceived in itself as a static entity, but only as it *relates to*. Thus personhood implies the ‘openness of being’, and even more than that, the *ek-stasis* of being, that is, a movement towards communion which leads to a transcendence of the boundaries of the ‘self’ and thus to *freedom*.²¹⁰

The concept of personhood viewed in the image of *divine* personhood is not a ‘collection of properties’ natural or moral. “It is only a ‘mode of being’ comprising relations (*schesis*) of ontological constitutiveness.”²¹¹ Personhood is not individualism but finds its fulfilment in relationships of communion with others.

²⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 42, n. 37.

²⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 107.

²⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Law and Personhood in Orthodox Theology,” in *The One and the Many*, 403-04.

²⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9, 176.

²⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

²⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 140.

²⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141.

²⁰⁹ Zizioulas is against social trinitarianism.

²¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 212-13. Italics original.

²¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 173.

According to Zizioulas, the *mystery* of being a person lies in the fact that it is here that otherness and communion coincide.²¹² For the true person to exist, being and communion must coincide.²¹³ Being is traced back to person and not to substance.²¹⁴ The person not only wants to be but also “to exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity.”²¹⁵ Zizioulas goes on to say that uniqueness is something so absolute for the person that it does not permit itself to be regarded as an arithmetic concept, to be combined with other objects and to be used as a means for any goal.²¹⁶

Besides the Trinity, the other foundation on which Zizioulas builds his ontology of particularity and uniqueness is the Person of Christ himself. According to Zizioulas, Christ’s particular being is constituted by a relationship (*schesis*) with God, particularly “the filial relationship between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.”²¹⁷ Zizioulas contends that humanity “‘in Christ’ becomes a true person *not through another ‘schesis’* but only in and through the one filial relationship which constituted Christ’s being.”²¹⁸

In Christ, therefore, every man acquires *his* particularity, *his* hypostasis, *his* personhood, precisely because, by being constituted as a being in and through the same relationship which constitutes Christ’s being, he is as unique and unrepeatable and worthy of eternal survival as Christ is by virtue of his being constituted as a being through his filial relationship with the Father, which makes him so unique and so eternally loved as to be an eternally living being. In Christ, therefore, understood in the way I am trying to describe hypostatic union, man not only maintains his personhood but so fulfils it as to make it constitutive of his being in the ultimate ontological sense which, as we have seen, is implied in the notion of personhood and which is to be found only in God.²¹⁹

Zizioulas’ ontology of personhood exists only when we consider this unique Christology which enables humanity in Christ to have a personal identity that is unique and unrepeatable. The crucial point is the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures in one person. As Zizioulas explains,

What enables man in Christ to arrive at a personal identity in ontological terms is that in Christ the natures *are* only because they are particularized in one person. In Christ the general exists only in and through the particular; the particular is thus raised to ontological primacy. The ‘Who’ of Christ is the Son. In him the two natures give their qualities to the identity without making the identity depend, in the primary ontological sense, on these qualities, that is, in the sense in which our identities ultimately depend –

²¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 106.

²¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 107.

²¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 42, n. 37.

²¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

²¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 47.

²¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 239.

²¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 239. Italics original.

²¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 240-41. Italics original.

and thus are unable to make the particular ‘I’ ontologically decisive. The natural qualities are not extrinsic to the identity – the question, ‘Who am I?’, does not aim at excluding natural qualities from the identity of ‘I’ – but by being ‘enhypostasized’ these qualities become dependent on the hypostasis for their being; the hypostasis is not dependent on them. Thus, the cause of being is the particular, not the general.²²⁰

This is what Zizioulas has called “the mystery of the person as an ontological “principle” and “cause.”²²¹ Christ, the Son of God can do so, i.e. make a person unique because His love can, in Zizioulas’ words, “endow something with uniqueness, with absolute identity and name.”²²² Most importantly, it is in Christ’s person that we have a unique, unrepeatable and personal identity. This concept of the person is what, in Zizioulas’ opinion, the world owes to Greek patristic theology.²²³

3.3.5. Conclusion – Personhood in the Light of Communion and Otherness

Personhood is, according to Zizioulas, a certain conception of the human being that is used in theology and in the Church.²²⁴ He gives the following summary of what personhood is:

*1) The Person is otherness in communion and communion in otherness.*²²⁵

Zizioulas asserts that the person is “an identity that emerges through relationship.”²²⁶ The ‘I’ can only exist as long as it relates to a ‘thou’ that affirms its existence and its otherness. For example, in the Trinity, each person of the Trinity cannot be conceived without the other. At the same time, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are so unique “that their hypostatic properties are totally incommunicable from one person to the other.”²²⁷ Zizioulas reminds us, “This hypostatic fullness as otherness can emerge only through a relationship so constitutive ontologically that relating is not consequent upon being but is being itself. The *hypostatic* and the *ek-static* have to coincide.”²²⁸

*2) Personhood is freedom.*²²⁹

This is the freedom to be oneself, to be other. As one person cannot strictly be considered a person unless there is an “other,” personhood is also the freedom *for* the other. Zizioulas explains,

²²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 109. Italics original.

²²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49.

²²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49, n. 44.

²²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 65.

²²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

²²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

²²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

²²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

²²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 112. Italics original.

²²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

Freedom thus becomes identical with *love*. God is love because he is Trinity. We can love only if we are persons, that is, if we allow the other to be truly other, and yet to be in communion with us. If we love the other not only in spite of his or her being different from us but *because* he or she is different from us, or rather *other* than ourselves, we live in freedom as love and in love as freedom.²³⁰

A consequence of the understanding of freedom as love and of love as freedom is that personhood is creativity.

3) *Personhood is creativity*.²³¹

Personhood *involves ekstasis* – the affirmation of the other in which the self goes outside the boundaries of itself. This makes the person *ek-static*. Zizioulas maintains, “Freedom is not *from* but *for* someone or something other than ourselves.” This involves also a movement of affirmation of the other described by Zizioulas as the “drive of personhood towards the affirmation of the other” that “is so strong that it is not limited to the other that already exists, but wants to affirm an ‘other’ which is the totally free grace of the person.” This happens in art where the artist creates an ‘other’ and brings about “a totally other identity as an act of freedom and communion.”²³² Zizioulas then draws from this the vital implication that “living in the Church in communion with the other means therefore, creating a *culture*.”²³³

We can sum up Zizioulas’ position that true personhood arises out of love and relationship with others.²³⁴ This implies that personhood and communion are interdependent. Zizioulas asserts that only free love that is unqualified by natural necessities can generate personhood. This is found in God whose being is, as the Cappadocian Fathers saw it, “constituted and ‘hypostasized’ through a free-event of love by a free and loving person, the Father, and not by the necessity of divine nature.”²³⁵ Zizioulas contends that *this orthodox understanding of the Holy Trinity is the only way to arrive at the notion of personhood*.²³⁶ He makes it very clear that his idea of personhood is theologically based on the Cappadocian Fathers. It is to the Cappadocian teaching on the Trinity that we have to turn.

²³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9-10. Italics original.

²³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 10.

²³² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 10.

²³³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 10. Italics original.

²³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168.

²³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 169.

²³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

3.4. Zizioulas' Trinitarian Ontology – Towards the Father as 'Cause'²³⁷

3.4.1. Introduction – The Trinity and Personhood²³⁸

The study of the Cappadocian Fathers' contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity sheds light on Zizioulas' concept of Personhood.²³⁹ According to Zizioulas, it was the Cappadocian Fathers who not only contributed significantly to the theological development of the doctrine of the Trinity, they also radically re-oriented classical Greek humanism, "a conception of man and a view of existence" that was not conceivable to the ancient Greeks.²⁴⁰ The theological controversies of the fourth century provided the occasion for the Cappadocian Fathers to articulate their philosophical and theological contribution to the being of God and man.²⁴¹ In response to Sabellianism, the Cappadocian Fathers identified the idea of person with that of *hypostasis* to preserve the ontological integrity of each person of the Trinity. It was only one generation before the Cappadocian Fathers that "the term *hypostasis* was fully identified with that of *ousia* or substance."²⁴² What the Cappadocian Fathers did was to dissociate *hypostasis* from *ousia* and attach it to *prosopon* so that the trinitarian expression "three persons" could be free from Sabellian interpretation.²⁴³

The Cappadocian Fathers also had a response to the Eunomians who argued that because the Father was unbegotten and the Son is totally unlike the Father in that the Son is begotten, hence the Son is not God. They responded to the Eunomians by saying that when God is called Father or "unbegotten", he is called so with reference to personhood (mode of being) and not to substance (nature). In other words, God the Father is being defined here relation-wise and not substance-wise.²⁴⁴ Hence the Son could still be *homoousios* with the Father despite having different hypostatic properties that are incommunicable and unique to each person of the Holy Trinity.²⁴⁵ Zizioulas stresses that this incommunicability of hypostatic properties does not mean that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are to be understood as autonomous individuals. In fact, the Cappadocian Fathers called the trinitarian Persons by

²³⁷ Critics of Zizioulas include S. Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God. A Pentecostal Trinitarian Theology [PM Series]* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012). He argues Zizioulas' *monarchia* of the Father cannot sustain his communitarian ontology.

²³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 155-70.

²³⁹ This is expounded in J. Zizioulas, "The Trinity and Personhood: Appreciating the Cappadocian Contribution," in *Communion and Otherness*, 155-70.

²⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 155-56.

²⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 156.

²⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 157-58.

²⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 158.

²⁴⁴ I make this distinction as St. Augustine has done.

²⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 160.

names indicating *schesis* (relationship).²⁴⁶ It is most important to note that none of the three persons of the Trinity can be conceived “without reference to the other two, both logically and ontologically.”²⁴⁷ Divine existence is the existence of the three persons who exist *freely* and in mutual *relationship*.

The Cappadocian Fathers made a distinction between nature and person or ‘mode of existence’ (*tropos hyparxeos*). Nature points to the ‘what’ of something and can be predicated of more than one thing while person points to the ‘how’ and can only be predicated of one being. Zizioulas contends that the ‘image of God’ in man has precisely to do with this *how* of being.²⁴⁸ Man can choose to order his existence either in the way of God’s being which is communion and life, or in the direction of his nature that will lead to individualism and mortality. *Theosis* of man in the thinking of the Greek Fathers meant that man could ‘become God’ by living according to the image of God, that is, living in “the way God exists” and “as an image of God’s personhood.”²⁴⁹

Zizioulas concludes that the Cappadocian Fathers left for us as an inheritance this “most precious concept it possesses: *the concept of the person, as an ontological concept in the ultimate sense*.”²⁵⁰ It is through this concept that we approach the Trinity in order to understand God. Zizioulas’ ontology is very distinctively Christian. It is not couched in substantial terms. It is not a gnoseological ontology. It is better described as a *relational ontology*.²⁵¹ Zizioulas’ ontology is a theological ontology based on the concept of the *monarchia* of the Father.²⁵² It liberates ontology from gnoseology. It is important to understand Zizioulas’ trinitarian ontology because, according to Papanikolaou, it is “the lens through which Zizioulas interprets all other aspects of theology.”²⁵³ It is, as we shall see, the fundamental building block of his ecclesiology.

Zizioulas opines that Greek ontology was fundamentally monistic in this respect – the being of God and the being of the world were organically linked to the effect that God was

²⁴⁶ Zizioulas quotes from Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 29 (PG 36, 96) in which Gregory says, “The Father is a name neither of substance nor of energy but of *schesis*.”

²⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 160-61.

²⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 165.

²⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 166.

²⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 166. Italics original.

²⁵¹ Zizioulas’ relational ontology is important in an age marked by the discovery by scientists of the presence of “a remarkable degree of intrinsic relationality” in the physical world. See J. Polkinghorne, *The Trinity and an Entangled World*, 1-11.

²⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 45, n. 40.

²⁵³ A. Papanikolaou, “Sophia, Apophasis, and Communion: The Trinity in Contemporary Orthodox Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to The Trinity*, ed. P. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 253.

not ontologically free to be apart from the world, to be ‘Other.’²⁵⁴ According to Zizioulas, the *ontological monism* characterizing Greek philosophy from its inception led “Greek thought to the concept of the *cosmos*, that is, of the harmonious relationship of existent things among themselves. Not even God can escape from this ontological unity and stand freely before the world.”²⁵⁵ The question arose for the Greeks of the relationship between God and the world.²⁵⁶ To what extent was this relationship a dialectical one? Zizioulas opines that the ancient Greeks thought of God as “bound by ontological necessity to the world and the world to him.”²⁵⁷ This is contrasted to the Christian view of the world being made out of *nothing* by God. God is entirely *free* from creation and free to create the world. God is free *for* the creation of the world.

It is Zizioulas’ view that the Cappadocian Fathers created a new ontology, an ontology that avoids the ontological monism of the ancient Greeks as well as the gnoseological ontology espoused especially by the Gnostics. This was achieved, according to Zizioulas, through the *ecclesial experience* of the Fathers, in particular, the *eucharistic experience* of the Church as guided by the bishops, pastoral theologians such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus and Athanasius.²⁵⁸ They worked out the Being of God by experiencing *how* he is through participation in *Church worship*, particularly in the *Divine Eucharist*. This is where Christians gather to be the Church as the Body of Christ which is the institution where personal love and relationship is experienced in an ecclesial community. Zizioulas has thus developed a Christian ontology that is not substantial but is relational and personal. It is an *ontology of love* that is found in relation to the Holy Trinity and in God. It also expresses the existential and universal needs of human beings, the most important and greatest of which is love.²⁵⁹ This love is to be found in the Holy Trinity.²⁶⁰ Zizioulas writes,

Only love, free love, unqualified by natural necessities, can generate personhood. This is true of God whose being, as the Cappadocian Fathers saw it, is constituted and ‘hypostasized’ through a free event of love caused by a free and loving person, the Father, and not by the necessity of divine nature. This is true also of man who is called to

²⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16.

²⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 29.

²⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 180.

²⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 29-30.

²⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16.

²⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 13.13.

²⁶⁰ Many theologians have expressed the Holy Trinity in terms of love. St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor are some that come to mind. For the differences between the two, see K. Ware, “The Holy Trinity: Model for Personhood-in-Relation,” 118-23.

exercise his freedom as love and his love as freedom, and thus show himself to be the ‘image of God’.²⁶¹

This trinitarian love is based on two premises: It is the love of the Father and is ‘caused’ by the Father. Love therefore generates personhood and constitutes and personalizes God. That is the power of love which is equated with God for, according to St. John, “God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God lives in him.”²⁶²

3.4.2. The Holy Trinity and the *Monarchia* of the Father

According to Zizioulas, in classical trinitarian theology, “the final formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity speaks of “one substance, three persons.”²⁶³ One could conceive of the Trinity from the initial viewpoints of either the substance of God or the persons of God. This means that either substance or persons are the most basic ontological concepts used in conceiving the Trinity. Rather than making divine substance the primary ontological concept, Zizioulas contends, “The Holy Trinity is a *primordial* ontological concept and not a notion which is added to the divine substance or which follows it.”²⁶⁴ This is because “the substance of God, “God,” has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.”²⁶⁵ In other words, God exists as communion in the Trinity.²⁶⁶ God is the Trinity of three persons, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit who are always together.²⁶⁷ Their relationship defined in relation to each other is permanent and unbreakable.²⁶⁸ However Zizioulas clarifies that,

This communion is not a relationship understood for its own sake, an existential structure which supplants “nature” or “substance” in its primordial ontological role – something reminiscent of the structure of existence met in the thought of Martin Buber. Just like “substance,” “communion” does not exist by itself: it is the *Father* who is the “cause” of it. This thesis of the Cappadocians that introduced the concept of “cause” into the being of God assumed an incalculable importance. For it meant that the ultimate ontological category which makes something really *be*, is neither an impersonal and incommunicable “substance,” nor a structure of communion existing by itself or imposed by necessity, but rather the *person*.²⁶⁹

²⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168-69.

²⁶² 1 John 4.16.

²⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40.

²⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

²⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

²⁶⁶ This is in the sense of God being conditioned by communion because he is communion. He exists in and as communion. However, this communion is from the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit, asserts Zizioulas. See his *Being as Communion*, 17-18.

²⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 107, n. 16; 122, n. 33 and 126, n. 47. See also Gregory of Nyssa, *C. Eun.* 4.8.

²⁶⁸ The basic patristic teaching is that wherever one person of the Trinity is, the others are also there at the same time. See also Athanasius, *Ad. Serap.* I.20; Basil, *De Spir. Sancto* 19.49; Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joan.* 10.

²⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17-18.

Because the ultimate ontological category is the person, God owes his existence not to substance or communion itself but to the person of the Father. This for Zizioulas means,

(a) that His “substance,” His being, does not constrain Him (God does not exist because He cannot but exist), and (b) that communion is not a constraining structure for His existence (God is not in communion, does not love, because He cannot but be in communion and love). The fact that God exists because of the Father shows that His existence, His being is the consequence of a free person; which means, in the last analysis, that not only communion but also *freedom*, the free person, constitutes true being. True being comes only from the free person, from the person who loves freely – that is, who freely affirms his being, his identity, by means of an event of communion with other persons.²⁷⁰

The implications of this are twofold – There is no true being without communion and the person cannot exist without communion.

The other basic consideration in trinitarian theology concerns the relationship between the Economic Trinity and the Immanent Trinity. According to Karl Rahner, the Economic Trinity is the Immanent Trinity and vice versa.²⁷¹ Zizioulas basically agrees with this view²⁷² but hastens to add that the Immanent Trinity is not exhausted in the Economic Trinity.²⁷³ There is a sense here in which the Immanent Trinity still has an unknowable aspect and hence there must be recourse to apophatic theology. We must not confuse the two descriptions of the Trinity. Neither can we construct our trinitarian doctrine based only on the economic Trinity. We need also an apophatic theology to go beyond the Economic to the Immanent Trinity.²⁷⁴ This may be an alternative way to knowledge of God through the apophatic tradition typically associated with the Eastern Fathers.²⁷⁵ However, there may yet be another positive way to know God – through the relationships in God, i.e. the communion of the divine persons. When God is called Father or “unbegotten”, he is called so not with reference to his substance, but to personhood.²⁷⁶ Because personhood is a relational concept, we may speak of God the Father as the unbegotten to refer to him *relation-wise*. The Father-Son

²⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18. Italics original.

²⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 9. See also K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 77-102. Yves Congar objects to this axiom in his book *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 3 (New York: Seabury, 1983), 11ff.

²⁷² J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom,” 204-05. Here, Zizioulas opines that the identification of the two Trinities shows out “the *ek-static* character of God,” that is “his freedom to reach beyond himself, being *ek-static* both within himself and outside himself.”

²⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 201. Yves Congar in his book *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, III, 16, also questions Rahner’s Rule on the point whether the Economic Trinity reveals the Immanent Trinity entirely.

²⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today,” in *The One and the Many*, 9. This is where Lossky’s theology is helpful, according to A. Papanikolaou in his *Being with God*.

²⁷⁵ Namely, Gregory Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus and Gregory Palamas.

²⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 160.

relationship throws light on the Trinity. Zizioulas explains that the Cappadocian Fathers taught us that

the Trinity is not a matter for academic speculation, but for personal relationship. As such, it is truth revealed only by participation in the Father-Son relationship through the Spirit which allows us to cry ‘*Abba, Father*’ (Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6). The Trinity is therefore revealed only in the Church, that is, the community through which we become children of the Father of Jesus Christ.²⁷⁷

It is clear that the Trinity is a lived experience of relationships. It is to be experienced in the Church. This is the ecclesial experience of the early Church Fathers who contemplated “the being of God and the being of the Church with the eyes of worship, principally of eucharistic worship, image of the ‘*eschata*’ *par excellence*.”²⁷⁸ Zizioulas concludes that outside the Church, the concept of the Trinity is “a stumbling block and a scandal.”²⁷⁹ So if we want to know and to experience the trinitarian God, we need to go to Church to experience Him. This is because God can only be known in love and relationship. This implies we need to be in a community centred on Him if we are truly to become persons in the image of God as Zizioulas reminds us, “This theology of the person, which appeared for the first time in history through the patristic vision of the being of God, could never have become a live experience for man without the mystery of the Church.”²⁸⁰

Finally, Zizioulas follows closely the Orthodox Tradition in upholding the *monarchia* of the Father when speaking of the Trinity. He writes, “Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological ‘principle’ or ‘cause’ of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis*, that is, *the person of the Father*.”²⁸¹ The Father is the sole “cause” of the generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit.²⁸² He justifies this use of the concept of the person as derived from the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Basil who illustrates that the Father is the cause of the Trinity.²⁸³ Substance never exists in a “naked” state without hypostasis or “a mode of existence.”²⁸⁴ Outside the Trinity there is no God, that is, no divine substance, because the

²⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 170. Italics original.

²⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 19.

²⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 170.

²⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

²⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40.

²⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41, esp. n. 35. Here, Zizioulas links the problem of the *Filioque* to the Trinitarian theology of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas who both maintained the *Filioque* because they identified the being and ‘ontological principle’ of God with His substance rather than with the person of the Father.

²⁸³ St. Basil, *C. Eun.* 1.14-15. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 142.

²⁸⁴ St. Basil, *Letter* 38.2 (PG 32, 325ff). See also Gregory Naz., *Theol. Or.* 5.14 (PG 36, 149): the Trinity is ‘three suns,’ one light.

ontological ‘principle’ of God is the Father.”²⁸⁵ By making the Father the origin of the Trinity, Zizioulas opines that “the Cappadocians introduced freedom into ontology, since the Father as a person, and not as substance, can only exist freely and in relation with the other persons.”²⁸⁶ Zizioulas goes as far as to say that the Father grants freedom to persons and grounds the unity of the three persons of the holy Trinity.²⁸⁷ As Gregory of Nazianzen puts it clearly, “The three have one nature...*the ground of unity being the Father*, out of whom and towards whom the subsequent persons are reckoned.”²⁸⁸ Therefore, Zizioulas concludes that the Father “remains the one God of the Bible by being the ground of unity of the three persons.”²⁸⁹ This has been one of the most controversial points in Zizioulas’ ontology of the Trinity.²⁹⁰ Zizioulas is anxious to preserve freedom in the domain of the person of the Father, for freedom is not derived from nature.

3.4.3. Freedom and the Trinity

Freedom is a very important *theological* concept in Patristic thought that helps us understand the notion of being. It is not merely the freedom of choice or ‘freedom of will.’²⁹¹ According to Zizioulas, it is the freedom to *be*, more specifically “to be other in an absolute ontological sense”, an ontological freedom so to speak that is derived from trinitarian freedom.²⁹²

Trinitarian freedom is, negatively speaking, freedom from the given and, positively, the capacity to be other while existing in relationship and in unity of nature. In as much, therefore, as unity of nature provides sameness and wholeness, Trinitarian freedom, as the capacity to be other, can be spoken of as freedom from sameness. And in as much as otherness provides particularity, Trinitarian freedom can be spoken of as freedom from selfhood and individuality.²⁹³

²⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41, esp. n. 37. See also *Communion and Otherness*, 34. Some theologians like T. F. Torrance (1988, 1996) question this and ask why not make the ontological principle be all three persons of the Trinity taken together, i.e. the *monarchia* of the Triune God. This remains a contentious issue and is partially addressed in J. Zizioulas, “The Father as Cause” in *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54, esp. 128 and 130. Here, Zizioulas argues citing Gregory of Nazianzus (*Theol. Or.* 3.2) that the cause of the Trinity is the Father. This causation takes place on the level of personhood so that the generation of the Son and the Spirit is free and without transmission of substance. Thus, the notion of personhood is crucial in trinitarian theology. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 121. Without the concept of personhood, we can easily slip into the idea of causation at the level of substance.

²⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 119-20.

²⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 118.

²⁸⁸ Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 42.15. Quoted from J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 118.

²⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 118.

²⁹⁰ This position has been attacked by T. F. Torrance and some Protestants who reject the *monarchia* of the Father. I will discuss this controversy in detail in chapter six.

²⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

²⁹² J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom: Is God Free in Trinitarian Life?,” 199. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11 for Zizioulas’ exact definition of freedom.

²⁹³ J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom: Is God Free in Trinitarian Life?,” 206.

This freedom is found wherever the Spirit of the Lord is.²⁹⁴ It is the glorious freedom of the children of God experienced by creation when it is liberated from its bondage to decay.²⁹⁵ According to Zizioulas, “Freedom is the cause of being for Patristic thought.”²⁹⁶ Without freedom, there is no personhood.²⁹⁷ Conversely, without freedom, there is no personhood and consequently, nothing. Thus, the world’s being is contingent. The Patristic Fathers regarded the world’s being as dependent upon the freedom of a person, namely God the Father who freely *willed* creation.

Zizioulas contends that “the ground of God’s ontological freedom lies not in His nature but in His *personal existence*, that is, in the ‘mode of existence’ by which He subsists as divine nature.”²⁹⁸ How does He exercise this freedom? He does so by loving.²⁹⁹ Love as God’s mode of existence “hypostasizes” God and constitutes his being. This love is, according to Zizioulas, the love of a person, the Father.³⁰⁰ He “transcends and abolishes the ontological necessity of the substance by being God as Father, that is, as He who ‘begets’ the Son and ‘brings forth’ the Spirit.”³⁰¹ This is the *ek-static* character of God.³⁰² The essence of trinitarian freedom “lies in God’s capacity to be *ek-static* not in relation to something other than God, but *in himself*.”³⁰³

Freedom is deeply bound to otherness. Without otherness, there can be no freedom.³⁰⁴ They are interdependent.³⁰⁵ As Zizioulas writes, “Otherness is necessary for freedom to exist: if there is no absolute, ontological otherness between God and the world, there is no ontological freedom allowing each of these two ‘beings’ to be themselves and thus to be at all.”³⁰⁶ In the case of God, He exists for the other who is free to be himself. The world was also created in freedom out of nothing. With this doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, “the ‘principle’ of Greek ontology, the ‘*arche*’ of the world, was transposed to the sphere of freedom. That which exists was liberated from itself; the being of the world became free from necessity.”³⁰⁷

²⁹⁴ 2 Cor. 3.17.

²⁹⁵ Rom. 8.21.

²⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 164.

²⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

²⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44.

²⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

³⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46, n. 41.

³⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44.

³⁰² The concept of *ekstasis* can be found in the mystical Greek Fathers such as Pseudo-Dionysius and St. Maximus the Confessor. Martin Heidegger also employed this concept.

³⁰³ J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom,” 197.

³⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 19.

³⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 16.

³⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 19.

³⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

The world was also free to be other and this is granted not by the nature of God but by the person of God the Father. For Zizioulas, freedom is also necessary for the existence of the world and all that exists within it. Being does not depend on nature but on freedom.³⁰⁸ It is one of the *constitutive criteria* for being.³⁰⁹ For the patristic Fathers, freedom is the cause of being and the world's being is due to the freedom of a person, God.³¹⁰ Zizioulas maintains that it is from a person that we have freedom. This means that freedom in God is found in the divine persons and not in divine nature.³¹¹ Freedom is personal. Freedom is freedom *for* other persons, to be yourself³¹² and “the freedom to be other in an absolutely ontological sense.”³¹³ It is also freedom from the self, from one's own will and from selfish desires.³¹⁴ This freedom from the self ultimately leads to the finding of one's identity not through self-affirmation, but through the other – God.³¹⁵ Zizioulas continually maintains that freedom is not a freedom of choice among many possibilities, but the *heart's movement* of love towards the Other and ultimately the submission of the will to the ‘Other’ *par excellence*, God.³¹⁶ It is the freedom to love an ‘other’ and to be *for* an ‘other.’³¹⁷ According to Zizioulas, the statement ‘God is love’ can be applied primarily to God in his immanent being if love corresponds to the *ek-static* character of divine being. “By being love in himself eternally as Trinity, God realizes his freedom as a perpetual exodus from the self, not in order to meet an already existing ‘other’ (individualism) but to affirm the ‘other’ as a unique Being.”³¹⁸ This presupposes what Zizioulas has called, an ontology of love which I shall attempt to explore in the next section. This ontology of love can be contrasted to what was experienced in the recent terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch³¹⁹ by a person who hated the ‘others’ (communities of persons who were of different and thus ‘other’ ethnicity and religion from his own.) This attacker's denial of personal uniqueness derived from freedom and otherness led directly to an ontology of hate that is the very opposite of an ontology of love that I will describe.

³⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39. Here, in the context of how the Greek Fathers arrived at an ontology of the person, Zizioulas writes about the Fathers who “made being – the existence of the world, existent things – a *product of freedom*.”

³⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 214.

³¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 164.

³¹¹ J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom: Is God Free in Trinitarian Life?,” 197.

³¹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

³¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 11.

³¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 303-04. Freedom from one's own will is the highest form of freedom, according to Zizioulas. This is because the passion of self-preservation is the strongest of all necessities that bind man according to his nature. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 303.

³¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 304.

³¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 237 and 306.

³¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Person and Nature,” 105. Here, Zizioulas writes that freedom is identical to love.

³¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Trinitarian Freedom,” 197.

³¹⁹ On 15 March 2019, a gunman stormed into two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, shooting dead 50 worshippers in two mosques and wounding a further 50. See <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/111344867/christchurch-mosque-terrorist-shootings-what-you-need-to-know> (last accessed 17 Mar 19).

3.5. An Ontology of Love³²⁰

3.5.1. Introduction

Through an ontology of communion and otherness that is derived from the Trinity, it is to an ontology of love that Zizioulas' theology is heading as its final goal.³²¹ This love is expressed not in the form of a feeling but *ontologically* in the *event* of the Eucharist where the *act* of communion takes place. This communion is, according to Zizioulas, a product of *freedom* because of a *person*, God the Father, who freely wills this communion.³²² Zizioulas wants us to see that

the only exercise of freedom in an ontological manner is *love*. The expression "God is love" (1 John 4:16) signifies that God "subsists" as Trinity, that is, as person and not as substance. Love is not an emanation or "property" of the substance of God... but is *constitutive* of His substance, i.e. it is that which makes God what He is, the one God. Thus love ceases to be a qualifying – i.e. secondary – property of being and becomes *the supreme ontological predicate*. Love as God's mode of existence "hypostasizes" God, *constitutes* his Being. Therefore, as a result of love, the ontology of God is not subject to the necessity of the substance. Love is identified with ontological freedom.³²³

This love which "hypostasizes" God, as Zizioulas stresses, "is not something common to the three persons, something, that is, like the common nature of God, but is identified with the *Father*. When we say that "God is love," we refer to the Father, that is, to that person which "hypostasizes" God, which makes God to be three persons."³²⁴ This love is associated with divine freedom which is also ultimately linked by Zizioulas to the Father.³²⁵

To maintain an ontology of love, Zizioulas takes great pains to explain the meaning of the Greek term *hypostasis* from which he draws out the concept of the Person.³²⁶ First, a person is not an adjunct to being. Zizioulas stresses, "*It is itself the hypostasis of the being.*"³²⁷ Second, entities do not need to trace their being to being itself, but to a person.³²⁸ The person becomes the being itself and simultaneously constitutes beings through the

³²⁰ Zizioulas has used this phrase several times in his writings. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 108 and *Being as Communion*, 49. See also J. F. Crosby, "Is Love a Value-response? Dietrich von Hildebrand in Dialogue with John Zizioulas," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 55.4 (2015): 457.

³²¹ This concept appears in many of Zizioulas' writings. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49, n. 43 and *Communion and Otherness*, 108.

³²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44.

³²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46. Italics original.

³²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46, n. 41.

³²⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Trinitarian Freedom," 196.

³²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

³²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

³²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

communion of persons. Zizioulas insists that communion and freedom constitute true being and come from the person. As such, only persons can love because personhood is hypostatic and ecstatic at the same time. And love necessarily implies a freedom to love, which is found in the free person. It is God the Father who freely loves as a Person. Considering Zizioulas' ontologies of communion and love, we arrive at what Zizioulas calls "a true ontology of the person."³²⁹

Life and love are identified in the person: the person does not die only because it is loved and loves; outside the communion of love the person loses its uniqueness and becomes a being like other beings, a "thing" without absolute "identity" and "name," without a face. Death for a person means ceasing to love and to be loved, ceasing to be unique and unrepeatable, whereas life for the person means the survival of the uniqueness of its hypostasis, which is affirmed and maintained by love.³³⁰

Zizioulas refers to this "ontology of love" in Antoine de St-Exupery's (1900-44) classic book *The Little Prince*.³³¹ To understand what Zizioulas means by an "ontology of love", one should, as Zizioulas encourages us to do, take the trouble to read this book which Zizioulas has described as follows, "In its simplicity, it is a deeply theological book."³³² This little book was written with colourful hand-drawn illustrations for children and it holds a message for adults and children alike. It has been a best-seller for many years in France. It may serve as an illustration of what I believe to be Zizioulas' centre of his theology – an ontology of love.

3.5.2. *The Little Prince* and an Ontology of Love

The Little Prince is a story of a pilot (possibly pointing to Antoine de Saint-Exupery himself) who crash lands his plane in the desert, only to be met by a mysterious figure of a little boy who styles himself as the little prince. This little prince has come from another faraway planet and has travelled to many other nearby planets and has encountered many people before finally coming to Earth. In a few days, the pilot and the little prince become good friends as the prince shares his experiences with the pilot who learns that the prince has left his own planet where he had tended to a rose that he cared very much for. Not even the many roses that the little prince encounters on earth can excite him as the one whom he had cared for at home. That *unique* rose stood above the rest even if she was not quite as wonderful (sometimes even being to the point of being unreasonable in her behaviour towards the little

³²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 29.

³³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49.

³³¹ A. De Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*, trans. R. Howard (London: Harcourt, Inc., 2000). This was first published in 1943 and it has been revised and re-published many times since its first publication. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49, n. 43.

³³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49, n. 43.

prince) compared to all the other roses. His prolonged *absence* from the rose makes him pine more for her. In the end, the little prince decides to go home having spent some time with the pilot, much to the pilot's sadness. They part ways and the little prince disappears into the night. The story ends with the pilot reminiscing about his beloved prince and lamenting the loss of his friend by remarking that the picture (drawn by Antoine de St-Exupery himself in his book) of the desert *without* the little prince was one of the most desolate sights in the world.

There are themes in the book of *personal uniqueness*, loyal friendship and above all, love. No doubt it is also a social commentary of the culture and society of the author's day. But what really is brought to the fore poignantly is the *value* of the *person* when it is in *relation to another*. Contrary to the usual understanding of the person as an individual, Antoine de St-Exupery has literally painted the person of the little prince in his relations with others. It is his *personal relations* with those he meets that make him stand out as a person to others and others as persons to him. Likewise, the one rose that the little prince loves is *personified* (caused to be a person by being loved) by being singled out to be loved from the many other similar roses. Therefore, when one considers God as love, Zizioulas points out that

Love as eros is not about feelings and emotions, or goodness. It is about a new birth, a 'call' giving someone a unique identity, totally incomparable to any other identity, a 'mode of being' distinguished and identifiable, after the model of the Holy Trinity, not by any natural or moral qualities, but by the sheer relation it has with the being who causes its identity to emerge. The beloved one is unique because he or she is the beloved *of* someone, *his* or *her* beloved one. This is the only identity that makes him or her unique; it is a relational identity (cf. Mt. 3.17 and parallels; Jn. 1.18: 'beloved' and 'unique' combined with the possessive 'my'). Beings exist as particular; therefore, only as gifts of the Other, who grants them an identity by establishing a unique relation with them.³³³

This unique relation is found in community life in the Church, the pillar and bearer of truth. Zizioulas refers to the biblical way of thinking that truth is identical with love and with life.³³⁴ According to Zizioulas, "love is not a state of existence that can be created and sustained in the heart of the individual or of a group of individuals. It is neither a psychological nor an ethical-activistic phenomenon. It is an event that stems from the life of a community; in fact, it *is* a community."³³⁵ This community is not limited to the Church. In fact, love is an event

³³³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 89. Italics original. See also the Song of Songs (2.16) in the Bible where it says, "My beloved is mine and I am *his*, and his banner over me is love." Italics mine.

³³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 214-20.

³³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 217. Italics original.

that can be found in any community in which there is communion and otherness – the twin constituents of being which leads to life.

As for life, Zizioulas has this to say:

But what is life? Again, in the biblical sense, life is not primarily the force that sets and sustains an individual being in some sort of motion, something possessed by the individual, as in the “biological” sense of life. Nor is it *praxis* in the sense of acting, of “doing things,” as in the case of the “ethical” sense of the concept of life. It is rather to be understood as springing from a *relational* situation, from a relationship of *persons*. Life in this sense is the *event of communion of persons*, i.e., a situation in which all the divisions, individualizations, and fragmentations of existence (natural, moral, social, etc.) which threaten existence with decomposition and hence with death, are transcended in a communion of *freely loving* beings. Life as the overcoming of death – and truth which is life – is thus ultimately expressed in God understood not in a deistic but in a *Triadological* sense, i.e. as a relationship of persons, as “communion” in an ultimate ontological sense.³³⁶

These definitions lead Zizioulas to the identification of truth and of knowledge with love.³³⁷ It allows Zizioulas to say that love is constitutive of the being of God.³³⁸ When we say that God is love,³³⁹ we mean that God “subsists” as Trinity, “as person and not as substance”, as Zizioulas emphasizes.³⁴⁰ For Zizioulas, “Love is not an emanation or property of the substance of God... but is constitutive of His substance.”³⁴¹ In this way, we can speak of an ontology of love because love is no longer a “qualifying property of being” but “*the supreme ontological predicate*.”³⁴² Love is also conclusive proof of God’s existence. Zizioulas writes, “The only proof of God’s existence is his love – demonstrated by our very being, in otherness and communion. We are loved, therefore he exists.”³⁴³ An entity (human being) becomes a person when it is loved (by God).³⁴⁴ Outside of this love, it is a non-entity. According to Zizioulas, the proper way of expressing this ontological character of love in an ontology of otherness would be: “*I am loved, therefore I am.*”³⁴⁵ Zizioulas has replaced an ontology based purely on rational thinking in the form of Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” with an ontology of love that takes into consideration freedom and otherness at the same time. This ontology of love, developed using the concepts of personhood and communion in God

³³⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *The One and the Many*, 214-15. Italics original.

³³⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *The One and the Many*, 215.

³³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

³³⁹ 1 John 4.16.

³⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46. This is one of the few places where Zizioulas uses the language of subsistence.

³⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

³⁴² This love is the love of God. It is always related to God and finds its source in God.

³⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 98.

³⁴⁴ Persons are constituted by love. Human beings are constituted by love just as God the Trinity is constituted in love.

³⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 89.

and leading to a metaphysics of peculiarity, may be Zizioulas' (and those whom he followed – the Cappadocian Fathers and Maximus) greatest philosophical contribution to theology. The implication of this is best described by Zizioulas himself:

If we define *love* in ontological terms (i.e., as relationship creating absolute and unique identities), we must speak here of an ontology of love as replacing the ontology of *ousia*, that is, we must attribute to love the role attributed to substance in classical ontology. The overall consequence of this is that as long as ontology depends solely or ultimately on substance or nature it cannot accommodate the particular in an ultimate or primary way.³⁴⁶

In an ontology of love, persons define being by freely endowing love upon an 'other' person (the little prince and his little friend), thereby giving unique identity to the other and granting it *hypostasis* (personal being). Otherness and communion coincide in such an ontology of personal love whereby relationship is introduced into substance itself, to make being relational. The identification of a particular being is done by making it part of a relationship of love, not by isolating it as an individual. This is, according to Zizioulas, the condition for an ontology of personhood.³⁴⁷ This ontology of love and personhood is very much needed in today's world where people are often isolated as individuals, living apart from a community of love. This can easily encourage intolerant attitudes towards others who are very different from certain individuals or groups of individuals, and can inevitably lead to the terrible tragedies we see so often played out in the modern world.

3.6. Conclusion

We have seen how Zizioulas develops his ontology of love and of the person by following closely the Cappadocian Fathers' trinitarian theology that extensively uses the concept of relation.³⁴⁸ We have also seen in this chapter the priority of the person of the Father over the substance of God.³⁴⁹ He appeals to Gregory of Nazianzen who uses the term *monarchia* of all three persons but uses the term *monas* to refer ontologically to the Father.³⁵⁰ It is the Father who grants freedom and grounds the Trinity when He generates the *hypostases* of the Son and the Holy Spirit.³⁵¹ In Zizioulas' trinitarian theology, we have also seen a coincidence of *persons* and *nature* in God. The *One* and the *Three* coincide simultaneously and were

³⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 108. Italics original.

³⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 107.

³⁴⁸ Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes* 29 (PG 36, 96): "the name Father is not one of essence or of energy but of relation." See also J. Zizioulas, "Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought," 148, n. 8.

³⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54.

³⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 132. See Gregory Naz, *Theol. Or.* 3.2.

³⁵¹ This most controversial aspect of Zizioulas' theology is analysed in chapters seven and eight of my dissertation.

together *outside of time*. The Three persons make up the One. By studying the Trinity, we discover that otherness is “constitutive of unity and not consequent upon it.”³⁵² We also see that the Trinity is love between free persons in communion, the basis for an ontology of love in which life and love are identified in the person who “does not die only because it is loved and loves; outside the communion of love the person loses its uniqueness and becomes a being like other beings,³⁵³ a ‘thing’ without absolute ‘identity’ and ‘name,’ without a face.”³⁵⁴ In this way, Love ‘hypostasizes’ being and grants uniqueness to being, ensuring its eternal survival. This is Zizioulas’ articulation of a Christian ontology characterized by personal communion.

But this is only one side of the coin. Zizioulas’ ontology also has an *eschatological character* when he emphasizes Pneumatology in ecclesiology and Christology. This is because the Holy Spirit de-historicizes being and makes it dependent on the *eschaton*. True being is rooted in the future. The truth of being is located in the *eschaton*. Zizioulas emphasizes that “*the truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future.*”³⁵⁵ This is what makes Zizioulas’ ontology unique in that he considers the being of things *from the point of view of the future*. This is only possible when we think of the Holy Spirit making entities be when He breaks into history and dilates it into the infinite. This is an eschatological ontology that is experienced in the Church. As Knight has noted, “This is the Cappadocian revolution, a comprehensive Christian deconstruction of ontology as protology, and its replacement by eschatological ontology, a move not to be found in any other tradition, and which establishes man and God as free.”³⁵⁶

In the next chapter, we will see how the *epiclesis* of the Holy Spirit makes the Church an eschatological community in which God and His people come together as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist to constitute the Church. The central focus of the Church is the Eucharist in which, according to Zizioulas, *the opposite poles of the dialectical relationships between the created and the un-created, the historical and the eschatological, the Christological and the Pneumatological are held together in creative tension.*³⁵⁷

³⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

³⁵³ This is Zizioulas’ reference to the unique ‘rose’ in St. Exupery’s *The Little Prince* who is distinguished by the Little Prince from all the other thousands of roses he finds in the garden.

³⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49. Incidentally, the word ‘face’ in Greek is *prosopon*.

³⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62.

³⁵⁶ D. Knight, “Zizioulas on the Eschatology of the Person,” 191.

³⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62.

Zizioulas' Eucharistic Ecclesiology Conditioned by Pneumatology

4.1 Introduction

We have seen in chapter three that central to Zizioulas' ontology of a person is the relation of the person to the Church via *baptism* in the Holy Trinity. Zizioulas speaks of a "*hypostasis of biological existence*" that is by birth.¹ He then postulates a *hypostasis of ecclesial existence* that is constituted by baptism which gives man a new birth that leads to "a new mode of existence, to a regeneration (1 Pet. 1.3, 23), and consequently to a new 'hypostasis.'"² This new hypostasis is freely constituted in Christ and sustained through communion with the uncreated Trinity. It is baptism and new birth *of God* and 'from above,' to use Scriptural language, that gives rise to ecclesial being.³ Being as ecclesial hypostasis means living a new existence *in communion with God* and in relationship with each other in the Church. In this way, the Church as a *community* of ecclesial being becomes an *image* of the Kingdom of God. The Church is made an image of the triune God because the ecclesial being 'hypostasizes' the baptized person according to God's way of being.⁴ This ecclesial community is also an *eschatological community* that is rooted in the *eschaton*. Zizioulas calls this ecclesial hypostasis a "eucharistic hypostasis" with "roots in the future" and "branches in the present" that is fully realized in the Eucharist.⁵

"But how can we draw together ecclesial being and the being of God, history and eschatology, without destroying their dialectical relationship?"⁶ The answer Zizioulas gives to his own question is simply this, "We need to find again the lost consciousness of the primitive Church concerning the decisive importance of the *eucharist* in ecclesiology."⁷ The Church cannot be conceived without the Eucharist because, according to Zizioulas, they "are interdependent; they coincide, and are even in some sense identical."⁸ Zizioulas contends that it is "in the Eucharist that the Church would contemplate her eschatological nature, would taste the very life of the Holy Trinity; in other words, she would realize man's true being as

¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 50-53.

² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 53.

³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54. See John 3.3, 7.

⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 19.

⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59. This "eucharistic hypostasis" holds the two hypostases – the biological and the ecclesial together.

⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20.

⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20. Italics original.

⁸ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 68.

image of God's own being."⁹ One of the first to do an extensive study of Zizioulas' theology, Gaëtan Baillargeon, remarked that the heart of Zizioulas' thought resides in the Eucharist.¹⁰ It is the purpose of this chapter to appreciate the *centrality* of the Eucharist in the ecclesiology of Zizioulas. I will argue that for Zizioulas, if there is no Eucharist, there is no one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and consequently there is no valid Church ministry that is built on the foundation of Christ's ministry through the apostles and the *episcopos*.

This chapter is divided into four main sections:

- A) *Zizioulas' Christology as conditioned by Pneumatology.*
- B) *Zizioulas' ecclesiology as conditioned by eschatology and an ontology of communion.*
- C) *The Eucharist in the light of Zizioulas' ecclesiology.*
- D) *A comparison between the eucharistic ecclesiologies of Afanasiev and Zizioulas.*

4.2. Zizioulas' Christology as Conditioned by Pneumatology

4.2.1. Introduction

As we have seen in the first chapter, one of Zizioulas' key theses is that Christology needs to be conditioned by Pneumatology.¹¹ This requires a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in trinitarian theology. Right from the start of his career in 1966, Zizioulas attempted such a synthesis by starting with the Eucharist which reunited in one whole the works of Christ and the Holy Spirit.¹² Zizioulas' principal contention is that Christology and Pneumatology *mutually condition* one another.¹³ There is no Christ without the Spirit just as there is no Spirit without Christ. Jesus Christ is the *pneumatic Christ*. Even the Body of Christ, "both in the Christological (incarnational) and in the ecclesiological sense, became a historical reality *through the Holy Spirit*."¹⁴ Christ was born of the Spirit and anointed by Him. Christ's existence is conceivable "only *in the Spirit*."¹⁵ As Zizioulas explains,

Christ appears to be a relational being to an absolute degree. He cannot be conceived in terms of our empirical individualized existence. He is not an individual but a Person in the true sense of the word. His existence implies a body *by definition*. The Bible speaks of Him as the Messiah in terms of "corporate personality" (Servant of God, Son of Man, etc.), and the Fathers, following Paul, describe Him as the recapitulation of all humanity,

⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

¹⁰ G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur L'Eglise-communion*, 61. This was noted by Volf. See M. Volf, *After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 75, n. 15.

¹¹ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimensions," in *The One and the Many*, 75-90.

¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

¹³ There is no Spirit without the Christ as the Spirit is that of Christ. Likewise, there is no Christ without the Spirit who 'anoints' the Christ and makes Him the 'anointed One.'

¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 160-61.

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimensions," in *The One and the Many*, 78.

even of creation. But although this is a commonplace in theology readily admitted by all, it is hardly stressed that all this is inconceivable without Pneumatology. It is the Spirit that opens up reality to become relational, and this applies to Christ as well, if not par excellence.¹⁶

Christ exists only pneumatologically – the mystery of Christology. To speak of Christ means to speak of the Father and the Holy Spirit at the same time. Zizioulas maintains that the Holy Spirit is “the person of the Trinity who actually realizes in history that which we call Christ, this absolutely relational entity, our Saviour.”¹⁷ In this case, Christology is essentially conditioned by Pneumatology. When Christology is constituted pneumatologically, Zizioulas claims, “All separation between Christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit.”¹⁸ At the same time, Zizioulas writes that “all *pyramidal* notions disappear in ecclesiology: the ‘one’ and the ‘many’ co-exist as two aspects of the same being.”¹⁹

4.2.2. Christology²⁰

Zizioulas follows patristic Christology that strives to proclaim the Good News to man. The Good News is this: Humanity’s hypostasis can now be constituted “in an ontological reality which does not suffer from createdness. This is the meaning of the phrase in Scripture about being born ‘anew’ or ‘from above’ (John 3:3, 7).”²¹ Zizioulas claims that patristic Christology looks towards giving man the “assurance that the quest for the person, not as ‘mask’ or as a ‘tragic figure’ but as the authentic person, is not mythical or nostalgic but is a *historical* reality,” and Jesus Christ “realises in history *the very reality of the person* and makes it the basis and ‘hypostasis’ of the person for every man.”²² Thus, according to Zizioulas, Patristic theology regarded the following points as indispensable elements of Christology:

1) The identification of the person of Christ with the *hypostasis of the Son* of the Holy Trinity.²³

Here, according to Zizioulas, we have to consider the question of how it is possible for Christ to be the Saviour of humanity if His hypostasis is merely that of a “hypostasis of biological

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 78. Italics original.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110-11.

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 111.

¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139 and 141. Italics original. Volf is doubtful about Zizioulas’ claims that all pyramidal notions in ecclesiology simply vanish in the Spirit when Christology is constituted pneumatologically. See M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 112.

²⁰ Referring to N. Nissiotis, “La Pneumatologie ecclésiologique au service de l’unité de l’Eglise,” *Istina* 12 (1967): 322-40, Zizioulas has drawn attention to the fact that in Eastern theology, Christology is not a self-existent and self-explained domain of theology. See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 210, n. 5.

²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54.

²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54.

²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54.

existence.”²⁴ Zizioulas asks, “If Christ as a person “subsists” not in freedom but according to the necessity of nature, then He too finally, that is, definitively, fails to escape the tragic aspect of the human person.”²⁵ According to Zizioulas, Patristic theology expressed this existential concern negatively through the theology of the virgin birth of Jesus, and positively through the Chalcedonian doctrine of the one Person of Christ “identified with the *hypostasis of the Son of the Trinity*.”²⁶

2) The *hypostatic union* of the two natures – divine and human – in Christ.²⁷

Zizioulas points out that in contrast to the Western Fathers, the starting point of Christology for the Greek Fathers such as Cyril of Alexandria “is the hypostasis, the person” and not “natures” as in the *Tome* of Pope Leo I.²⁸ This is of great significance according to Zizioulas,

For it stresses not only, as we have seen, with regard to God but now also with regard to man that the basis of ontology is the person: just as God “is” what He is in His nature, “perfect God,” only as person, so too man in Christ is “perfect man” only as hypostasis, as person, that is, as freedom and love. The perfect man is consequently only he who is authentically a person, that is, he who subsists, who possesses a “mode of existence” which is constituted as being, *in precisely the manner in which God also subsists as being* – in the language of human existence this is what a “hypostatic union” signifies.²⁹

As is evident from the two points above, Zizioulas adopts the Orthodox Chalcedonian Christology of two natures *hypostatically united* in one Person. Rather than focusing on natures, he prefers to concentrate on the *Person* of the Christ who is “the hypostasis of the Son of God.”³⁰ According to Zizioulas,

Christology consequently is the proclamation to man that his nature can be “assumed” and hypostasized in a manner free from the ontological necessity of his biological hypostasis, which, as we have seen, leads to the tragedy of individualism and death. Thanks to Christ man can henceforth himself “subsist,” can affirm his existence as personal not on the basis of the immutable laws of his nature, but on the basis of a relationship with God which is identified with what Christ in freedom and love possesses as Son of God with the Father. This adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism.³¹

In other words, baptism is, according to Zizioulas, the adoption of humanity by God in the hypostasis of the Son through the regeneration of every baptized person into a “a new mode

²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54.

²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 54-55.

²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 55. Italics original.

²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 55.

²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 55.

²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 55-56. Italics original.

³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56.

³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56.

of existence,”³² what Zizioulas has called the “hypostasis of ecclesial existence.”³³ Zizioulas calls this hypostasis ecclesial because humanity realizes this hypostasis in history *only in the Church*, the Body of Christ. This is where the baptized receive what St. Paul calls the “Spirit of adoption, in which we cry Abba, Father”³⁴ just as Jesus received the Holy Spirit accompanied by the words of God the Father, “You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”³⁵ This is what Zizioulas calls, *ecclesial being*, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

The Christology of Chalcedon also enables us to understand the union between man and God³⁶ that is realized hypostatically *in Christ* without division and without confusion.³⁷ This hypostatic union of the human and divine natures has an existential significance for humanity today as Zizioulas has proposed in the paragraphs below.

4.2.2.1. Functions of Christology

Zizioulas contends that it is Christology that maintains the dialectic between the created and the un-created and bridges this dialectic.³⁸ It is also Christology that is “the sole starting point for a Christian understanding of truth” because Christ is the truth.³⁹ This was a difficult proposition for the ancient Greeks who sought truth in cosmology rather than in a person.⁴⁰

4.2.2.2. A Christology of the One and the many.

In much of Western theological and philosophical writings, it is often assumed that person means individual. Zizioulas, however, consistently refuses to identify the person with an individual. For him, the person is always in relation to an ‘other’ who constitutes his personhood. However, in modern society that tends towards individualism, this is often forgotten and not experienced as a living reality. Thus, the *corporate person* (an identity consisting of many individuals) is inconceivable in many peoples’ eyes. For Zizioulas, there

³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 53. See also 1 Pet. 1.3, 23.

³³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 53.

³⁴ Rom. 8.15 quoted by Zizioulas in *Being as Communion*, 56, n. 50.

³⁵ Luke 3.22 quoted by Zizioulas in *Being as Communion*, 56, n. 50.

³⁶ This hypostatic union, developed principally by St. Cyril of Alexandria, was first used to describe the union between the human and the divine natures in the person of Christ. This hypostatic union “makes the person (hypostasis), and not the natures, the ultimate ground of Christ’s being.” See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 109. The hypostatic union in Christ was a union of two natures in one person. Zizioulas, however, has extended its use to refer to the union in Christ between two *persons* – man and God. For example, he has written about the final victory of man over death which is accomplished only through the victory of a person, Christ. It is the victory “of man in his hypostatic union to God, that is, a victory of Christ as the man of patristic Christology.” See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 64.

³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 307.

³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 292. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 250-85 on the existential significance of Chalcedonian Christology.

³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 67. See also John 14.6.

⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 69.

are two types of Christology.⁴¹ The first type approaches Christ as if he were an individual. He is understood through his words spoken and interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is the way many would interpret Christ.⁴² The other type of Christology considers that if Christ is understood not as an individual, but as a person in relation to his Body, the Church, then we understand him as a *corporate person*. Zizioulas contends, “Here the Holy Spirit is not one who *aids* us in bridging the distance between Christ and ourselves but he is the person of the Trinity who actually realizes in history that which we call Christ.”⁴³ This Christology is conditioned by Pneumatology. In this context, truth and communion become identical once more.⁴⁴ Zizioulas introduces to us a Christology of the *one and the many*. Christ is not an individual. He is not one but many.⁴⁵ Christ is the *corporate person*. And because Pneumatology contributes to Christology *a dimension of communion*, we can say that Christ has a ‘body’ and that the Church can be referred to as the Body of Christ.⁴⁶ The Church can thus also be said to be a corporate body in the Person of Christ.⁴⁷ In Christ’s person are many individuals who make up Christ’s Body. This body is formed in the Spirit.⁴⁸ The Church does not have a hypostasis of its own but it conditions Christology by making Christ a corporate body for, according to Zizioulas, “the one cannot exist without the many.”⁴⁹

4.2.3. Zizioulas’ Pneumatology in relation to Communion and Eschatology

Zizioulas’ concept of the Holy Spirit consists of two main theses which follow from the conclusions reached in the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381CE.⁵⁰

*1) The Holy Spirit is God*⁵¹

Even if Basil did not use the term *homoousios* for the Holy Spirit, the fact that the Holy Spirit was *uncreated* was enough to establish that the Holy Spirit was God. According to Zizioulas, the reasons for this omission are not merely tactical and diplomatic.⁵² Zizioulas argues that

⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110-11.

⁴² Christ is understood to be a single man, a teacher and a special one who taught his disciples and expounded his teachings in sayings that have been written down in the New Testament.

⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110-11. Italics original.

⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 130.

⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 131.

⁴⁷ Here Zizioulas relies also on the idea of “corporate personality” in the work of Wheeler Robinson’s *The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality* (1980).

⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 146.

⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 190-95.

⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 190.

⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 183.

Basil saw that the best way of describing the unity of the Godhead was through the notion of communion rather than that of substance.⁵³

2) *The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father*⁵⁴

Zizioulas argues that the ultimate ontological ground of the Holy Spirit is the Father who remains the sole *cause* of the Holy Spirit, who in turn exists together with the Son and the Father. By proceeding from the Father and not from divine substance, the Holy Spirit is a person in the true sense.

Zizioulas emphasizes, “The Holy Spirit is associated, among other things, with *koinonia* (2 Cor. 13.13)⁵⁵ and the entrance of the last days into history (Acts 2.17-18),⁵⁶ that is, *eschatology*.”⁵⁷ There is a strong eschatological dimension to the presence and the activity of the Holy Spirit who is the spirit of liberty⁵⁸ and who blows wherever He wills.⁵⁹ According to Zizioulas, when the Holy Spirit blows, He “creates not good individual Christians, individual ‘saints,’ but an event of communion, which transforms everything the Spirit touches into a *relational* being... The Spirit de-individualizes and personalizes beings wherever he operates.”⁶⁰ This includes Christ who is not an individual because he has been de-individualized by the Spirit so that he is the pneumatological man in communion with God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Zizioulas even goes on to say that the Holy Spirit makes Christ a person – the “last Adam”, an *eschatological being*.⁶¹ The Holy Spirit also makes Jesus Christ a *catholic being* and a *pneumatological man*. It is the Spirit of God who makes the man Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ – the Anointed One. The Holy Spirit anoints the Christ. There is no Christ without the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Christology is said to be conditioned by Pneumatology.⁶² Because the Church is also the Body of Christ, it would naturally follow that if Christology is conditioned by Pneumatology, then ecclesiology will also be conditioned by Pneumatology.⁶³ This is one of the key ideas of Zizioulas’ theology: Ecclesiology must also be conditioned by the concept of communion and by eschatology,

⁵³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 183-84.

⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 192.

⁵⁵ See also J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” in *The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Christian Unity*, eds. D. Donnelly, A. Denaux & J. Famerée (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 37-38.

⁵⁶ See also J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 38.

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 6. See Acts 2.17-18.

⁵⁸ 2 Cor. 3.17.

⁵⁹ John 3.8.

⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 6. Italics original.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 130.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139.

⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139.

both of which are important ingredients of Pneumatology.⁶⁴ What this means is that the Body of Christ is conditioned from the start by the many and its unity is constituted by otherness.⁶⁵ The Holy Spirit becomes *constitutive* of ecclesiology. This, according to Zizioulas, is the primary work of the Holy Spirit of which there are two dimensions, one is communion, the other is freedom.⁶⁶ Zizioulas has noted a few characteristic ways of describing the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.⁶⁷

a) The Spirit is power⁶⁸

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and was made man. It was also the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11) and empowered His disciples for witness.

b) The Spirit is the giver of life⁶⁹

The entrance of the Holy Spirit of God into creatures brings life and breath. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no life, and consequently, no being.

c) The Spirit is communion

Wherever he blows, an event of communion is brought about through the formation of concrete communities in bonds of love.

d) The Spirit brings the *eschata* into history.

All the historical life of the Church draws its meaning from the Kingdom of God and not from history itself, thus making her “a ‘stranger’ in this world, a community which in the words of our Lord is ‘in the world’ but not ‘of the world.’”⁷⁰

e) The Spirit brings holiness into history⁷¹

The Holy Spirit does not come from creation and from within history. He exists outside of time and space and enters into history through Jesus Christ in whom the fullness of the Spirit was pleased to dwell.

⁶⁴ Zizioulas has written a very important article on Christ, the Spirit and the Church. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123-42. It was to become the basis of his idea on a pneumatologically conditioned Christ and his Church. This is an area that many theologians of the West have overlooked in their ecclesiology because Pneumatology has not been given its proper place in the synthesis of Christology and ecclesiology. For example, Zizioulas cites that the ecclesiology of Vatican II was mainly built upon Christological material alone. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123.

⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 294.

⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 294. See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 1985, 110ff and 123ff.

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 37-39.

⁶⁸ The Resurrection of Christ and the Incarnation of the Word are proofs of the power of the Holy Spirit over the natural order. See J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 37.

⁶⁹ We recall the words of the Nicene Creed, “I believe in the Holy spirit, the Lord and the giver of life.” See J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 37.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 38.

⁷¹ The Greek Fathers particularly attached the specific contribution of the Holy Spirit to holiness and sanctification. See J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 38.

This last point is important in ecclesiology when we speak of the Church as holy. This holiness given by the Holy Spirit to the Church stems from communion whereby members of the Church share “the holiness of God as this is communicated in the communion and the community created by the Spirit.”⁷² God’s holiness (not human holiness) is revealed in the Church by the Spirit to those who participate in the communion with God that is offered therein. The Holy Spirit offers Himself for human participation in God’s holiness through the Eucharist. It is this that makes the Church holy.⁷³

What is most important concerning the role of Pneumatology in ecclesiology, according to Zizioulas, is that we must consider all of the above specific aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work in their interrelatedness.⁷⁴ The Holy Spirit’s power helps us to overcome our individualism by bringing the *eschata* into history and forming an eschatological community that offers us a foretaste of the Kingdom where God’s holiness “is communicated as the only holiness that can sanctify the world.”⁷⁵

In conclusion, if our Pneumatology is dominated by epistemological concerns, it will be weakened, according to Zizioulas.⁷⁶ If we make revelation the decisive notion in theology, Christology will dominate Pneumatology. However, if we make eschatology and communion the decisive notions in theology, Zizioulas is confident that Pneumatology will condition Christology. This is because Pneumatology’s two vital ingredients – eschatology and communion will help us make sense of the Person of Christ as he exists in communion with the Persons of the Trinity and as the one of the many.

If Pneumatology conditions Christology, then there is also a close relationship between eschatology and the Church instituted as the Body of Christ. This is because one of the first fundamental particularities of Pneumatology is its eschatological character. The Spirit makes Christ the “last Adam”, an eschatological being.⁷⁷ According to Zizioulas, eschatology is not only concerned with the things of the future, the last things. It is also the present *in-breaking* of the Kingdom of God wherever the Spirit blows. The Spirit brings the *eschaton* into history. By so doing, He opens up “ecclesial institutions to their eschatological perspective.”⁷⁸

⁷² J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 38.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 39.

⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 39.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 39.

⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 203.

⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 130.

⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 140.

Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot overcome individualism in ecclesiology and all hopes of reaching “ecclesial unity as a reality of communion” will be dashed.⁷⁹

4.3. Zizioulas’ Ecclesiology as Conditioned Pneumatologically by Eschatology and an Ontology of Communion

4.3.1. Introduction

Zizioulas has outlined four basic theological suppositions in Orthodox ecclesiology:⁸⁰

- 1) Ecclesiology must be situated within the context of trinitarian theology.

The Cappadocian Fathers made a very clear distinction between the Persons in the Trinity. “The Church exists first of all because *the Father* – as a distinct Person – wills her to exist.”⁸¹ The Church will finally be brought *to the Father* by Christ when Christ submits everything united to Him to the Father.⁸² The Church is above all the Church of God the Father *before* she is the Church of Christ or of any geographical location.⁸³

- 2) Christology must be conditioned by Pneumatology in a constitutive way.

It is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ be what He is and gives Him a personal identity.⁸⁴ The Holy Spirit makes Christ a corporate Body, inconceivable as an individual.⁸⁵

- 3) The Church does not draw her identity from what she is but from what she will be. Zizioulas reminds us that eschatology is crucial to ecclesiology and that the *eschata* can be thought of as “the *beginning* of the Church’s life, the *arche*, that which brings forth the Church, gives her her identity, sustains and inspires her in her existence.”⁸⁶

- 4) There is a cosmic dimension of ecclesiology.

The Church is a community of human beings in relation to all of creation through Christ, “the Priest of creation.”⁸⁷ In the Church, all in Christ become priests of creation.

Using these theological principles, Zizioulas argues for an ecclesiology that is conditioned by two aspects of Pneumatology: eschatology and communion.⁸⁸ To make communion condition the very being of the Church, Zizioulas opines that the church must assign a “constitutive role

⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Holy Spirit and the Unity of the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” 39.

⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 137-39.

⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 137.

⁸² J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 137.

⁸³ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 137.

⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 138.

⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 142. Here, Zizioulas makes use of some biblical scholars’ understanding of “a corporate personality” that can be found in Hebrew thought. See for example Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel*.

⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 138-39.

⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 139 and 145.

⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 131.

to Pneumatology, not one dependent on Christology.”⁸⁹ As we have earlier seen, the Church is according to Zizioulas not simply an institution but also a way of being. Zizioulas has in fact described the Church fundamentally

as a *eucharistic way of being*, for it is in the Eucharist that this love of God the Father is offered to humanity as the unique *hypostasis* in which all human beings can freely obtain otherness and uniqueness. In the Eucharist, otherness is not a psychological ‘experience’ of particularity; but rather, the event of the Eucharist is the ontological affirmation of otherness and particularity through the assurance and foretaste of immortality.⁹⁰

Zizioulas contends, “The Church is a mystery of the unity of the “one” and the “many” – not of the “one” who first exists as “one” and then becomes “many,” but of the one who is at the same time “many.”⁹¹ This *simultaneous* being of the one and the many is enabled only by the Spirit who transcends linear historicism by making the eschaton part of the *anamnesis* (i.e. the historical consciousness) of the Church.”⁹² The place of Pneumatology in ecclesiology is thus vital for this eschatological aspect of the Church that is revealed in her liturgy where the Church can say in the eucharistic *anamnesis* that “in the Spirit,” she “*remembers that...second coming*.”⁹³ This is a *remembrance of the future* – a paradox – effected when the Holy Spirit breaks into history and transforms history into the *eschata* whenever the Eucharist is celebrated. The *epiclesis* is therefore of prime importance in Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. The Holy Spirit comes to the Church to *con-stitute* it as we gather for the Eucharist and as we take part in the very emergence of the Church herself.⁹⁴

4.3.2. The place of Christology and Pneumatology in Ecclesiology

Zizioulas agrees with Florovsky that ecclesiology must not be a separate chapter in theology but an organic one in Christology.⁹⁵ In other words, his starting point in ecclesiology is a Christological one because the Church is described as the Body of Christ in the New

⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141. Here, Zizioulas notes that this is something Vatican II has not done. But with the notion of communion that was stressed in Vatican II, we are not far from an ecclesiology of communion.

⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 79. Italics original. Here, Zizioulas reminds us that it is for this reason that the Eucharist was quite early described in the Church as the “medicine of immortality, an antidote against death” (Ignatius, *Eph.* 20.2; PG 5, 756A) and as “*antidotum vitae*” (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III.19.1; PG 7, 938Df.). See J. Zizioulas *Communion and Otherness*, 79-80, n. 175.

⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 78-79.

⁹² J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 79.

⁹³ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 79. Italics original. See also his *Being as Communion*, 180.

⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 140.

⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 15. Florovsky had remarked, “The Theology of the Church is nothing but a chapter, and one of the principal chapters, of Christology. Without this chapter, Christology itself would not be complete. It is within the framework of Christology that the mystery of the Church is proclaimed is proclaimed in the New Testament. It was presented in the same way by the Greek and the Latin Fathers.” See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 35, n. 39.

Testament.⁹⁶ The most important thing in ecclesiology is, according to Zizioulas, “*the very person of Christ* and man’s union with Him. In this way, the Church is described as Christ Himself, ‘*the whole Christ*’ in Augustine’s apt phrase,⁹⁷ while ecclesiology ceases to be a separate chapter for theology but becomes an organic *chapter for Christology*.”⁹⁸ Christians are said to be “incorporated into the Body of Christ and not of the Spirit, and it is Christ who is the head of the body.”⁹⁹ Viewed in this light, Christology seems undoubtedly the starting point in ecclesiology. However, Zizioulas also asks whether Christology is conceivable without Pneumatology.¹⁰⁰ The answer he provides is that Christology cannot be separated from Pneumatology in trinitarian theology. In fact, the synthesis between the two for Zizioulas is absolutely essential for a proper understanding of the Church. Zizioulas writes,

The mystery of the Church has its birth in the entire economy of the Trinity and in a pneumatologically constituted Christology. The Spirit as “power” or “giver of life” opens up our existence to become relational, so that he may at the same time be “communion” (*koinonia*, cf. II Cor. 13:13). For this reason the mystery of the Church is essentially none other than that of the “One” who is simultaneously “many” – not “One” who exists first of all as “One” and *then* as “many,” but “One” and “many” at the same time.¹⁰¹

Here, Zizioulas argues for a pneumatologically constituted Christology. Viewed in this light, ecclesiology becomes closely associated with Pneumatology. So, we see that Zizioulas takes as a starting point that the Church is not only an institution related to Christ, but also an *event* or a way of being related to the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² Zizioulas stresses that the Church is simultaneously constituted by both Christology and Pneumatology.¹⁰³ It is the Body of Christ precisely in its being a “spiritual body.”¹⁰⁴

Thus the Church becomes in the Spirit an image of the Trinity itself in which the “essential” and the “existential,” nature and person, are not causing each other but are identical with each other. This makes it important to distinguish between “essence” and “event” in ecclesiology. This is what the Spirit does to the ontology of the Church. At the same time, the same Spirit as life-giver and communion brings the ultimate, the *eschaton* (Acts 2) – i.e., the eternal life of God – into history. The Church becomes in this way the communion of saints in which the past, the present, and the future are not causally related to each other, but are one as the Body of Christ in the event of communion.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 75.

⁹⁷ *Tract. on the Gospel of John* 21.8 (PL 35:1568).

⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 15.

⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 77.

¹⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112. This is further discussed in chapter six “Ministry and Communion,” in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (1985). Italics original.

¹⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 15.

¹⁰³ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 79.

¹⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 79.

¹⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimensions,” in *The One and the Many*, 79-80. Italics original.

This is Zizioulas' modified position on the Church in his later works which see him move closer to defining the Church in pneumatological terms without undermining its Christological foundations.¹⁰⁶ In a sense, he has re-emphasised the pneumatological dimension of the Church and made Pneumatology constitutive of the Church together with Christology which is inconceivable in itself without Pneumatology. Zizioulas regards this synthesis of Pneumatology and Christology as the "*sine qua non* condition for a proper understanding of the Church."¹⁰⁷ This synthesis is achieved ecclesologically, according to Zizioulas, in the Eucharist.

4.3.2.1. *The Eucharist and the Church*

Zizioulas considers that the Church has a stable being even in her becoming the Church.¹⁰⁸ This stable being is found in the structure and life of the Church and especially in the Eucharist which constitutes the Church while being constituted by it.¹⁰⁹ Zizioulas notes that

Although the Eucharist was instituted Christologically, i.e., in the Last Supper, it was not celebrated on the day of its institution but on that of the Resurrection, the eschatological day of Sunday. In the Spirit, the institutional aspect could no longer be objectively conceived in itself except for historiography; it was celebrated on the Eighth Day in its being localized in a community. In the Eucharist, therefore, the Body of Christ in its objective ontology becomes conditioned epiclestically. The Eucharist portrays the mastery of the Church par excellence precisely because of this synthesis: without Christ there is no community, but unless there is a community to invoke the Spirit, Calvary is no longer Calvary. The *epiclesis* of the Spirit gives life to the Body (John 6:63), and this removes the sacramental reality of the Church from any notion of causality: thanks to the epiclesis, the Church realizes in herself the Christ event without her causing it to happen and without her being caused by it. There is no issue of priority between Christ and the Spirit, and this is instructively shown by the epicleses of the early Church.¹¹⁰

4.3.2.2. *The Bishop and the Church*

This brings us to the central role of the bishop in the Church. Zizioulas argues that the bishop is constitutive of the Church and of the mystery of the Eucharist.¹¹¹ In other words, the Church cannot exist without the bishop. In fact, all orders of the laity, deacons, presbyters and the bishop are required to be present in worship before one can say that the Church is fully Catholic even if it is a local Church. This is to say that a parish led by a presbyter is not a

¹⁰⁶ See his "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church" in *The One and the Many*, 75-90. This is where he argues that the synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology is necessary for a proper understanding of the Church.

¹⁰⁷ J Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimensions," in *The One and the Many*, 77.

¹⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 20. Zizioulas is suspicious of ideas of the Church evolving as put forward by some Roman Catholic e.g. L. Cerfaux) and Anglican theologians (e.g. G. Dix). He believes in the essence of the Church even if there may these outer coverings around it. See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 38, n. 63.

¹⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 68.

¹¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimensions," in *The One and the Many*, 81.

¹¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 20.

Church in the fullest meaning of the term local Church. This is because the local Church structure is, according to Zizioulas, episcopo-centric. At the centre of the eucharistic assembly is the bishop seated “on the throne of God”¹¹² as an icon of Christ who is surrounded by the presbyters.¹¹³ As such, the Eucharist is not presbytero-centric but *episcopo-centric* in its nature. It is the bishop and not the presbyter who is the president of the Divine Liturgy and the eucharistic community.¹¹⁴ The presbyters form a *college* surrounding the bishop so that the entire eucharistic assembly becomes an *image* of the worship of God in heaven as described by the apostle John in the book of Revelation.¹¹⁵ This image has been central to Zizioulas’ ecclesiology and relies heavily upon the theology of Ignatius of Antioch.¹¹⁶

To sum up, Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is both Christological and pneumatological. He makes pneumatology condition ecclesiology. In addition, he makes the concept of communion condition ecclesiology. This is to be expected as the Holy Spirit is *koinonia* and thus if pneumatology is to condition ecclesiology, then communion will also be inextricably linked to ecclesiology. This means that we can conceive the Church ontologically as communion. This is how, for Zizioulas, Pneumatology becomes an ontological category in ecclesiology.¹¹⁷ One cannot but conceive of the Church pneumatologically as well as Christologically.

4.3.3. Orthodox Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Ecclesiology¹¹⁸

In Orthodox theology, there are three basic images of the Church taken from the Bible itself. The Church is a) the people of God, b) the Body of Christ and c) the Temple of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ The last image is of prime importance to Orthodox ecclesiology because Orthodox ecclesiology has always stressed the *pneumatological dimension*. As we have already noted, the Church is also constituted by the Holy Spirit and not simply instituted by Christ. Orthodox ecclesiology has also always been determined by the *Divine Liturgy*, the Eucharist.¹²⁰ As such, *eschatology* and *communion* have determined Orthodox ecclesiology

¹¹² Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1 quoted by J. Zizioulas in *Communion and Otherness*, 296, n. 38.

¹¹³ This is the eschatological vision according to St. Ignatius of Antioch as recorded in his letters *Magn.* 3.1-2; 6.1 and *Trallians* 3.1.

¹¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions,” in *The One and the Many*, 70.

¹¹⁵ Rev. 4-5. The bishop is the image of Christ who occupied the throne of God in place of God. J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 200. See also St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Magn.* 6.1.

¹¹⁶ Zizioulas’ reliance upon St. Ignatius of Antioch is further described in chapter five of this dissertation.

¹¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 132. In his *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, he repeatedly stresses this.

¹¹⁸ See A. Andreopoulos, “A Modern Orthodox Approach to Spirituality,” *Spiritus* 11.1 (2011): 19-20.

¹¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 310-311.

¹²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 131.

because the Eucharist is where the eucharistic-eschatological community gathers in communion.¹²¹

This ecclesial community, the Church, as we have seen, needs to be conditioned by pneumatology.¹²² This is to say that the being of the Church is communion in the Spirit. Zizioulas would like to see the concept of communion pushed to its ontological conclusion.¹²³ For him, *communion* must condition the being of the Church.

We have also seen that this communion-based ecclesiology bears close resemblance to Afanasiev's ecclesiology. Since Afanasiev, this kind of ecclesiology known as eucharistic ecclesiology has interested both Orthodox and Roman Catholics. It uses the second image of the Church – the Body of Christ – more than the other two¹²⁴ in that, in this ecclesiology, it is the Eucharist that makes the Church.¹²⁵ However, Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology did not take into consideration how the universal Church, i.e. the churches in the world, can be the Catholic Church. Afanasiev's ecclesiology implied that the Pope and councils were superfluous since any local church where the Eucharist is celebrated could be the Catholic Church. This is obviously not true. Zizioulas holds that the whole concept of conciliarity is based on communion at all levels of the Church.

Hence Zizioulas has emphasized repeatedly the importance of communion as the ontological category in understanding the Church. This would make way for primacy and conciliarity in the Church through structures that facilitate communion.¹²⁶ How can this be done? Armed with his concept of the eucharistic *hypostasis*, Zizioulas looks to the nature of the Eucharist as a guide to articulate an ecclesial vision based on the Eucharist.

4.3.4. Recapitulation – Zizioulas' Anthropology

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Zizioulas has uniquely defined two types of *hypostases* which characterize man: ecclesial *hypostasis* and biological *hypostasis*.¹²⁷ In addition, Zizioulas has proposed another ontological category called the sacramental or eucharistic *hypostasis*, which holds man's ecclesial and biological hypostases together in the Eucharist.¹²⁸

Beginning with the study of man and particularly the uniqueness and fullness of every

¹²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 131.

¹²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139-40.

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141.

¹²⁴ The other two images are the Church as the "people of God" and the Church as the "Temple of the Holy Spirit."

¹²⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Orthodox Ecclesiology," in *The One and the Many*, 311.

¹²⁶ These are structures that are related to the local Church through the communion of the local churches in regional synods.

¹²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49-59.

¹²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59

human being who is created in the image of God, Zizioulas brings in ecclesiology to help us locate the place where humanity realizes this uniqueness and fullness – in the Church. This is where humanity forms and participates in the Body of Christ and attains full personhood in the fullness of Christ, who is the *ontological ground* of every person.¹²⁹ Through the hypostatic union of the human and the divine natures in Christ's Person, every man

May become *Christ* (according to the Fathers) or 'put on Christ' (according to Paul). And this is what makes Christ the head of a new humanity (or creation) in that he is the first one both chronologically and ontologically to open up this possibility of personhood in which the distance of individuals is turned into the communion of persons.¹³⁰

This communion of persons is accomplished in the Church through the many baptized members constituting the One Body. This is what Zizioulas has called the restoration of personhood in man through and in Christ, which gives rise to the community of the Church. Zizioulas explains,

By virtue of the fact that the human person shares fully in the material world, while at the same time transcending it through the privilege of freedom he possesses, the Church constitutes the place where man acts as the 'priest of creation,' referring it to God (*anaphora*) in freedom and allowing it to become part of the Body of Christ, and thus survive eternally. It is precisely this anthropocentric view of the world that allows for the mystery of the Church to be exclusively *Christocentric*, since Christ as the incarnate Son constitutes *the* Priest of creation, the one who freely offers it to the Father in the form of the eternal eucharistic Anaphora.¹³¹

4.3.5. Personhood in Christ and the Eucharistic Nature of the Church

Zizioulas argues that personhood "is the mode in which nature exists in its ecstatic movement of communion in which it is hypostasized in its catholicity."¹³² This is realized, according to Zizioulas, "in Christ as the man *par excellence* through the hypostatic union"¹³³ whereby personhood in man is restored by the communion of persons that is realized in the community of Christ's Body, the Church. This leads to an understanding of Christology in terms of ecclesiology because,

by being the initiator of personhood for humanity, Christ acquires *a body*, and not only that but he can only be spoken of in terms of this body (Acts 9.5; 1 Cor. 12.12; etc.). At the same time, man in relating to Christ in and through personhood affirms his existence only in communion, in the *koinonia* of the Spirit. The restoration of personhood in Christ thus leads inevitably to the community of the Church which, in its turn offers impersonal nature the possibility of being 'referred' to God in its integrity through the personhood of

¹²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 242.

¹³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245. Italics original.

¹³¹ J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 145. Italics original.

¹³² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245.

¹³³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245.

man. This makes the Church *eucharistic* in its very nature, and man God by participation in God.¹³⁴

According to Zizioulas, the Church is made up of the concrete forms of ecclesial communion (Baptism, the Eucharist and ministry) that reflect the relation between communion and otherness in the Holy Trinity, in Christ and in the Spirit.¹³⁵ All the sacraments in the Church are tied to the Eucharist. This includes baptism which initiates participation in the Eucharist and is always done in the context of a eucharistic community comprising all the orders.

4.3.5.1. *Baptism*

Baptism is the sacrament associated with repentance, the essence of Christian existence in the Church, and with forgiveness.¹³⁶ Every baptized person ceases to be identified with his past, becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God by coming into the eucharistic community as an ‘ordained’ member taking his place in the assembly. He is a new creation and draws his eucharistic hypostasis from the future.

4.3.5.2. *Eucharist*

In the words of Zizioulas,

The Eucharist is the moment in the Church’s life where the anticipation of the *eschata* takes place. The *anamnesis* of Christ is realized not as a mere re-enactment of a past event but as an *anamnesis* of the future,¹³⁷ as an eschatological event. In the eucharist the Church becomes a reflection of the eschatological community of Christ, the Messiah, an image of the Trinitarian life of God.¹³⁸

Hence, the Eucharist is not an objectified ‘thing’ but an ‘event.’ Elsewhere, Zizioulas writes that the Eucharist in the New Testament is the “moment in the life of the Church where – by the Holy Spirit – the ‘eschaton’ enters into history.”¹³⁹ In other words, the anamnestic and an epicletic character of the Eucharist conditions history understood in the light of the eucharistic experience.¹⁴⁰

Zizioulas calls the Eucharist “the heart of the Church, where communion and otherness are realized *par excellence*. If the Eucharist is not celebrated properly, the Church ceases to be the Church.”¹⁴¹ According to Zizioulas, the Eucharist is also where communion and otherness are sanctified. Difference ceases to be divisive and becomes good. Unity and

¹³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245. Italics original.

¹³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 6-9.

¹³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4 and 6.

¹³⁷ This remembrance of the future is dealt with specifically in J. Zizioulas, *Remembering the Future* (2009).

¹³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 254-55. Italics original.

¹³⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 115.

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

communion affirms diversity and otherness in the Eucharist where the catholicity of the Church is realized in time and space without any discrimination on the basis of sex, profession or age.¹⁴²

Zizioulas argues that the “validity” of the Eucharist depends on three essential conditions:¹⁴³

- 1) The presidency (direct or indirect) of the bishop.
- 2) Communion with other churches in the world in time and space through apostolic succession and conciliarity.
- 3) The presence of the community with all its members and orders, including the laymen.

The Eucharist provided the basic framework and structure of the Church in that it gave the early Church an image of the Kingdom of God where the apostles surround Christ in His Kingdom.¹⁴⁴ The Eucharist also provided the *context* for the perpetuation of this structure in history. This provides a way to synthesize the historical and eschatological dimensions of the Church’s existence without the danger of “institutionalization.”¹⁴⁵ This is because for Zizioulas,

the eucharist is perhaps the only reality in the Church which is *at once an institution and an event*; it is the uniquely privileged moment of the Church’s existence in which the Kingdom comes epiclestically, i.e. *without emerging as an expression of the historical process, although it is manifested through historical forms*. In this context the Church relates to the apostles simultaneously by looking backward and forward, to the past and to the future – always, however, by letting the eschaton determine history and its structures.¹⁴⁶

This eschatological vision of the eschatological community at the Eucharist gives us a glimpse of the undivided Kingdom of God upon which the Church can build her unity not by norms such as unity of ministry or doctrine, but by this very vision provided by the eucharistic celebration of God’s faithful. It is in this Eucharist that the Tradition of the Church is not simply passed on generation to generation. Instead it is “re-enacted and re-received in the Spirit” by each generation.¹⁴⁷

4.5.3.3. Ministry

Ministry involves the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit who distributes a variety and a diversity of charisms.¹⁴⁸ Zizioulas quotes from 1 Cor. 12.29 to support the varieties of charisms in the

¹⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 7.

¹⁴³ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions,” in *The One and the Many*, 74.

¹⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 204-06.

¹⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 206.

¹⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 206-07. Italics original.

¹⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 207.

¹⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 8.

Church. He also stresses the absolute *interdependence* among the member-ministries of the Church and cites 1 Cor. 12.21 where Paul said that nobody could say to the other ‘I have no need of you’ when they gathered together. Communion and otherness co-exist most deeply when these concepts are connected to the Eucharist, the *event* of communion and otherness.

Basically, there are three essential principles in Zizioulas’ understanding of church ministry.

1) It is foremost a *Christologically* understood ministry.¹⁴⁹

A Christologically understood ministry transcends all categories of priority and separation that is created by ordination. Christ is apostle,¹⁵⁰ prophet,¹⁵¹ priest,¹⁵² bishop¹⁵³ and deacon¹⁵⁴ according to the early Church. All ministries are Christ’s ministry. Christ is pre-eminent in everything.¹⁵⁵

2) There is no ministry outside the *eucharistic* community.¹⁵⁶

All ministry takes place within the eucharistic community by those who stand in the community. Ministry is relational¹⁵⁷ and all ministers stand in an ontological relation with all the members of the Church. There is no charisma to be possessed individually but ministers obtain their authority to act from the Church itself.¹⁵⁸ According to Zizioulas, ministerial authority is derived from communion in the Church.¹⁵⁹ Even the bishop can exercise his ministerial authority to ordain only if he is himself “existentially related to a community” of a particular city.¹⁶⁰

3) Ministry and ordination cannot be treated in isolation from *trinitarian* theology or Christology.¹⁶¹

Ministry and ordination cannot be treated as autonomous subjects without losing their theological perspectives. A certain ‘Christological mystique’ that identifies the Church minister with Christ himself is required if the Church is to minister to the world.¹⁶² In the Eucharist, Christ recapitulates in himself the gifts offered and offers them to the Father through the Holy Spirit. This is the chief ministry of the Church – to offer all creation to God

¹⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 163 and “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 181.

¹⁵⁰ Heb. 3.1.

¹⁵¹ Matt. 23.8; John 13.13.

¹⁵² Heb. 2.7; 5.6; 8.4; 10.21.

¹⁵³ 1 Pet. 2.25; 5.4; Heb. 13.13. Cf. Ignatius, *Magn.*, 3, 1-2; *Polyc inscr.*

¹⁵⁴ Rom. 15.8; Luke 22.27; Phil. 2.7.

¹⁵⁵ Col. 1.18.

¹⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 163.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 214.

¹⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 164.

¹⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Concept of Authority,” in *The One and the Many*, 174.

¹⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 166 and “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 188.

¹⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 209.

¹⁶² J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 181.

in the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In these principles, we recognize that the Church, Christology and ministry are all inseparably linked by the Eucharist. This is where Christ and the Holy Spirit act through the Body resulting in a ministry that takes into consideration the present here and now as well as the eschatological vision of Christ seated on his throne and surrounded by the angels, elders and the multitude altogether ministering to him. We can say that the very nature of the Church is eucharistic.

4.3.6. Conclusion

The eucharistic nature of the Church means that the Church incorporates two vital basic elements, according to Zizioulas, that of vision and community.

A) Vision

The Eucharist has a visionary nature.¹⁶³ This is evident, according to Zizioulas, from the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel which speaks of the Logos made flesh in visionary language – “we beheld his glory”, which remind us of the visions of Isaiah.¹⁶⁴ It is the vision of the eschatological Kingdom of God to which the Byzantine liturgy attests.¹⁶⁵ In this Kingdom, God is seated on his throne surrounded by the elders and all the multitudes.¹⁶⁶ The *typos* of this eschatological reality with the bishop seated “in the place of God”¹⁶⁷ on his throne is, according to Ignatius of Antioch, the Eucharist.¹⁶⁸

B) Community

The eucharistic community embodies the eschatological community.¹⁶⁹ It has a definite shape and structure that is revealed in the celebration of the Eucharist where the eschatological community is present through the Holy Spirit. The inseparability of the Eucharist and the Church is clear in an ecclesiology that is pneumatologically conditioned by eschatology and an ontology of communion.

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296-97.

¹⁶⁴ John 1.14.

¹⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296.

¹⁶⁶ Rev. 4-5 quoted by J. Zizioulas in “The Development of Conciliar Structures,” in *The One and the Many*, 200.

¹⁶⁷ Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1.

¹⁶⁸ Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1. Quoted by Zizioulas in *Communion and Otherness*, 296.

¹⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 297.

4.4. The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God in the Light of Zizioulas' Ecclesiology

4.4.1. Introduction

In view of all these concepts of communion and pneumatological conditioning of ecclesiology, what can we draw from Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology? According to Tallon, "Interpreters of Zizioulas often note that the Eucharist is the heart, basis and goal of his theology, but less often do they provide a description of the concrete Eucharist that Zizioulas assumes as the *context* for his more well-known teaching regarding personhood, communion and otherness."¹⁷⁰ Since the Eucharist is the key event in understanding Zizioulas' ecclesiology, an attempt is made here to describe it more fully in this section and relate it to the Church and the Kingdom of God.

4.4.2. The nature of the Eucharist

Zizioulas notes that "the testimony of the New Testament concerning the Eucharist is both extremely limited and, by its nature, difficult to interpret."¹⁷¹ The Eucharist was instituted by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper and meant to be repeated.¹⁷² When Jesus took bread and the cup of wine, he commanded his disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me." The Eucharist is based on the events of the Last Supper. However, it is not just a memorial service to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and the giving of his body and blood. According to Zizioulas, Jesus offered us an "*image* of the Kingdom" in the Eucharist.¹⁷³ This image is not just a past event or picture of the Kingdom of God. This image is a *window into the future* of the Kingdom of God that is experienced in the present through participation in the Eucharist.

Zizioulas contends that the Eucharist is first and foremost "an assembly (*synaxis*), a community, a network of relations in which man 'subsists' in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body which transcends every exclusiveness of a biological or social kind."¹⁷⁴ It is a historical context where familial relationships lose their biological exclusiveness and where "relationships of free and universal love" are revealed.¹⁷⁵ Zizioulas opines that patristic theology "saw in the eucharist the historical realization of the philosophical principle which governs the concept of the person, the principle that the *hypostasis* expresses the whole of its nature and not just a part." It is in the Eucharist that Christ is "parted but not divided" and every communicant "is the whole Christ and the whole

¹⁷⁰ See Tallon's Introduction in J. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, xiii.

¹⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, "Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 1.

¹⁷² J. Zizioulas, "Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 1.

¹⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 206.

¹⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60.

¹⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60.

Church.”¹⁷⁶

Secondly, the Eucharist has an eschatological character that helps us to answer the question of how the ecclesial and biological hypostasis are related.¹⁷⁷ It is a *movement* towards realizing man’s eschatological existence in the present. Zizioulas writes,

This liturgical, progressive movement of the Eucharist, its eschatological orientation, proves that in its eucharistic expression the ecclesial hypostasis is not of this world – it belongs to the eschatological transcendence of history and not simply to history. The ecclesial hypostasis reveals man as a person, which, however, has its roots in the future and is perpetually inspired, or rather, maintained and nourished, by the future. *The truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future.*¹⁷⁸

In summary, *assembly* and *movement* are the two fundamental characteristics of the Eucharist and together they, Zizioulas stresses, “constitute the vital core of patristic eucharistic theology” and “make the eucharist *liturgy*.”¹⁷⁹

According to Zizioulas, the whole mystery of Christ is in the Eucharist. As such, the mystery of the Church is also to be revealed in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the most mystical of all aspects of the Church. It is, in Zizioulas’ words, “the mystical experience of the Church *par excellence*.”¹⁸⁰ He bases his findings on the following related to eschatological vision:

- 1) Ignatius of Antioch, who visualized “the Eucharist as a *typos* of the eschatological reality with the bishop seated on the throne of God.”¹⁸¹
- 2) The Byzantine liturgy tries to make the Eucharist “a vision of the Kingdom.”¹⁸²
- 3) All ancient liturgies borrow the vision of Isaiah with the *Trisagion* as their basis.¹⁸³

Zizioulas laments that it is unfortunate that in the course of history, sacramental theology somehow lost “the visionary character of the Eucharist” resulting in the loss of *anticipation* of a future event in the Eucharist.¹⁸⁴ The eucharistic mystery became incomplete in the sense that if we proclaim that Christ has died and stop there, the Eucharist becomes only a “psychological retrospection involving the re-enactment of a past event.”¹⁸⁵ What about the present and the future experience of Christ as risen and of Christ as the one who will come

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60-61.

¹⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61.

¹⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61-62. Italics original. Here, Zizioulas quotes St. Maximus’ *The Church’s Mystagogy* where the Eucharist is understood as movement, as progress towards the goal. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61, n. 62.

¹⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61.

¹⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296-97. Italics original.

¹⁸¹ Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1.

¹⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296, n. 40.

¹⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296.

¹⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 297.

¹⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 297.

again? The eschatological nature of the Eucharist is lost. The Eucharist is both an historical and an eschatological event, an event in which not only the past but the future too is *remembered*.¹⁸⁶ Zizioulas constantly points to this element of *remembering the future* in the eucharistic celebrations.¹⁸⁷ This is possible because of the *epiclesis* whereby the Holy Spirit comes upon the Church gathered at worship.¹⁸⁸ The Holy Spirit comes to dilate history and make it not just a linear progression of time but the breaking in of the eschaton into history.

The Eucharist is a meal in which the historicity is transcended.¹⁸⁹ It is a mystical supper and “the mystical experience of the church *par excellence*.”¹⁹⁰ Its mystical character comes from the fact that it is a heavenly meal that is rooted in the eschatological Kingdom of God that does not belong to this world. It is a faint shadow of the things to come from heaven.

Finally, the catholicity of the Church is revealed in the Eucharist, especially in its structure.¹⁹¹ The structure of the Eucharist is an image of the structure of the Kingdom of God. What is this eucharistic structure?

4.4.3. The Structure of the Eucharist

Zizioulas maintains that the structure of the Eucharist is based on the eschatological Kingdom of God. According to Zizioulas, at the centre of the *synaxis* of the whole Church and behind the one altar was the throne of the one bishop who sat in the place of God and who was understood to be the living image of Christ.¹⁹² Around this throne sat the presbyters. By him stood the deacons helping him in the celebration. In front of him were all the people of God from all races, languages and cultures. For Zizioulas, this structure of the eucharistic community expressed the full catholicity and unity of the Church.

The importance of the bishop cannot be overstated in this eucharistic assembly. He is an indispensable part of the structure of the Eucharist. He is the one

- 1) who offers the Eucharist to God in the name of the Church.
- 2) in whom the many united become one.
- 3) through whose hands the whole community has to pass, in its being offered up to God in Christ.¹⁹³

In short, the bishop is not an individual, but as the icon of Christ, he is in person the head of

¹⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures on Christian Dogmatics*, 153.

¹⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 180, 240, 254 and *Communion and Otherness*, 154.

¹⁸⁸ See also J. McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology, Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 287. McIntyre states here that if there were no epiclesis, the Eucharist would just be a memorial service.

¹⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 162.

¹⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296-97. Italics original.

¹⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 152.

¹⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 152-53.

¹⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 153.

the eucharistic community. He is bishop in relation to his eucharistic community. In Christ's person, he is also the head of this corporate body – the people of God who are gathered in Christ of whom the bishop is an icon. Through his place as the head of Christ's eucharistic body – the Church, he expresses the unity and catholicity of the Church in relation to all members of the eucharistic community of whom he is the head.¹⁹⁴

In the Orthodox Church, the bishop is viewed in the light of the Church's liturgical experience which is encapsulated in Orthodox canon law. Zizioulas writes that

The bishop is thus primarily seen by the Orthodox as the manifestation of the arrival of Christ on earth and only secondarily as the successor of the Apostles, as part of the apostolic college or even as a teacher. Nevertheless, these other aspects are also present. We have distinguished here three fundamental aspects that constitute, at the same time, three dimensions of ecclesiology. The bishop is the organ of the Church's catholicity. He is so by a) expressing the fullness, unity and multiplicity of the eschatological community in each place; b) expressing the historical continuity of the Church in time; and c) expressing the communion and unity of the Church in space.¹⁹⁵

Zizioulas' conception of the relation between the function and the identity of the bishop can be summarized as follows: Firstly, by being the president of the Eucharist, the bishop expresses "the fullness, unity and multiplicity of the eschatological community in each place." Secondly, by being ordained and ordaining new bishops, he expresses "the historical continuity of the Church in time." Lastly, by being in communion with the rest of the Church through councils and synods, he expresses "the communion and unity of the Church in space."¹⁹⁶ These three fundamental aspects of the bishop constitute three dimensions of ecclesiology, namely the eschatological, the historical and the catholic. The bishop as an indispensable part of the structure of the Eucharist also reveals the eschatological and ecclesial dimensions of the Eucharist. Of prime importance to Zizioulas is the fact that the bishop presides over the Eucharist in the Church as Christ presides over the Last Supper with the twelve apostles. This highlights the Christological aspects of the episcopacy which, as Zizioulas poignantly points out, have been lost today in the churches especially when the parish system is dominant.¹⁹⁷ This has made the bishop redundant in the churches as far as the Eucharist is concerned. The bishop who is now viewed as an administrative figure has ceased to be indispensable in the structure of the local church itself. Without the bishop, the local church ceases to be the catholic Church because a) she does not have the full structure of the

¹⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 154.

¹⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 252.

¹⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 252-53.

¹⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, "*Episkope* and *Episkopos*," in *The One and the Many*, 231.

Eucharist that guarantees catholicity and b) she loses her communion with the universal Church through the communion of bishops of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Thus, we see how important the concept of person is especially when we speak of the bishop as the person who relates to God, to the Church and to the world. When he offers the Eucharist, he offers the world and all that is in it to God in his person. He offers not only sacrifices to God but he also offers himself as well while being the head of the eucharistic assembly with whom he con-celebrates the Eucharist and makes up the Body of Christ, the Church. Through the Holy Spirit, the bishop is not merely an individual presiding over the eucharistic assembly,¹⁹⁸ he is the icon of Christ and he points to the eschatological image of the Kingdom of God that is envisioned at the Eucharist. Like Christ, he unites all things in himself and offers it to God in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit present in her through the *epiclesis*. The bishop prays for the Holy Spirit to come upon the assembly to sanctify all present in the Body of the Son of God so that the Church may truly have life and communion and be worthy of the name of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of God.

4.4.4. The Catholicity of the Eucharist

It is usual to associate the word ‘catholic’ with the idea of a universal Church structure consisting of all the worldwide local churches in communion with each other. But for Zizioulas, the local Church is catholic in its very nature.¹⁹⁹ This is the mystery of the “one” and the “many” in which the “primary content of ‘catholicity’ is not a moral but a Christological one.”²⁰⁰ According to Zizioulas, the catholicity of the Church is to be found *solely* in Christ.²⁰¹ “She is catholic first of all because she is the Body of Christ.”²⁰² The Church’s catholicity depends *entirely* on Christ. This is, as Zizioulas puts it, “a Christological reality” in the sense of the Church’s catholicity being “Christ’s unity and it is His catholicity that the Church reveals in her being catholic.”²⁰³ What this means is that the Church’s catholicity is, according to Zizioulas,

Neither an objective gift to be possessed nor an objective order to be fulfilled, but rather a *presence*, a presence which unites into a single existential reality both what is given and what is demanded, the presence of Him who sums up in Himself the community and the

¹⁹⁸ The main function of the bishop was to preside over the eucharistic assembly. He presides in the Lord over the assembly. See 1 Thess. 5.12.

¹⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 108.

²⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 158.

²⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 158.

²⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 158.

²⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 159.

entire creation by His being existentially involved in both of them. The Church is catholic only by virtue of her being where this presence is (Ignatius), i.e. by virtue of her being inseparably united with Christ and constituting His very presence in history..²⁰⁴

Zizioulas maintains that the Church is catholic because “she is where Christ is.”²⁰⁵ Following Ignatius, Zizioulas concludes that the local Church is catholic “*because of the presence within her of the whole Christ in the one Eucharist under the leadership of the Bishop*. In this way, each local Church having its own Bishop is catholic *per se*; that is to say, it is the concrete form in space and time of the whole body of Christ, of the ‘generic’ (*kath’olou*) Church.”²⁰⁶ In addition, the Church is catholic also because of the *pneumatological dimension* of the Church. It is the Temple of the Holy Spirit and hence it is the place where the Holy Spirit descends through the *invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiclesis)* at every Eucharist. This is why the Church’s catholicity also depends constantly upon the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁷ When he descends upon the Church at the Eucharist, “each communicant is transformed into the whole Body of Christ, so in the same Spirit the very structure of the Church becomes the existential structure of each person.”²⁰⁸ According to Zizioulas, this profound thought underlies the idea of Maximus the Confessor that the catholicity of the Church is to be found in each member personally.²⁰⁹ Every baptised person in the Church is the whole Christ.²¹⁰

4.4.5. Apostolic Succession viewed in the Light of the Eucharist

According to Zizioulas, apostolic succession is essentially a succession of eucharistic communities. It is the historical continuity of the Church via the succession of bishops based on the eschatological community. Ordination takes place in the context of the eucharistic community. The bishop is the sole ordainer because he is the head of the eucharistic community who unites his community with the rest of the churches. Thus, every ordination is an ordering of the whole Church of God where the ordained takes his or her place in the entire Church of God.

In Zizioulas’ scheme, the apostles are understood to be “a college surrounding Christ” in

²⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 159-60.

²⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 158.

²⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 117-18. Italics original.

²⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 161.

²⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 84-85.

²⁰⁹ St. Maximus, *Myst. 4* (PG 91:672) quoted by Zizioulas in “Pneumatological Dimension,” in *The One and the Many*, 85, n. 26. The catholicity of the Church is to be found in *each* member personally

²¹⁰ This idea of Zizioulas, who follows St. Maximus closely in this respect, has been called into question by Volf because it contradicts Zizioulas’ concept of the uniqueness of every person. If every person is the whole Christ, as Zizioulas asserts, then how is every person particular in his own way? See M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 89, n. 90.

His Kingdom.²¹¹ This is originally the thought of Ignatius who saw the college of presbyters surrounding the bishop as the image of the apostles surrounding Christ in His Kingdom. Zizioulas describes apostolic continuity in the following way,

Continuity here is guaranteed and expressed not by way of succession from generation to generation and from individual to individual, but in and through the convocation of the Church in one place, i.e. through its *eucharistic structure*. It is a *continuity of communities* and *Churches* that constitutes and expresses apostolic succession in this approach.²¹²

The close relation of apostolic succession to the Eucharist is seen here in that it is the Eucharist that provides the context for the apostolic succession of eucharistic communities and thus for the continuity of the Church herself. This eschatological approach to continuity has almost disappeared from modern ecclesiologies which, according to Zizioulas, view apostolic succession in “a one-sided way” and which have “virtually ignored the fundamental Biblical image of the apostles as an indivisible college surrounding Christ in His Kingdom.”²¹³

Zizioulas has helped us to locate and understand the real image of the Kingdom of God offered to us by Christ Jesus on the night he was betrayed. Zizioulas writes,

In the eucharist, therefore, the Church found *the structure of the Kingdom*, and it was this structure that she transferred to her own structure. In the eucharist the “many” become “one” (1 Cor. 10:17), the people of God become the Church by being called from their dispersion (*ek-klesia*) to one place (*epi to auto*). Through her communion in the eternal life of the Trinity, the Church becomes “the body of Christ,” that body in which death has been conquered and by virtue of which the eschatological unity of all is offered as a promise to the entire world. The historical Jesus and the eschatological Christ in this way become one reality, and thus a real synthesis of history with eschatology takes place.²¹⁴

This synthesis between history and eschatology is what Zizioulas has constantly pointed us to in the Eucharist where the Spirit brings the *eschaton* into history. It is in the Eucharist that the *eschaton* is experienced. This ecclesial experience of the *eschaton* by the Body of Christ brings the Kingdom of God into fulfilment in the world through the eucharistic sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist.²¹⁵ The Kingdom of God breaks into the world whenever the Eucharist is celebrated in a way that models the prototype that has been passed down the centuries ever

²¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 177 and 200.

²¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 177. Italics original.

²¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 204.

²¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 206. Italics original.

²¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 39-82.

since Jesus broke bread with his disciples at the Last Supper.

4.4.6. The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought²¹⁶ and Primacy in the Church

In recent years, there has been an emerging consensus on the ecumenical movement.²¹⁷ First, the Eucharist is understood by the eucharistic community as a meal transcending all divisions in every dimension of existence.²¹⁸ Secondly, the Eucharist is understood in a way whereby the eucharistic anamnesis becomes a “*re*-presentation of the Body of Christ” which reveals to us that her existence as the Body of Christ and her catholicity all depend constantly upon the Holy Spirit.²¹⁹ Hence the Church is where both the Spirit and Christ are present in the Eucharist. The Eucharist makes manifest in the world the “two hands of God”, as Irenaeus has put it. It is thus the primary sacrament of the Church of God in this world.

However, Zizioulas stresses that the Eucharist cannot be reduced to the category of a sacrament.²²⁰ In other words, neither the Church nor her sacraments can be viewed merely in sacramental categories. Furthermore, it is not an objective ‘thing’ that can be categorized and examined. It is thus better approached from the angle of the mystery of God, of man and of the Church in the world. Hence the study of the Eucharist cannot be left on its own without considering the trinitarian aspects of God and the Christological and pneumatological dimensions of the Church.

Zizioulas contends that the Churches in both the East and the West should realize that they need each other and must try to understand each other. Zizioulas has some practical suggestions for each side. Protestant Christianity must give the Eucharist “a more central place in its life.”²²¹ Roman Catholic theology should liberate sacramental theology from “the notions of historical causality imposed by medieval scholastic theology, so that the eschatological and pneumatological aspects of the Eucharist may become more evident.”²²² On their part, the Orthodox Church should try “to draw the ethical implications of the Eucharist and see it as a source of life in all aspects, and not simply as a cultic experience.”²²³ Working together on their respective weaknesses, it is Zizioulas’ hope that through the

²¹⁶ This is a Faith and Order document “The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought,” in *Study Encounter*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1968).

²¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 161, n.74.

²¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 162.

²¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 161. Italics original.

²²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20.

²²¹ J. Zizioulas, “Eschatology and History,” in *The One and the Many*, 135.

²²² J. Zizioulas, “Eschatology and History,” in *The One and the Many*, 135.

²²³ J. Zizioulas, “Eschatology and History,” in *The One and the Many*, 135.

Eucharist, there will be “greater integration of the two major traditions that make up our one and common identity as the Body of Christ.”²²⁴ Through the Eucharist, Zizioulas hopes also to overcome confessional divisions and to work towards ecclesial unity in the Church.²²⁵

This leads us finally to the issue of primacy in the Church which Zizioulas deems the most important ecumenical problem currently. Zizioulas proposes an approach that is based less on historical considerations than on theological ones. His proposal is based on observations regarding the structure of the Eucharist which makes the Church.²²⁶ These observations summarize the basic tenets of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology and are stated as follows:²²⁷

- 1) The Church cannot but be a unity of the one and the many at the same time.

This principle stems from trinitarian theology and from Christology in its relation to Pneumatology. There is no priority of the One God over the triune God. Zizioulas insists that “the Trinity is just as primary as the one substance in the doctrine of God: the ‘many’ are constitutive of the one, just as the one is constitutive of the ‘many.’”²²⁸ This same principle also applies to Christology where Zizioulas maintains,

The fact that Christ is inconceivable without the Spirit makes Pneumatology *constitutive* of Christology. Given that the Spirit operates as a force of *communion* (2 Cor. 13:13) and as the one who *distributes* the charismata and personalizes the Christ-event, Christ as the “anointed one” by the Spirit (*Christos*) is at the same time “one” and “many” – not “one” who *becomes* “many,” but as “one” who is inconceivable without the “many,” his “body.” There can be no “head” without a “body”; there is no “one” without the “many,” no Christ without the Spirit.²²⁹

According to Zizioulas, this “one” and the “many” principle is also fundamental in the case of the Eucharist where there is only one eucharist in the whole Church but this one Eucharist is at the same time many Eucharists.²³⁰

- 2) The Church is local and universal at the same time.

Zizioulas’ opinion is different from that of some Orthodox theologians such as Afanasiev and

²²⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Eschatology and History,” in *The One and the Many*, 135.

²²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 259-60.

²²⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 264-65.

²²⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265-68.

²²⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265.

²²⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 265-66. Italics original.

²³⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 266.

Meyendorff who view the local Church as primary and the Church universal as secondary. Zizioulas has always believed that “the nature of the Eucharist points to the simultaneity of locality and universality in ecclesiology.”²³¹

3) The bishop has both a local and a universal ministry.

A bishop is ordained primarily for a particular local church community. However, he is at the same time a bishop of the Church universal. This is indicated by two canonical provisions as noted by Zizioulas: a) episcopal ordination requires the participation of more than one bishop and b) once a bishop is ordained, he has to exercise his synodical ministry.²³²

4) The synodal system is a “*sine qua non* condition” for the catholicity of the Church.

Zizioulas maintains that synodality is so fundamental in ecclesiology that “there can be no Church without a synod.” This is because

Through this institution the catholicity of the local Church is guaranteed and protected. This is achieved through a double canonical provision. On the one hand, *every* bishop has the right and duty to participate *on equal terms* with all the other bishops in a council, and on the other hand, no council has the authority to interfere with the internal affairs of each bishop’s diocese. The authority of a conciliar synod is limited to the affairs pertaining to the communion of local Churches with one another. Such was, for example, the case in the early Church when canon 5 of I Nicaea instituted the convocation of synods in every region twice a year in order to examine cases of eucharistic excommunication: if a certain bishop excommunicated one of its faithful, the excommunicated person could not go to another local Church to take communion. This could only be decided by a synod of which the bishop concerned would be also a member. The synod could not in this way become an institution *above* the local Church. It would exercise authority only *via* the local Church. Equally, the local Church could not ignore the consequences of its decisions and actions for the other churches, as if it were a “catholic” Church independently of its relations and communion with the rest of the Churches.”²³³

This in effect means that through the synodical system we do not arrive at a universal Church; instead, according to Zizioulas, we “arrive at a *communion of Churches*. *Universality becomes in this way identical with communion*.”²³⁴ This is the way Zizioulas sees the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as “a communion of Churches.”²³⁵

²³¹ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 266.

²³² J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 267.

²³³ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 267-68. Italics original.

²³⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 268. Italics original.

²³⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 268.

Zizioulas argues that if the above four tenets are followed through, it will lead to the consideration of primacy as a “*sine qua non* condition” for the catholicity of the Church.²³⁶ This involves the idea of primacy at *all levels* of the Church: The bishop is the *primus* at the local level, the metropolitan at the regional level and the patriarch at the wider regional level.²³⁷ At the same time, if the apostolic canons, especially canon 34, are adhered to, this will lead us to consider the primacy of Rome on the basis of a universal primacy that fully respects canon 34 of the apostolic canons which states that all the bishops in one region are to recognize their primate as their head and do nothing without him, while the primate should equally do nothing without these bishops.²³⁸ It is only under such conditions whereby “the catholicity of the local Church is respected and at the same time the unity and the oneness of the Church in the world is served and manifested” that a universal primate is deemed by Zizioulas to be “an ecclesiological necessity in a unified Church.”²³⁹

4.4.7. Conclusion

Starting from the structure of the Eucharist, Zizioulas has argued for a eucharistic ecclesiology based on this eucharistic structure and the unity of ecclesial communities in the bishop who also unites in the local church all churches by his being in communion with all bishops in synods presided over by a primate.

4.5. A Comparison between the Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Afanasiev and Zizioulas

Having set out both Afanasiev’s and Zizioulas’ ecclesiologies, we are now in a position to compare them.

4.5.1. Points of convergence

Zizioulas himself points out in his book *Being and Communion* (1985) that readers of this book will surely recognize in his studies the “fundamental presuppositions” of Afanasiev’s “eucharistic ecclesiology.”²⁴⁰ Indeed, there are similarities in their approach and these are summarized as follows:

1. The necessity of all the orders of the people of God to be present for a Eucharist to be con-

²³⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 268.

²³⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 268-70.

²³⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 269-72.

²³⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 273.

²⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 23.

celebrated²⁴¹ in a valid way.

Both Afanasiev and Zizioulas affirm that it is the eucharistic gathering and meeting of the people of God that constitutes the Church.²⁴² They affirm that the Eucharist is primarily an assembly (*synaxis*) and *act* of God's people who have been called together in the corporate act of worshipping God.²⁴³ It is, as Zizioulas writes, "a 'catholic' act of a 'catholic' Church."²⁴⁴ It is here in the eucharistic community that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts "by constituting the whole structure of the Church" in an event of free communion in the presence of all orders of the people of God.²⁴⁵

2. All the ministries in the Church are organically linked to the Eucharist.

According to Afanasiev, the priestly ministry of every member of the church "finds expression in the eucharistic assembly."²⁴⁶ There is no ministry of the Church apart from the Eucharist. Ministry arises out of the worship of God by God's people. The ministry of the Church is the ministry of the eucharistic assembly which comprises the *laos* who have been given God's spiritual gifts for the ministry.²⁴⁷ Zizioulas even goes so far as to say that all the fundamental elements which constitute the Church's structure and historical existence had necessarily to pass through the eucharistic community to be "sure" (according to Ignatius of Antioch) or "valid" and "canonical" (according to canon law).²⁴⁸

3. The decisive importance of the eucharistic experience of the early Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch in the shaping of ecclesiology.

Both Afanasiev and Zizioulas refer very often to the letters of Ignatius of Antioch when defining the eucharistic assembly and the consequences of gathering together as the people of God.²⁴⁹ It is here that the Church is formed and re-formed. It is here that Christ is present in the Spirit.²⁵⁰ Together with Ignatius, both Afanasiev and Zizioulas emphasize the indispensability of the bishop in the Church and the catholicity of each local church.²⁵¹

²⁴¹ According to Zizioulas, the term – con-celebration can mean two things. While it could mean that all the different orders do the same thing, it could also mean that each order participates in the Eucharist according to its proper place in the eucharistic assembly. Zizioulas favors this latter definition. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 232, n. 69.

²⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

²⁴³ The Eucharist is understood primarily not as a thing or "an objectified means of grace." See J. Zizioulas *Being as Communion*, 145, n. 5.

²⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 145.

²⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

²⁴⁶ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

²⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 221-23.

²⁴⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

²⁴⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 6, 37, 88, 223-29 and J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 221-23.

²⁵⁰ We are hereby reminded of the Eucharistic prayers at communion, "The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us."

²⁵¹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 6, 37, 88 and J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 238-42. The influence of St. Ignatius on Zizioulas will be discussed in chapter five. For Zizioulas, the catholicity of the local church depends very much on the ministry and presence of the bishop.

4. The importance of Pneumatology in ecclesiology.

Both Afanasiev and Zizioulas stress that the Church is *of the Holy Spirit*.²⁵² The Church is pneumatologically conditioned and formed. There is no church apart from the Holy Spirit because it is the Holy Spirit that constitutes the Church whenever all the people of God gather in the Eucharist. The Spirit also makes the Church an eschatological community that has been called and formed by God in time to be in communion with God and with those outside of time.²⁵³ Therefore, the Church lives and acts by the Spirit.²⁵⁴

5. The importance of love in the Church.

For Afanasiev, love is the “common content of the ministries of the Church.”²⁵⁵ Even if there is law and power in the church, these must be based on love and must never banish grace from the life of the church. Those who preside in the Lord²⁵⁶ must do so in love while authority belongs only to the Church “which presides in love.”²⁵⁷ The repeated emphasis on love can be found in Afanasiev’s works. In “*Una Sancta*” (1963), he writes,

When love has once again become the foundation of life in all the churches, then dogmatic divergences that seem insurmountable will be removed in the light of this Love. Christian people have placed knowledge above Love because they have forgotten that “our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect” (1 Cor. 13:9). When Love is raised higher than knowledge, then knowledge itself will be perfected.²⁵⁸

Likewise, Zizioulas emphasizes love as the goal of all ministry and the ascetic life. The capacity of the person to love without exclusiveness, not out of a moral obligation but out of his “hypostatic constitution”, is a characteristic of what Zizioulas calls, an ecclesial hypostasis.²⁵⁹

6. Both have considered the Limits to the Church

Afanasiev wrote a book *The Limits of the Church* that was almost (but never) completed before he passed away. This was meant to be a follow-on complementary book to *The Church of the Holy Spirit*. Zizioulas has also constantly wrestled with the limits of the Church²⁶⁰

²⁵² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit* and J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 110-11.

²⁵³ The Apostles’ Creed reminds Christian worshippers that we believe in the communion of saints. The Church commemorates the saints who have reposed and entered into eternity. They remain in communion through the Holy Spirit with the faithful who are gathered in the eucharistic assembly so that together they become the people of God and of His Kingdom.

²⁵⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 1-2.

²⁵⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 275.

²⁵⁶ Afanasiev has written a whole chapter on “Those who preside in the Lord” to trace the origins and meaning of the bishop-presbyters in the early church. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 133-68.

²⁵⁷ N. Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 110.

²⁵⁸ N. Afanasiev, “*Una Sancta*,” in M. Plekon (ed.) *Tradition Alive*, 28.

²⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 57-58.

²⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 314-15. According to Florovsky, there were two types of limits: a) canonical limits (Cyprian) and b) charismatic limits (Augustine). Zizioulas strives to find a balance between the two

having read Florovsky who had earlier written an article on this topic to set out the canonical and charismatic boundaries of the Church.²⁶¹ Based on the catholicity of the Church in the world and her constant interaction with the world, Zizioulas concludes that “there is no point where the limits to the Church can be objectively and finally drawn.”²⁶²

7. The Importance of Baptism and Confirmation for entry into the Church and participating in the Eucharist

Afanasiev and Zizioulas place special importance on the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation²⁶³ as ‘ordination’ in the Church whereby a person is given his proper place in the eucharistic assembly together with the rest of the people of God. It is the fundamental precondition for participating in the Eucharist and receiving the grace that comes from God. The three rites of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist remain united in the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church.²⁶⁴

8. The Eucharist as the source of unity in the Church

Afanasiev and Zizioulas both look to the Eucharist as the enduring link between divided Christians. For Afanasiev, the Eucharist is the principle link between Catholics and Orthodox.²⁶⁵ The Church cannot be and remain divided because Christ is never divided²⁶⁶ and because “there will be only one flock and one shepherd” (John 10.16).²⁶⁷

9. Canons of the Church

Afanasiev and Zizioulas appeal to the canons of the Church for authoritative direction in the governing of the Church and her ministries.²⁶⁸ Afanasiev was himself an expert in canon law and quoted often from church canons such as the council of Trullo, canon 64, which forbade

while Florovsky clearly favors the Augustinian view. See J. Zizioulas, “The Self-Understanding of the Orthodox,” in *The One and the Many*, 323.

²⁶¹ G. Florovsky, “The Limits of the Church,” in *Church Quarterly Review* (Geneva: WCC, 1933). The views in this essay are repeated in G. Florovsky, “The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem,” in *The Ecumenical Review* (1950): 152-61.

²⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 162.

²⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 6 and “Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist,” in *The One and the Many*, 91-100. N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 24. Here, Afanasiev refers to baptism and confirmation as “lay ordination.”

²⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 91. Here, Zizioulas maintains that there is only “one mystery, that of Christ, in which the entire mystery of our salvation is contained” and that Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist “remained united in the liturgical life, and it was there, too, that no particular theology of any of these three developed, at least in the first centuries.”

²⁶⁵ See N. Afanasiev, “The Eucharist: The Principal Link between the Catholics and the Orthodox,” *Irénikon* 3 (1965): 337-39. This article was published in English in M. Plekon (ed.) *Tradition Alive*, 47-49. See also J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* and M. Plekon (ed.), *Tradition Alive*, 2.

²⁶⁶ Zizioulas maintains that “Christ is not divided” even if we have many churches but we have only One Body. See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 259.

²⁶⁷ See N. Afanasiev, “*Una Sancta*,” *Irénikon* 36 (1963): 436-75. This work has been published in English in *Tradition Alive*, ed. M. Plekon, 30. See especially page 7.

²⁶⁸ Zizioulas looks to the canons of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea for the justification of having only one bishop in every city.

the laity from preaching publicly.²⁶⁹ Zizioulas himself appealed to canon 8 of the council of Nicaea to back up his claim that there should be only *one* bishop in the Church of one city.²⁷⁰ He also appealed to Nicaea's canon 4 for evidence in support of his view that the election of a bishop is done by all the bishops of the province.²⁷¹ Afanasiev also refers to this canon on the topic of conciliarity but says that the assembly of bishops are part of the regular local assembly,²⁷² something that Zizioulas disagrees with because the historical evidence points to a provincial council of bishops and not a local council.²⁷³ Zizioulas also constantly points to canon 34 of *The Apostolic Canons* that states that the heads of the local churches in each region must recognize the primate of a particular city and that both the local bishops and their primate need each other's approval before doing anything outside their dioceses.²⁷⁴ In addition, Zizioulas appeals to canon 5 of the First Council of Nicaea to support the rule that synods cannot intervene directly in the affairs of a local Church "except in so far as these affairs affect the life of other local Churches in an essential and direct way."²⁷⁵

4.5.2. Points of Divergence

Though similar in many respects, there are also significant differences between Afanasiev and Zizioulas. The following points summarize these differences:

1. The different importance attached to the ministry of the bishop.

For Zizioulas, only the bishop is to preside over a eucharistic assembly.²⁷⁶ Without his presence or mention of his name, the Eucharist thus celebrated by the faithful would not be valid even if it was presided over by a presbyter. This is because the bishop is, according to Zizioulas,

²⁶⁹ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 72.

²⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 8-9. The bishop was the unity of the Church and thus if the Church gathers around several bishops based on cultural and ethnic differences, this will cause divisions in the Church in that city. See also J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 146, "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 212, "Ecclesiological Issues Inherent in the Relations Between Eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental Non-Chalcedonian Churches," in *The One and the Many*, 300 and 302.

²⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 203.

²⁷² N. Afanasiev, "Le concile dans la théologie orthodoxe russe," *Irénikon* 35 (1962): 320.

²⁷³ J. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 204.

²⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," in *The One and the Many*, 55-56, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 250, "The Institution of Episcopal Conferences: An Orthodox Reflection," in *The One and the Many*, 258, "Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology," in *The One and the Many*, 284 and "Uniformity, Diversity and the Unity of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 340. This is a very important canon that Zizioulas uses to support the idea of primacy in the Church. It is the "golden rule" of the theology of primacy, according to Zizioulas. For the importance of this canon, see P. Duprey, "The Synodical Structure of the Church in Eastern Orthodox Theology," *One in Christ* 7 (1971): 152-82, esp. 154f.

²⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, "The Institution of Episcopal Conferences," in *The One and the Many*, 256. Here, Zizioulas gives an example of when the synod has exercised authority over the local Church and its bishop. This happened in cases when the provincial synod decided on cases of excommunication from the Eucharist. This was a matter that affected all the other Churches since excommunication from one Church meant excommunication from *all other Churches*.

²⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 152-53.

The one who would offer the Eucharist to God in the name of the Church, thus bringing up to the throne of God the *whole Body of Christ*. He was the one in whom the ‘many’ united would become ‘one,’... the bishop would become the one through whose hands the whole community would have to pass in its being offered up to God in Christ, i.e. in the highest moment of the Church’s unity.”²⁷⁷

For Zizioulas, all ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit pass through the bishop in the Church to make manifest the *koinonia* of the Spirit and the community created by it.²⁷⁸ He is the “sole ordainer.” The bishop is the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus*.²⁷⁹ For a Eucharist to be canonically “valid”, Zizioulas maintains that the bishop must preside over the eucharistic assembly.²⁸⁰ In addition, Zizioulas places emphasis on the bishop being closely connected to the other neighbouring bishops who ordained him. This places his Church in communion with the rest of the churches. This communion of the churches through the bishops was something Afanasiev overlooked in his eucharistic ecclesiology that over-emphasized the local church at the expense of the structure of the universal Church, according to Zizioulas.²⁸¹ For Afanasiev, it was the bishop or presbyter who could preside over a eucharistic celebration of the faithful. However, Afanasiev does not place stress on the bishop as the sole ordainer but emphasizes instead that the Holy Spirit is the One who pours out His gifts on the baptized (though not necessarily through the bishop). Afanasiev also does not appear to insist on the bishop presiding over the Eucharist.²⁸² In relation to the celebration of the Eucharist, Afanasiev particularly mentions the category of “senior presbyter” who occupied the unique central place of being the head of the eucharistic assembly.²⁸³ He took on the role of the bishop in presiding over the eucharistic assembly and in offering thanksgiving on behalf of the people of God as was done in the early second century Church following the apostolic age.

2. *The different ecclesiological emphasis eschatologically and historically.*

Zizioulas seems to put more emphasis on the eschatological nature of the Church and the Eucharist in his constant reference to the Revelation to St. John, particularly to what John saw in the heavenlies – the order of worship of all creatures around God’s throne (Rev. 4-5).²⁸⁴ Afanasiev seems on the other hand to look back over history towards an ideal church

²⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 153. Italics original.

²⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 199.

²⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 195. Zizioulas draws from Hippolytus of Rome this definition of the bishop.

²⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Presuppositions,” in *The One and the Many*, 73-74.

²⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 155, n. 57.

²⁸² N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 202.

²⁸³ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 212.

²⁸⁴ Zizioulas emphasizes the Eucharist as the *moment* when the Church realizes her historical and eschatological being. See *Being as Communion*, 187-88. Afanasiev also quotes from the vision of St. John the Theologian [in the Book of Revelation (4:2-4)] to describe the image of a eucharistic assembly but he does so far less often than Zizioulas who even suggests that

modeled after the primitive churches in the first three centuries after Christ's Resurrection. Although both cite Ignatius of Antioch's advocacy of an ecclesiology that is basically episcopo-centric and eucharistic, it is Zizioulas who emphasizes a more eschatological approach to apostolic succession and ministry in the Church.

3. The different importance placed on the universal church in relation to the local churches.

Zizioulas is more concerned than Afanasiev about the way the many local churches are united in the one universal Church. This is the basis of Zizioulas' criticism of Afanasiev's ecclesiology as being too "localized" and which seems to bear no relation to the wider Church. Zizioulas is thus more open than Afanasiev to the necessity of a universal primacy for the *bene esse* of the Church leading him to reconsider the possibility of the bishop of Rome being the first amongst equals among all the bishops, the primate of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.²⁸⁵ Afanasiev on the other hand is highly suspicious of the so-called universal church model on which he believes the Roman Catholic Church has built her entire church structure with the Pope as the head. This universal ecclesiology was, according to Afanasiev, formulated by Cyprian of Carthage (a Roman by education and habit) and was adopted and promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church.²⁸⁶ Afanasiev, like many in the Orthodox Church, therefore strongly refutes all Roman Catholic claims regarding the primacy of the bishop of Rome.²⁸⁷ At most, Afanasiev is only prepared to concede in his writings that the Church of Rome "presides in love"²⁸⁸ and has "priority" over the other churches.²⁸⁹ This priority is more so a matter of honour and of 'witness.' In contrast to primacy, it does not entail that all churches are subject to the primate. Zizioulas notes that Afanasiev "insists that universal ecclesiology is unknown in the ancient Church until St. Cyprian, and that the idea of primacy is a juridical notion contradicting the evangelical idea of grace."²⁹⁰

4. The different emphasis on unity in the Church and how it is achieved.

the bishop is an *alter Christus* who takes the place on the throne of God in the Eucharist. See N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 169.

²⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 273.

²⁸⁶ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," in *The Primacy of Peter*, 59. Afanasiev goes on in this article to analyse the evidence from Cyprian's writings that point to a universal church with Rome exercising primacy (pages 60-65). Zizioulas however thinks that Afanasiev was wrong to read universalistic ideas back into Cyprian's ecclesiology as was done in N. Afanasiev, "La doctrine de la primauté à la lumière de l'ecclésiologie," *Istina* 2 (1957): 401-20. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 200-01.

²⁸⁷ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 57. Afanasiev could not reconcile the idea of primacy with the Divine Eucharist. See J. Zizioulas, "Primacy and Nationalism," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 57.3-4 (2013): 452.

²⁸⁸ This is a phrase in Ignatius' letter to the Romans.

²⁸⁹ See the final chapter of Afanasiev's *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007) and his other important article, "The Church Which Presides in Love." Zizioulas himself opines Afanasiev's distinction between priority and primacy "remains an ambiguous one: why should 'priority' mean necessarily 'grace,' and 'primacy,' 'legalism'?" See also J. Zizioulas, "Recent Discussions on Primacy," in *The One and the Many*, 281.

²⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Recent Discussions on Primacy," in *The One and the Many*, 281.

Zizioulas and Afanasiev both emphasize the unity of the Church but place differing emphasis on how this is achieved. For Zizioulas, unity in the Church is to be found chiefly in the bishop and in the Eucharist over which he presides.²⁹¹ For Afanasiev, church unity is to be found in the Eucharist celebrated by all the people of God present in a local community. He does not emphasize as Zizioulas does, unity based on the communion of churches through their respective bishops in communion with each other and through eucharistic communities in communion with each other

A) in time (*communio sanctorum*) through apostolic succession and

B) in space (*communio in sacris*) through conciliarity.²⁹²

5. The different importance placed on the parish.

The different importance placed on the parish is the major point of divergence between these two theologians. Zizioulas concluded in his doctoral dissertation *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* that the parish is not the catholic Church even if the Eucharist is celebrated there.²⁹³ To suggest that the parish is the catholic Church risks giving priority to the local church over the universal Church. This is something Zizioulas consistently refuses to do. Zizioulas opines that Afanasiev is wrong to conclude that the local church has priority over the universal because the Eucharist points to the *simultaneity* of both the local and the universal.²⁹⁴ For Afanasiev, the parish itself becomes the Church in its catholicity when the Eucharist is celebrated by all the people of God in a particular parish. In the parish is found all the elements of a Church. This is opposed by Zizioulas who links the Eucharist closely with the bishop, an indispensable person constituting the structure of the Church and who unites in himself his church and the rest of the Church.

6. The difference in thoughts on what the Eucharist achieves in ecclesiology.

Zizioulas views the Eucharist as being able to express simultaneously both the localization and the universalization of the mystery of the Church.²⁹⁵ In addition, it is the moment when the historical and eschatological aspects of the Church coincide.²⁹⁶ Afanasiev, by contrast, pays far less attention to the universalizing and eschatologizing tendencies of the Eucharist and accepts the Eucharist as the local manifestation of the catholic Church presently and historically.

²⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. The sub-title of this book is *The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries*.

²⁹² J. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 213.

²⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 259.

²⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 133.

²⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 25.

²⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 187-88.

7. *Inter-communion*

Afanasiev supports inter-communion because both Catholics and Orthodox celebrate the same Eucharist despite canonical dis-unity. Zizioulas, however, does not support inter-communion.²⁹⁷ For him, the act of celebrating the Eucharist is not enough to make a church. Communion must be preceded by a common faith and love. This is because the Eucharist is “the expression of the very nature of the Church in its fullness, and what is required for the Eucharist is union in love and faith.”²⁹⁸ Schism and heresy are the conditions under which inter-communion cannot occur.²⁹⁹ Wherever there is schism, there is a break in communion and one party will naturally not recognize the other party’s saints.³⁰⁰ Zizioulas asks how then can these different groups (who recognize different saints of the Church) communicate at the same altar when there is schism?³⁰¹ This is not possible unless the schism is first healed through repentance and agreement by negotiation of all parties.³⁰² This is why Zizioulas holds firm to the position that Roman Catholics, Protestants and members of the Orthodox still cannot have communion together at the same table until the schisms are healed.

8. *The difference in views on the ordination of a priest or deacon.*

Afanasiev regards the ordained person in a functional role.³⁰³ The ordained priest has a special ministry as he has been called by God to this office. Afanasiev quotes from Eph. 4.11-12 and 1 Cor. 12.28-30 to list the offices of the various ministries in the Church.³⁰⁴ These offices describe the functional forms of ministry. By contrast, Zizioulas stresses the ontological and relational aspects, as well as the iconological and eschatological aspects of being an ordained bishop, priest or deacon.³⁰⁵ These offices are for Zizioulas, not merely

²⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 258 and *Communion and Otherness*, 8. This has been observed by R. Bordeianu, “Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Retrieving Eucharistic Ecclesiology,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44.2 (Spring 2009): 239.

²⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 317.

²⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 8.

³⁰⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Issues,” in *The One and the Many*, 293. For example, the Eastern Orthodox Church will not recognize Roman Catholic saints such as Francis of Assisi or Bernard of Clairvaux because they were not part of the Eastern Orthodox Church due to the schism of 1054 which affected the *communio sanctorum* of the Church. See also J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 291-92. Here, Zizioulas emphasizes that membership in the Church is not only communion with Christ but also with all the living and departed “saints” in the community of the Church as a whole.

³⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Issues,” in *The One and the Many*, 294. Communion involves not only the people present at the Eucharist but also the saints who are in the Lord. If for example, say, the Orthodox Church has anathematized some saints of the Roman Catholic Church, how then can there be inter-communion with the Roman Catholic Church unless the anathema against these saints is lifted? As Zizioulas reminds us from 1 Cor. 10.16-17 according to St. Paul’s perspective, eucharistic communion is not only *communio in sacris* but is also at the same time *communio sanctorum*. See J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Issues,” in *The One and the Many*, 291.

³⁰² J. Zizioulas, “Ecclesiological Issues,” in *The One and the Many*, 294-95.

³⁰³ See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 226, where he cites N. Afanasiev “L’Eglise de Dieu dans le Christ,” in *La Pensée Orthodoxe* 13 (1968): 19.

³⁰⁴ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 82.

³⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 226-29. In support of this ontological position, Zizioulas cites the Patristic Fathers such as St. Ignatius of Antioch, Theodore of Mopsuestia, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Maximus the Confessor. He also cites from P. Trembelas, *Dogmatique*, III (1968), 329f. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 227-30.

functional, but they form the structure of the Church which in the Eucharist is supposed to be the icon of the eschatological Kingdom of God. Ordination to each of the orders means assigning to each person his place in the eucharistic assembly which is an image of the Kingdom of God in the eschaton.³⁰⁶

9. Universal Primacy³⁰⁷

Zizioulas allows for the possibility of a universal primate in his eucharistic ecclesiology even though the idea of a universal primacy has generally been rejected by the Orthodox.³⁰⁸ Zizioulas has even moved in the direction of making primacy a *necessary* condition for the unity of the Church.³⁰⁹ However, Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology excludes this possibility of a universal primate.³¹⁰ Afanasiev maintains that a universal primate can only be associated with a universal ecclesiology.³¹¹ The reason for excluding primacy is simply Afanasiev's rejection of the power of one bishop over the universal Church. Even if there may be one bishop (e.g. the patriarch) who has a more special position than the rest of the bishops and is head over many churches, Afanasiev describes such a bishop as having "priority" over the other bishops. Afanasiev strongly avoids using the term 'primate' which he asserts is a legalistic expression. Instead, he prefers the term "priority" when referring to the church that possesses a "greater authority of witness" because the concept of priority is "founded on the idea of grace."³¹² Afanasiev rejects any notion of primacy chiefly because it is incompatible with eucharistic ecclesiology. In eucharistic ecclesiology, all local churches possess catholicity. However, the one local church "which presides in love" and which has *priority* over all the others will direct the Church of God.³¹³ Afanasiev hints that the church of Rome should be that local church that "presides in love."³¹⁴ After all, it was the Roman

³⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229.

³⁰⁷ See E. McManus, "Aspects of Primacy according to Two Orthodox Theologians," *One in Christ* 36.3 (2000): 234-50.

³⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 273 and "Recent Discussions on Primacy," in *The One and the Many*, 282-84. Yet there have been some Orthodox theologians such as A. Schmemmann and J. Meyendorff who do not outrightly reject the idea of primacy but concede that primacy has historically played a *necessary* part in Church unity. See A. Schmemmann, "Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology," in *The Primacy of Peter*, 39f and J. Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 1982), 243f and J. Meyendorff, "St. Peter in Byzantine Theology," in *The Primacy of Peter*, 8 and 29.

³⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 273.

³¹⁰ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 81.

³¹¹ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 72-73.

³¹² N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 81-82. This has been criticized by Zizioulas who feels that the difference between "primacy" and "priority" remains ambiguous. He questions Afanasiev's attempts to link "priority" with grace but "primacy" with legalism. See J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 281 and N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 108.

³¹³ N. Afanasiev, "The Church Which Presides in Love," 110.

³¹⁴ N. Afanasiev, "Una Sancta," 26. See also N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 227 and 308, n. 22. Based on the evidence of the inscription of Ignatius' letter to the Romans, Afanasiev traces the idea of the primacy of Rome to St. Ignatius who recognized the importance of the Roman Church which Ignatius characterized as "presiding in love in the multiplicity of local churches." See also the section on the Greeting of St. Ignatius' letter to the Church in Rome.

church that enjoyed primacy for centuries and its organization became the paradigm for other churches.³¹⁵ Afanasiev has written on how a local church could “preside in love” in actual practice by excelling in witness, service and love.³¹⁶ This church has, according to Afanasiev, “priority of *authority*, by giving witness on events in the Church’s life.”³¹⁷ Zizioulas, on the other hand, has provided some *structural* conditions (conciliarity and synodality)³¹⁸ under which a universal primate could indeed “preside in love” over the many episcopal churches.³¹⁹

4.6. Summary and Conclusion

We conclude this chapter by first summarizing the two basic tenets of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology.

1) *The model of communion and otherness for the Church is the trinitarian God.*³²⁰

This is the fundamental pre-supposition of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. The Church must “mirror the communion and otherness that exists in the triune God.”³²¹ As the Church is primarily communion, exactly as is the case in the trinitarian God, Zizioulas contends that we should conceive the Church as “*a way of being*.”³²² Just as the Trinity is God’s way of being in communion, so too a Church modelled upon the Trinity also exists in communion.

2) *Pneumatology must condition ecclesiology as well as Christology.*³²³

Zizioulas contends that if we are to make trinitarian doctrine decisive for ecclesiology, “we must give to the Holy Spirit a *constitutive* role in the structure of the Church.”³²⁴ This was something Zizioulas feels Vatican II did not do even while progress was made in recognizing the local church in ecclesiology.³²⁵ Therefore, Zizioulas takes it upon himself to propose an ecclesiology that is conditioned by the concept of communion. He hopes that there will be a Vatican III that will make the notion of communion condition the very being of the Church so that ecclesial institutions will be transformed and the ministry of the bishop of Rome may be

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0107.htm> (last accessed 11 Apr 2017)

³¹⁵ N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 195.

³¹⁶ Afanasiev emphasizes the “power of love” in the Church, a power that derives not from law but from the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ and from the Holy Spirit. It is love that is the basis of all service and ministry in the Church. See his final chapter “The Power of Love” in *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 255-75.

³¹⁷ N. Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” 110. Italics mine.

³¹⁸ According to Zizioulas, canon 34 of the “Apostolic Canons” provides the golden rule for a theology of primacy. J. Zizioulas, “Recent Discussions on Primacy,” in *The One and the Many*, 284.

³¹⁹ See his “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” and “Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” in *The One and the Many*, 262-87.

³²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

³²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4-5.

³²² J. Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God Today,” in *The One and the Many*, 15. Italics original.

³²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139.

³²⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God Today,” in *The One and the Many*, 15. Italics original.

³²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 123.

seen in a more positive light.³²⁶

We have seen how Zizioulas' ecclesiology is unique in the sense that it combines both Christological and pneumatological elements in ecclesiology. What he emphasizes is the *correct balance* between Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology. This is achieved by allowing the two to *mutually condition* one another. When there is no such balance, ecclesiology can easily become Christomonistic or pneumatomistic. Either extremes are to be avoided. Starting with the Eucharist of which the bishop is an indispensable part, Zizioulas has started the process of determining this right balance with the help of the concept of communion and by building upon the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev who considers the local church 'catholic.' However, unlike Afanasiev, Zizioulas also concentrates on conciliar structures that facilitate communion among local churches. These conciliar structures comprised of synods of bishops regional and local make up the universal Church through Zizioulas' ecclesial concept of the one and the many. The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is the local church in communion with other local churches through their respective bishops just as the one God is the three Persons in communion with each other.

We have also noted how Zizioulas places *decisive* importance on the Eucharist in ecclesiology for determining not only this delicate balance between Christology and Pneumatology, but also for drawing together, history and eschatology, ecclesial being and the being of God, "without destroying their dialectical relationship."³²⁷ Zizioulas attempts to point his readers to recovering this very "lost consciousness of the Primitive Church" by giving up the notion of the Eucharist as just one sacrament among many. Rather, it is the central Sacrament of Christ which *constitutes* the being of the Church. The Eucharist reveals the sacramental nature of the Church which lives, according to Zizioulas, "in an intensely epicletic atmosphere containing the synthesis of two elements: on the one hand, the assurance of Christ's presence on the eucharistic table and, on the other, the Church's cry: 'Come, Lord, come.'"³²⁸ The synthesis between the historical and the eschatological is evident in this epicletical conditioning of history.³²⁹ The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is found in the Eucharist whose very structure is modelled after the eschatological event of the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God. As such, the universal Church is not a super-structure of all

³²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141-42.

³²⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 20.

³²⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 187. See also Rev. 4-5 and 22.17.

³²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 187.

the local churches but it is simply the local Church in communion with the other churches in space (through conciliarity) and in time (through the communion of the saints and apostolic succession). Zizioulas' vision of the Eucharist as the event and structure of catholicity is very much based on the New Testament Pauline and Johannine ecclesiologies as interpreted by the Patristic Fathers, especially Ignatius of Antioch. We will see in the next chapter just how much Zizioulas was indebted to Ignatius' model. We will also examine how faithful Zizioulas was to the Patristic tradition in formulating his trinitarian ontology. According to Zizioulas, there also seems to be an exact correspondence between the trinitarian theology as developed by the Cappadocian Fathers (especially Basil) and Orthodox ecclesiology.³³⁰ Orthodox ecclesiology is essentially based on the Economic Trinity – the work of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit in history, which is fully revealed in the Eucharist, the event of communion *par excellence*. This structure of communion in the Eucharist is also extended to the idea of *primacy* as a necessary condition for church unity and a eucharistic ecclesiology based on the Church as the *Communion* of all *episcopal* churches.³³¹

We conclude this final chapter in Part I of this dissertation with the following question to be answered in Part II: *Where does Zizioulas' trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology based on 'the one and the many' stand in the Patristic tradition?*

³³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

³³¹ The word episcopal is key because of the importance of the bishop in the local church and the Church universal.

PART II

Zizioulas' Patristic Sources

Patristic Influences on Zizioulas

5.1. Introduction

In Part I of this dissertation, we have examined Zizioulas' key theological ideas of personhood and communion, especially his communion-based ecclesiology and how he improves on Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology by introducing a *pneumatologically conditioned ecclesiology*. This chapter will focus on the ideas of key Church Fathers who have been decisive in influencing his thought.

5.2. St. Ignatius of Antioch, Hippolytus of Rome and St. Irenaeus of Lyons

5.2.1. St. Ignatius of Antioch

Apart from St. Paul the apostle, the most frequently cited author in Zizioulas' *The One and the Many* (2010), is St. Ignatius of Antioch (c.35 – c.108).¹ This early Church Father is also cited extensively throughout Zizioulas' other two major books.² Zizioulas himself comments that Ignatius' model of the Church is *decisive* for an Orthodox understanding of the Church.³ In many respects, Zizioulas follows Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology, also based on St. Ignatius' model; but Zizioulas does not attribute the universal church ecclesiology to Cyprian in the same way that Afanasiev does. Following Ignatius, Zizioulas writes that the local Church is the catholic Church in all its fullness when all the Church orders are present in the Eucharist with the bishop (*episkopos*) as the head of the eucharistic assembly *and* when the bishop is himself in communion with the other local churches through being in communion with their respective bishops.

Zizioulas contends that Ignatius differed from his contemporaries in this one respect:⁴ “he singles out the bishop from the collective whole of the ‘*presbyteroi*’ or ‘*episkopoi*’ (*kai diakonoi*) as a ministry in itself, thus leading us from the *episkope* to the *episkopos*.” According to Zizioulas, Ignatius did not believe in a monarchical bishop who acts alone.⁵ Neither does he preside over the eucharistic community alone outside of the community.⁶

¹ This was noted by McPartlan in his introduction to the book. See J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xix, n. 41.

² *Being as Communion* (1985) and *Communion and Otherness* (2006).

³ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 312.

⁴ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 222-25.

⁵ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 224.

⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 253.

Zizioulas notes that there are many passages in Ignatius' writings that show that "the bishop is inconceivable apart from the *presbyters* who are united with him 'as the strings are to the musical instrument' (*Eph.* 4:1) (cf., *Philad.* 4: *episcopos hama to presbuterio*), and above all, apart from the *community* (*Magn.* 6:1; *Eph.* 1:3; *Tral.* 1:1; *Sm.* 8, etc.)."⁷

Zizioulas argues from the evidence of Ignatius that particular ministries of the laity, deacons, priests and bishop became "the indispensable ministries of the Church in her relation *ad intra* during the entire history of the Church until and perhaps including the Reformation."⁸ Zizioulas contends that all orders and ministries that constitute the Church and her structure must pass through the eucharistic community to be "sure,"⁹ according to Ignatius.¹⁰ The Eucharist thus occupies the *central* place in Church ministry.

According to Zizioulas, Ignatius uses typological language to describe the ministry in the early church.¹¹ Ignatius speaks "of the various orders of the Church in terms of *typos* or *topos*: e.g. the bishop is the 'type' or 'in the place' of God, etc."¹² Zizioulas notes that "this kind of language becomes possible only when one has in view the concrete eucharistic community."¹³ Ordination then becomes, according to Zizioulas, "an assignment to a particular *place* in the community, and the ordained is defined after his ordination precisely by his 'place' in the community which in its eucharistic nature portrays the very Kingdom of God here and now."¹⁴ It is for this reason that this typological language of Ignatius found its way so easily into the early liturgical documents."¹⁵ According to Zizioulas, Ignatius also "sees the Eucharist as a *typos* of the eschatological reality with the bishop seated on the throne of God" just like Christ is seated on the throne of God in the eschatological vision of St. John.¹⁶ Ignatius also identifies the whole Christ and the whole Church with the local eucharistic community¹⁷ that is a catholic community in its composition transcending social and natural divisions, a sign

⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Episkope and Episkopos," in *The One and the Many*, 224.

⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 221.

⁹ According to the terminology of contemporary canon law, this means to be "valid" and ecclesologically true.

¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 21.

¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229.

¹² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229.

¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229. See especially note 59.

¹⁴ According to Zizioulas, this is why Ignatius regards "the local Church united around the bishop as identical with the whole or 'Catholic' Church united in Christ (*Symr.* 8)." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229-30, n. 60.

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 229-30. Zizioulas gives the examples of the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*. See *Didascalia* 9 and *Const. Apost.* (II, PG 1:668). Zizioulas notes that the latter reference speaks of the bishop as "God on earth after God" and the presbyters as "a type of the apostles." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 230, n. 61.

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 296. See also Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 144, n. 3. See also Ignatius *Smyrn.*, 8. "... Let that be deemed a valid eucharist which is under the leadership of the bishop or one to whom he has trusted it. Wherever the bishop appears let there the multitude of the people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is there (is) the Catholic Church."

and revelation of how the Kingdom of God will be.¹⁸

Zizioulas stresses that “in the literature of the first three centuries at least, the local Church, starting again with Paul, was called the *ekklesia tou theou* or the ‘whole Church’ or even the *katholike ekklesia* and this is not unrelated to the concrete eucharistic community.”¹⁹

Zizioulas continues,

As the ecclesiology of Ignatius of Antioch makes clear, even the context in which the term *katholike ekklesia* appears is a eucharistic one, in which Ignatius’ main concern was the unity of the eucharistic community.²⁰ Instead of trying, therefore, to find the meaning of the “catholic Church” in this Ignatian context in a contrast between “local” and “universal,” we would be more faithful to the sources if we saw it in the light of the entire Ignatian ecclesiology, according to which the eucharistic community is “*exactly the same as*” (this is the meaning I would give to *hosper* which connects the two in the Ignatian context) the whole Church united in Christ. Catholicity, therefore, in this context, does not mean anything else but the *wholeness* and *fullness* and *totality* of the body of Christ “exactly as” (*hosper*) it is portrayed in the eucharistic community.²¹

This is how Zizioulas understands the eucharistic ecclesiology of St. Ignatius which defines catholicity in terms of wholeness, a characteristic of the eucharistic community when it gathers together in one place to celebrate the Eucharist.

Zizioulas argues that apostolic continuity and succession are approached by Ignatius eschatologically whereby “the apostles are conceived as persons with an *eschatological function*” and “are understood as a *college*.”²² Zizioulas describes, “Here the apostles are not those who follow Christ but who *surround* Him. And they do not stand as a link between Christ and the Church in a historical process but are the *foundations* of the Church in a presence of the Kingdom of God here and now.”²³ This is in contrast to Clement who takes a historical approach to apostolic continuity whereby, according to Zizioulas, “the apostles are conceived as persons entrusted with a *mission* to fulfill. As such they are *sent* and thus *dispersed* in the world. This implies that they are understood as *individuals* possessing a message and authority in a way that reminds one of the Jewish institution of the *Shaliach*.”²⁴ Citing Scripture²⁵ and the letters of Ignatius,²⁶ Zizioulas writes

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 152.

¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 148.

²⁰ Ignatius writes, “... Let that be deemed a valid eucharist which is under the leadership of the bishop or one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop appears let there the multitude of the people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is there (is) the catholic Church.” Smyrn. 8 quoted in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 149, n. 23.

²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 149. Italics original.

²² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 173-74. Italics original.

²³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 174-75. Italics original.

²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 172. Italics original. See also his *Being as Communion*, 176 and 204; and his “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 240-41.

²⁵ Rev. 4-5.

²⁶ Eph. 5.2-3, 13.1; Polyc. 4.2; Magn. 7.12.

Ignatius' image of the Church is borrowed not from history but from the eschatological state of the Church's convocation "in the same place" to partake of the eternal life of God as it is offered to the world at the eucharistic table. Here the image is very much like the one we find in the Apocalypse,²⁷ and the implications for the relation of the Church to the apostles are clearly different from those we find in *I Clement*: the apostles are a united college and they surround Christ in His Kingdom. For this reason it is the *college of presbyters* surrounding the bishop, who sits "in the place of God" or is the image of Christ,²⁸ that Ignatius sees the image of the apostles.²⁹

This gives Zizioulas a basis for saying that the bishop is an *alter Christus* who is surrounded by a plurality of elders – an eschatological image of Christ in His Kingdom. The implication of this Ignatian scheme is simply this: apostolic continuity is the continuity of communities and churches. Thus, apostolic succession takes place through the Church's eucharistic structure.³⁰

In summary, the Eucharist makes the Church the catholic Church,³¹ "*the full and integral Body of Christ*."³² For Ignatius, the catholicity of the Church is found in the celebration of the Eucharist where the Kingdom of God is depicted iconically by the Church with the bishop seated on his throne surrounded by the college of presbyters and assisted by the deacons with the multitude of laymen gathered around him. In the "catholic Church", the total Christ is found in the form of the Eucharist.³³ Here, the bishop in the local Church is not only the *alter apostolus* but also the *alter Christus*. Zizioulas draws further evidence of this eschatological image of the bishop from Hippolytus of Rome.³⁴

5.2.2. Hippolytus of Rome

According to Zizioulas, the contribution of the *Apostolic Tradition*, attributed to Hippolytus of Rome (c.170 – c.235), to the history and theology of the episcopacy was very crucial. Zizioulas believes that the subsequent history of the Church depended on this "Hippolytan synthesis."³⁵ Zizioulas contends that Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* has all that is needed for a complete knowledge of what the Church meant by episcopacy at that time in the middle of the second century.³⁶ This may be summed up as follows:

²⁷ Rev. 4-5.

²⁸ Ignatius, *Magn.* 3.1-2, 6.1; *Tral.* 3.1. Zizioulas points out that the idea of the bishop as the image of Christ survived at least until the fourth century. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 177, n. 21.

²⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 176-77. Italics original. See also Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.1.

³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 177.

³¹ Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 8.

³² J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 62-63.

³³ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 63. See chapter four of *Being as Communion* (1985) for an analysis of the sources.

³⁴ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 241.

³⁵ This point is noted by McPartlan in his introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xix, n. 36.

³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 226-27.

1) The bishop's *primary* role is to offer the Eucharist as part of the eucharistic community and as its head; and to be the '*sole ordainer*' who "can give the Spirit to the community."³⁷

2) The bishop is the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus* to the community.³⁸

Zizioulas' concept of the role and function of the bishop is largely derived from Hippolytus who, like Ignatius, sees the bishop in the light of eschatology. Zizioulas emphasizes, "*The bishop in his function is the apostles' successor inasmuch as he is the image of Christ within the community*: the primitive church was unable to see the two aspects (Christ-apostles) separately."³⁹ Thus, is it not surprising that Zizioulas also emphasizes the importance of the bishop as "an ecclesiological presupposition of the Eucharist."⁴⁰ He is an indispensable part of the Eucharist as he represents Christ as the head of the eucharistic community which forms the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. In this way, "*the Church constitutes the Eucharist while being constituted by it*."⁴¹

Zizioulas also draws the following important observations from Hippolytus which influenced apostolic succession:⁴²

1) The bishop is simultaneously the image of Christ and the image of the apostles.⁴³

Zizioulas explains that "the combination of the two images was decisive for the history of the concept of apostolic succession in terms of the synthesis between the historical and the eschatological perspectives."⁴⁴ The historical view is that God sends Christ and Christ sends the apostles who are succeeded by bishops.⁴⁵ The eschatological view is based on the image we have from the book of Revelation⁴⁶ where the apostles form a united college surrounding Christ who is represented by the bishop.⁴⁷

2) The *presbyterium* is understood to be a college and is related to the functions of counselling and governing.⁴⁸

The Christological image is reserved for the bishop *alone* and he is the one who gives the ministry (ordains ministers) while being surrounded by the presbyters. Zizioulas draws the

³⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 71. Zizioulas concedes that Hippolytus (*Apost. Trad.* 4, 2) seems to speak of the participation of the presbyters through the laying on of hands during ordination. This is balanced by Hippolytus' assertion that the bishop is the sole ordainer because he alone can give the Holy Spirit. See J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 71, n. 36.

³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 195 and *Communion and Otherness*, 200. See also Hippolytus, *Apost. Trad.* 3.

³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 116.

⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 72.

⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 68. Italics original.

⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 196.

⁴³ Hippolytus, *Apost. Trad.* 3.

⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 196.

⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 176.

⁴⁶ Rev. 4-5.

⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 177.

⁴⁸ Hippolytus, *Apost. Trad.* 8 (prayer for the ordination of a presbyter).

implications of this as follows: “Apostolic continuity is realized through the bishop, not as an individual, but in his being surrounded by the college of the presbyterium. This is a way of preserving the balance between the *alter Christus* and the *alter apostolus* images of episcopacy.” Furthermore, the ordination takes place in the context of the whole eucharistic community so that ministry is derived from the community. In fact, Zizioulas emphasizes, “*Apostolic succession through episcopacy is essentially a succession of Church structure.*”⁴⁹ This is clear from the writings of Hippolytus⁵⁰ – the bishop is to be ordained during the Eucharist on the feast of Pentecost by two or three bishops from neighbouring churches.⁵¹ This is considered by Zizioulas to be important because the structure of the Church is composed of

- a) bishops who must be in communion with each other for their respective churches to be the catholic and apostolic Church, and
- b) all orders of the eucharistic community in communion with their head, the bishop.

In this scheme of things, the Church is explicitly defined and propagated through time (via apostolic succession through the bishop in the eucharistic community) and space (via conciliarity through the communion of bishops). On this basis, Zizioulas draws inspiration for an ecumenism in space and in time based on this understanding of apostolic continuity as “a continuity of *structure* and as a succession of *communities*.”⁵²

5.2.3. St. Irenaeus of Lyons

As with Ignatius, St. Irenaeus (d.202) is considered by Zizioulas to be a pastoral theologian whose ecclesial experience decisively shaped his understanding of the being of God.⁵³ Together with Ignatius, he associated being with life, and life with communion.⁵⁴ According to Zizioulas, Irenaeus saw “Christ as being the truth not of the *mind* – his fight against Gnosticism, the most rationalistic movement of the period... but of the *incorruptibility of being*.”⁵⁵ Truth was, for Irenaeus, associated with communion with God in the life of a eucharistic community. It is in the Eucharist as community that knowledge and communion become identical.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 197. Italics original.

⁵⁰ See Hippolytus, *Trad. Apost.* 3 (prayer of ordination of a bishop).

⁵¹ Hippolytus, *Apost. Trad.* 2; Council of Arles, canon 20; Council of Nicaea, canons 4 and 6.

⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 198.

⁵³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16.

⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 93.

⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 80. Italics original.

⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 81. See also Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 20.5.

Irenaeus' ecclesiology is, according to Zizioulas, focused on two key points:⁵⁷

1) The centrality of the Eucharist in the Church⁵⁸ and in the Orthodox tradition.⁵⁹

Irenaeus once said, "Our doctrine agrees with the eucharist and our eucharist with our doctrine."⁶⁰ The Eucharist was the criterion of catholicity.⁶¹ True doctrine arises from a 'true' eucharistic celebration. Truth arises within the eucharistic community which is the Body of Christ, who is the truth, the way and the life.⁶²

2) The Church is only where the Spirit is.⁶³

Here we see the importance of Pneumatology for ecclesiology. The Church is of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴ It is where those "born of the Spirit"⁶⁵ come together to constitute it.

Zizioulas notes that it was also Irenaeus who coined the term the "two hands of God"⁶⁶ referring to the actions of the Son and the Spirit who existed *simultaneously* and acted together in creation.⁶⁷ This was significant for Zizioulas because this meant that God the Holy Spirit was also at work *together* with God the Son when the Church was instituted. It points to the vital *constitutive* role the Spirit should play in ecclesiology.

According to Zizioulas, Irenaeus also developed a theology of episcopacy that was at once Christological and charismatic.⁶⁸ This is evidenced in Irenaeus speaking of bishops possessing a certain *charisma veritatis* which Zizioulas identifies as being received by the bishop within the eucharistic community and as a Pentecost event.⁶⁹ This was developed in response to the need for a proper synthesis between Pneumatology and Christology in the Church in the face of Gnosticism and Montanism. Truth must pass through the community and through the bishop. When we make Pneumatology an integral part of Christology in the context of a trinitarian theology, then there will not be opposition between the institutional

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 190.

⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 81.

⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," in *The One and the Many*, 57.

⁶⁰ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 18.5. Cited by Zizioulas in his *Being as Communion*, 190.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, "Ecclesiological Presuppositions," in *The One and the Many*, 63.

⁶² John 14.6.

⁶³ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III 24.1.

⁶⁴ This is an important concept in Orthodox ecclesiology which Zizioulas has singled out which could be the basis for the notion of the Church as communion. This means that the Church is constituted by the Spirit and not simply instituted by Christ. This *pneumatological* approach to the Church is for Zizioulas, "a very important aspect of Orthodox ecclesiology which in many ways contrasts with the Roman Catholic understanding of ecclesiology, which is basically Christological in its approach." See J. Zizioulas, "Orthodox Ecclesiology," in *The One and the Many*, 310-11.

⁶⁵ John 3.8.

⁶⁶ Irenaeus, *Haer.* IV, *Praef.* 4.

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimension," in *The One and the Many*, 76.

⁶⁸ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimension," in *The One and the Many*, 82.

⁶⁹ See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 116 and "The Development of Conciliar Structures," in *The One and the Many*, 200, n. 29 where Zizioulas quotes from Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV 16.2.

and the charismatic, according to Zizioulas, who, like Irenaeus, makes the pneumatological dimension of the Church of vital importance to the Church's very existence.⁷⁰

In summary, the theological contribution of these three men of the Church was to highlight the importance of the Eucharist and the bishop in the Church of God. Zizioulas' doctoral work *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (2001), is largely based on the eucharistic ecclesiologies of Ignatius, Irenaeus and Hippolytus of Rome. While these three figures are instrumental to Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology focusing on eschatology and the bishop, it is the Cappadocian Fathers who influenced Zizioulas' concept of the person and his ecclesiology of communion in the light of the Persons of the Trinity.

5.3. The Cappadocian Fathers

5.3.1. Introduction

Zizioulas appeals to three Cappadocian Fathers, St. Basil the Great of Caesarea (c. 330-79), St. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-89/90) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-94?), for his trinitarian ontology of communion and personhood.⁷¹ Papanikolaou has noted Zizioulas' emphasis on the Cappadocian Fathers and in particular on their clarification of "a trinitarian relational ontology of personhood that is grounded in the eucharistic experience of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit."⁷² As we shall see, the Cappadocian Fathers have added the *trinitarian dimension* to the eucharistic experience of God in the Church that is *instituted* Christologically and *constituted* pneumatologically.

The Cappadocian Fathers first distinguished clearly between nature and person, or mode of existence. Nature referred to the 'what' of something while persons pointed to the 'how' of being. According to Zizioulas, "man is free to affect the 'how' of his existence either in the direction of the way (the *how*) God is, or in the direction of *what* his, that is man's, nature is."⁷³ The former way is what the Greek Fathers referred to as the *theosis* of man.⁷⁴ The image of God is related to the 'how' of man – his personhood.

The Cappadocian Church Fathers developed and bequeathed to us a concept of God, who exists as a communion of free love of unique, irreplaceable and unrepeatable identities, that is, true persons in the absolute ontological sense. It is of such a God that man is meant to be an 'image'. There is no higher and fuller anthropology than this anthropology of true and full personhood.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimension," in *The One and the Many*, 89.

⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 155-70.

⁷² A. Papanikolaou, *Being With God*, 11.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 165.

⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 166.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 168.

This theological anthropology of the Cappadocian Fathers is only realized in the Church which is an *image* of the Trinity, itself described by Zizioulas as the Divine personhood.⁷⁶

According to Zizioulas, “The persons or *hypostasis* of the Holy Trinity are emphatically and exclusively described by the Cappadocian Fathers as “modes of existence.”⁷⁷ Thus, we must “speak of the persons of the Holy Trinity in *ontological* categories, which means in categories indicative of God as being.”⁷⁸ Zizioulas stresses that in reality,

Ontological categories are the *only* ones permissible in referring to the personal existence of God. This is apparent from the fact that hypostatic properties, those that define the particularity or otherness of each Person in God as the only things that can be said to constitute the Person in God, relate solely and exclusively *to the being of God and not to anything else*: the characterizations of the Father as unbegotten, the Son as begotten, and the Holy Spirit as proceeding all connote exclusive ways in which those Persons are in existence and have their being. The moment we introduce into the Persons of the Trinity some other content not of an ontological nature, we fall into error.⁷⁹

Each Person of the Trinity is ontologically described in the sense that what is revealed about God as Trinity is simply this: Each divine Person’s ontological nature is in relation to God the Father. Zizioulas insists that this ontological language is the only proper way to describe the Being of God in trinitarian theology.⁸⁰ Therefore, Zizioulas believes Augustine erred when he made substance to be ontologically primary and when he introduced content not of an ontological nature (memory, knowledge, love) into the Persons of the Trinity.⁸¹ These are qualities that are common to all three Persons of the Trinity and thus do not define each Person uniquely.

The following sub-sections will further explore the theological influence of each Cappadocian Father on Zizioulas who wrote in 1995 that we still await a comprehensive and exhaustive theological and philosophical treatment of the Cappadocian Tradition in relation to theology, anthropology and ontology.⁸² Zizioulas’ initial study of a trinitarian ontology of the person in the Cappadocian Fathers is a step in this direction.⁸³ We will see how Zizioulas appropriates each Cappadocian Fathers to arrive at such an ontology.

⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 170.

⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 29.

⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 29. Italics original.

⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 29. Italics original.

⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 29.

⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 106. See also J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 29. For Zizioulas, the Persons of the Trinity are referred to ontologically and not analogically. Analogies tend to break down and do not have the capacity to uniquely define each Person of the Trinity. For example, love is common to all three persons of the Trinity, but unbegottenness is attributed only to the Father and begottenness is only attributed to the Son (Heb. 1.5).

⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 156.

⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99-112.

5.3.2. St. Basil of Caesarea

Basil is the foremost of the Cappadocian Fathers to have influenced Zizioulas' theology. In this sub-section, we will examine Basil's influence. According to Zizioulas, of all the Greek Fathers, Basil uses the idea of communion most extensively.⁸⁴ Reading Basil's works,⁸⁵ we see that he was unhappy with the notion of substance as an ontological category, and replaces it with *koinonia* which he prefers to use "wherever reference is made to the oneness of the divinity."⁸⁶ Instead of emphasizing the unity of God in terms of the one nature, Basil prefers to speak of the unity of God in terms of the "*communion of persons*."⁸⁷ Zizioulas notes that

Communion is for Basil an ontological category. The *nature* of God is communion.⁸⁸ This does not mean that the persons have an ontological priority over the one substance of God, but that the one substance of God coincides with the communion of the three persons. In ecclesiology all this can be applied to the relationship between local and universal Church. There is one Church, as there is one God. But the expression of this one Church is the communion of the many local Churches. Communion and oneness coincide in ecclesiology.⁸⁹

Basil insisted on what he deemed the best way to speak of the unity of the Godhead through the notion of *koinonia* rather than that of substance because, according to Zizioulas, he was "anxious to stress and safeguard the distinct and ontologically integral existence of each of the persons of the holy Trinity."⁹⁰ The *homoousios* did little to dispel the fear of Sabellianism which destroyed this ontological integrity because the term itself could be subject to Sabellian interpretations. This could explain why Basil was reluctant to use the term *homoousios* for the Spirit.⁹¹ Additionally, Basil rejected the use of the term *prosopon* or person to describe the Trinity because, according to Zizioulas, the term *prosopon* "was not ontological enough to protect doctrine from the dangers of Sabellianism and that *hypostasis* was needed *precisely in order to add to the relational character of prosopon an ontological content*."⁹² The identification of *ousia* with *hypostasis* made by Athanasius earlier on⁹³ and Basil's attachment of the term *hypostasis* to the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit makes possible the conception that each person of the Trinity has a unique ontological identity that

⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, "Pneumatological Dimension," in *The One and the Many*, 78, n. 11.

⁸⁵ St. Basil, *De Sp.* S. 18 (PG 32, 194C) and 63, *C. Eun.* II. 12 (PG 29, 593C).

⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 184.

⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134.

⁸⁸ Here, Zizioulas further cites A. Jevtich, "Between the 'Nicaeans' and the 'Easterners'. The Catholic Confession of Saint Basil," in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 24 (1980): 244.

⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 134-35. Italics original.

⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 184.

⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 182-84, esp. 184, n. 15.

⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186, n. 18. Italics original.

⁹³ St. Athanasius, *Ep. ad episc.* (PG 26, 1036B) quoted in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 185, n. 16.

is derived from the relation that each person has with the other (a mode of being in relation to the other) without falling into the danger of Sabellianism (three different ‘roles’ assumed by the one God).⁹⁴ The Cappadocians identification of hypostasis with person is described by Zizioulas,

By calling the person a ‘mode of being’ (*tropos hyparxeos*), the Cappadocians introduced a revolution into Greek ontology since they said for the first time in history, (i) that a *prosopon* is not secondary to being, but its *hypostasis* and (ii) that a *hypostasis*, that is, an ontological category, is relational in its very nature, it is *prosopon*.⁹⁵

The importance of this, according to Zizioulas, is that “person is now the *ultimate* ontological category we can apply to God.”⁹⁶ Furthermore, Zizioulas draws the conclusion “Since the person in its identification with hypostasis is an – ultimate and not a secondary – ontological notion, it must be person – and not a substance – that is the source of divine existence.”⁹⁷ In Zizioulas’ opinion, this is a very important philosophical and theological position. Zizioulas writes:

Thus, the notion of ‘source’ is complemented by the Cappadocians with the notion of ‘cause’ (*aitia*) and the idea emerges that the cause of God’s being is the Father. The introduction of ‘cause’ in addition to ‘source’ was meant to indicate that divine existence does not ‘spring’, so to speak, ‘naturally’ as from an impersonal substance, but is brought into existence, it is ‘caused’, by *someone*. Whereas *pege* (source) could be understood substantially or naturalistically, *aitia* (cause) carried with it connotations of personal initiative and – at least at that time – of *freedom*. Divine being owes its being to a *free person*, not to impersonal substance. And since hypostasis is now identical with person, freedom is combined with love (relationship) and the two together are identified with the *Father* – a relational notion in its very nature.⁹⁸

Zizioulas considers Basil’s reflections on the nature of God’s being.⁹⁹ In a correspondence between Apollinaris and Basil, Basil asks Apollinaris to explain to him how in our dealings with God, particularly with regard to the relationship between the persons of the Holy Trinity, one could avoid assuming ‘a substance lying above’ or ‘a substance lying underneath.’ The former refers to Platonism and the later, possibly to Aristotelianism.

⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 156. I note here that by calling God three persons (*hypostases*) this does not solve the problem of reconciling the one being of God with the three *hypostases* of God. How can the three *hypostases* be one God? Clearly, there must still be a term such as *homoousios* to specify that the three hypostases have the one divine nature. The *homoousion* is implicit in the theology of the Cappadocians who assumed that the three hypostases had one divine nature and thus did not further elaborate on it.

⁹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 185-86. Italics original.

⁹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186. Italics original. See also n. 18 on the same page where Zizioulas writes, “The profound philosophical and existential implications of this fact are normally unnoticed by historians of philosophy.” Zizioulas repeated emphasizes that the person is the ultimate ontological category when speaking of God. See also his *Communion and Otherness*, 195-99.

⁹⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

⁹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186-87. Italics original.

⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 106 and 142.

Apollinaris' answer to Basil was simply this: there is no need to suppose that particular human beings subsist above or underneath because human beings derive their being not from a 'common substance' but from the *person* of Adam.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in the case of God, such a supposition of substance lying above or below is unnecessary because "it is *God the Father (theos ho pater)* and not divine *ousia* that is likewise the *arche* and the *hypothesis* of divine being."¹⁰¹

Basil refers constantly to God the Father being the cause of the being of God. This concept can easily be misunderstood if we apply the idea of cause in the sense of the more usual senses of material or formal cause. It must be emphasized that when Basil uses the word 'cause,' it is not in the same sense of an efficient, formal or material cause.¹⁰² Rather, he is referring to a 'cause,' God, *outside of time*. According to Zizioulas, the Cappadocian Fathers had removed from the concept of cause its association with time¹⁰³ and thus from cosmological implications.¹⁰⁴ This would eliminate all the usual notions of 'cause' with the usual cosmological connotations associated with it as these are all tied with the concept of time through which we understand cause and effect. This timeless causality is coupled with a rejection of substantial causation by the Cappadocian Fathers, an extremely important point overlooked by critics of Cappadocian theology, according to Zizioulas.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Zizioulas contends, "Causal language is permissible, according to the Cappadocians, *only at the level of personhood, not of substance*,"¹⁰⁶ it refers to the *how* and not to the *what* of God. Causality is used by these Fathers as a strictly personalist notion presupposing a clear distinction between person and *ousia*.¹⁰⁷

Another way that Basil conceives of 'cause' in God is that of '*arche*' or beginning. Though, strictly speaking, there are no temporal relations in God, yet this term '*arche*' is used to express order in God. So, God the Father as the '*arche*' means that, in trinitarian language, he is able to 'beget' the Son and 'bring forth' the Holy Spirit. It is in the light of these

¹⁰⁰ Basil, *Epist.* 361 and 362. These letters form part of the corpus of the epistles of Basil, according to Zizioulas. G. L. Prestige has shown that there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of these letters in his work, *St. Basil the Great and Apollinaris of Laodicea*, 1956. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 105, n. 12 and 142.

¹⁰¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 105-06. Italics original.

¹⁰² Zizioulas concedes that Aristotle's fourfold description of cause presented difficulties to Patristic theology. So, it is very important to take note of how the Cappadocian Fathers used this philosophical concept in theology. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 127-28.

¹⁰³ Gregory Naz., *Or.* 42.15: "The name of the unoriginate is Father; of that who has had a beginning (*arche*), Son; and of that who is together with the beginning (*to meta tes arches*), Holy Spirit. And the union (*henosis*) of them is the Father, from whom and to whom are referred those who follow...with neither time nor will nor power instigating." See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 128, n. 48.

¹⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 128.

¹⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 128.

¹⁰⁶ Basil, *C. Eun.* I.14-15; Gregory Naz., *Theol. Or.* 3.2; 15. Referenced by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 128.

¹⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 128.

relations that the *monarchia* of God the Father is affirmed. The correct meaning of the *monarchia* of the Father, as used by the Cappadocian Fathers, is this: God the Father is the beginning or source of all being, including the being of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸ Basil understands ‘*arche*’ in the ontological sense of “the beginning of being.”¹⁰⁹ When this is applied to God the Father, it implies that He is not caused by any other being because there is no being prior to Him. The Father is thus referred to as the ‘cause’ of all being, including the being of God.

The affirmation of the Father as ‘cause’ is maintained by Zizioulas throughout his writings.¹¹⁰ His basis for saying this derives mainly from the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Basil, who expressed the Cappadocian axiom that “everything in God begins with the ‘good pleasure’ (*eudokia*) of the Father,”¹¹¹ which Zizioulas takes as related to the way the economic and the Immanent Trinity exists.¹¹² If being begins with the will of God the Father, then all beings must logically be ‘caused’ by the Father. In God, the Trinity, who exists outside of time, the Father is the ‘cause’ of the Son and the Holy Spirit by His begetting of the Son and His bringing forth the Holy Spirit.¹¹³ These causal relations we must remember take place outside of time. Zizioulas points out that for the Cappadocian Fathers, “being” is a concept that is applied to God simultaneously in two senses:¹¹⁴

A) The *ti estin* (what he is) of God’s being and

B) The *hopos estin* (how he is).

This latter sense is identified by the Cappadocian Fathers with God’s personhood¹¹⁵ which presupposes a clear distinction between person and *ousia*.

When we have distinguished God’s person from his *ousia* and have removed the concept of time from God, then we have arrived at a timeless causality in God that is applied strictly to God’s personhood, that is, the persons of the Trinity. This is also a causation in a personal and non-substantial sense which is strictly applied to persons and not to substance. In this way, the Person (not the substance which is common to all three divine Persons) of God the Father is ‘cause.’

Zizioulas stresses that besides God, every human being’s personal origin can be traced to

¹⁰⁸ This is probably the most controversial aspect of the theology of the *monarchia* of the Father. How Zizioulas defends this Orthodox doctrine is set out in chapter six.

¹⁰⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 131.

¹¹⁰ This is especially argued for in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 113-48.

¹¹¹ Basil, *De. Sp. S.* 16.38.

¹¹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 121.

¹¹³ After Athanasius, it was widely acknowledged that the Son came from the *essence* of the Father while the world came from the *will* of the Father.

¹¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 125.

¹¹⁵ Thus, Basil, *C. Eun.* I.14-15; Gregory Naz., *Theol. Or.* 3.16.

a person and not to an impersonal human nature, either *hyperkeimene* (standing above), in the Platonic sense, or *hypokeimene* (standing underneath), in the Aristotelian sense.¹¹⁶ This is made clear by Basil when he writes the following to illustrate that the Father is the cause of the Trinity.

We therefore find in thinking this way that our concept of [the Father's] ungeneratedness does not fall under the category of discovering the *what is* (*tou ti estin*), but rather... the *how is* (*tou hopos estin*)... Just as, in speaking of human beings, when we say that so and so has come into being (*egeneto*) from so and so, we do not speak of the what (*to ti*), but of the whence he came forth... And in order to make it clearer, the evangelist Luke, in describing the genealogy of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ according to the flesh...began with Joseph; and having called him the offspring of Heli, and him of Matthat, and thus leading the description to Adam, he then arrived at the earliest ones and said that Seth came from Adam, and Adam from God, at which point he ended the ascent. [In so doing, Luke] *did not declare the natures of each one's birth*, but the immediate principles (or beginnings: *archas*) from which each of them came into being... This is what we do when by the appellation of the unoriginate we are taught the *how of God* rather than his nature itself.¹¹⁷

It is evident from Basil that the *arche* of human beings is not to be found in human nature but in Adam.¹¹⁸ We can now see how Zizioulas concludes that causation in God has nothing to do with divine *ousia*, but only with his personhood.¹¹⁹ Zizioulas maintains throughout his works that persons have 'cause' because "they are the outcome of love and freedom."¹²⁰ Everyone therefore owes his existence, the fact of his being and his distinctive otherness as a person, to another. Zizioulas writes, "As offspring of human nature, we are not 'other' in an absolute sense; neither are we free. If we attribute either *arche* or 'cause' to a person, Adam, we acquire otherness in unity."¹²¹ Otherness is thus a key ontological category that is constitutive of being. Otherness is seen in the personal distinctiveness of the persons of the Trinity and in their ontological origins based on their mutual relationships with each other. Without otherness, the Trinity cannot exist. This means that otherness is vital in the conception of the person. Without otherness, there is no person.¹²² Without personhood, there is no Trinity. Without the concept of the Father as 'cause' of personhood in God's being, we cannot understand and achieve the true personhood that is revealed to us in God's way of being the Trinity.¹²³

¹¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 142.

¹¹⁷ Basil, *C. Eun.* 1.14-15; cf. Luke 3:23-38. This was quoted by Zizioulas in *Communion and Otherness*, 142. Italics are Zizioulas'.

¹¹⁸ Basil, *Ep.* 361 and 362.

¹¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 142.

¹²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141.

¹²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 142.

¹²² This is the basic thesis of Zizioulas regarding otherness as definitive of personhood.

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141.

Zizioulas has also noted that Basil “clearly understands *arche* in the ontological sense of the beginning of being. As such, *arche* is attached exclusively to the Father.”¹²⁴ Basil writes that the names Father and Son “spoken of in themselves indicate nothing but the relation (*schesis*) between the two. For Father is the one who has given the beginning of being (*arche tou einai*) to the others... Son is the one who has had the beginning of his being (*arche tou einai*) by birth from the other.”¹²⁵ So the Son derives his particular being (i.e. personhood not *ousia*) from the Father.¹²⁶ At the level of natures, the Son is the same as the Father. But at the level of personhood, Father and Son are distinct in the being of God. In particular, the Son is from the Father who is the *arche* of all.

If the Son is a different person from the Father, are there then two distinct Gods? The answer of course is no, because although there is a difference in personhood, there is no division in *ousia* which is common to the Son and the Father. They are ultimately one God but two distinct persons. Does this mean that this one God exists as two different modes of being? Certainly, this is a possibility because person denotes a mode of being. However, the Son, as mode of being, also shares the same nature as the Father. Hence the divine Persons, though distinct, cannot be divided in terms of *ousia*. The Father and the Son are still one.¹²⁷

This oneness of the Father and the Son in God can further be illustrated by the following doxology derived from Basil who, complemented an earlier doxology¹²⁸ with the following: Glory be to the Father with (*meta*) the Son and with (*syn*) the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹ This doxology stresses the concurrence of all three persons of the Holy Trinity. Each Person of the trinitarian God is equal in honour, as Zizioulas observes, and is placed one next to the other without hierarchical distinction.¹³⁰ More importantly, each divine Person cannot do without the other Persons of the Trinity. Each divine Person exists simultaneously with the others as Persons in the one God. This way of perceiving the mystery of the Trinity is derived from the liturgical and eucharistic experience of Basil.

For Zizioulas, the importance of this doxology lies in the fact that the existence of God is

¹²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 131.

¹²⁵ Basil, *C. Eun.* 2.22. Quoted by Zizioulas in his, *Communion and Otherness*, 131-32.

¹²⁶ Note that this is a crucial point because the Son always had the same nature (*ousia*) as the Father. So, the Son's nature cannot be derived from the Father for the Son had the same nature (*homoousios*) as the Father.

¹²⁷ John 10.30.

¹²⁸ According to Zizioulas, the doxology which Basil replaces prevailed in the early centuries and is probably from Alexandria. This doxology was “Glory be to the Father through (*dia*) the Son, in (*en*) the Holy Spirit.” See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 187-88.

¹²⁹ St. Basil, *De. Spir. S.* 1.3f; 7.16; 25.58ff quoted by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 188. n. 24 and also J. Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today,” in *The One and the Many*, 10, n. 20. See also St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (New York: SVSP, 1980), 17, 33-34, 89-92.

¹³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 189.

revealed to us in the Divine Liturgy as “an event of communion.”¹³¹ Basil stresses the unity of divine operations *ad extra*. He writes,

If one truly receives the Son, the Son will bring with him on either hand the presence of his Father and that of his own Holy Spirit; likewise he who receives the Father receives also in effect the Son and the Spirit... So ineffable and so far beyond our understanding are both the communion (*koinonia*) and the distinctiveness (*diakrisis*) of the divine hypostases.¹³²

The advantage and the deeper meaning of this *meta/syn*-doxology are simply this: From whichever Person one begins speaking of the Holy Trinity, one ends up with what Zizioulas describes as the “co-presence and co-existence of all three Persons at once.”¹³³ The one God exists simultaneously as three different Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity can be said to be one and three at the same time, provided we understand clearly the limitations of language¹³⁴ and of numbering when referring to God.

Finally, together with Gregory Nyssa, Basil also excludes the use of the category of number when speaking theologically.¹³⁵ If there is a need to apply the notion of number to the Trinity, Basil says that we must do so ‘reverently’ (*eusebos*),¹³⁶ which, according to Zizioulas, means that we cannot number the divine Persons by addition in the usual sense of adding up human beings.¹³⁷ This is because, as Zizioulas explains, “*divine persons, in contrast with human ones, cannot be regarded as a concurrence of natural or moral qualities of any kind; they are distinguished only by their relations of ontological origination.*”¹³⁸

5.3.3. Gregory of Nazianzen

Gregory of Nazianzen insists, together with his fellow Cappadocian Fathers, particularly Basil, that “the *cause* or *aition* of divine existence is the Father, which means a person.” The Father is the ground of unity of the three Persons.¹³⁹ As Gregory writes, “The three have one nature... the *ground of unity being the Father*, out of whom and towards whom the subsequent Persons are reckoned.”¹⁴⁰ Likewise, he maintains, like Basil, that the worship of

¹³¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 189.

¹³² Ep. 38.4 (PG32, 332Df). This was quoted by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 189.

¹³³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 189.

¹³⁴ Zizioulas has pointed out that Gregory of Nyssa had earlier stated that when we use human persons to illustrate the three persons of the Holy Trinity, we can only do so ‘by misuse of language’ (*katachrestikos*) and not ‘accurately’ (*kurios*). See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172.

¹³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 174.

¹³⁶ St. Basil, *De Sp.* S. 18, 44. This is noted by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 174. Basil writes, “Either let the unspeakable be honoured by silence or let holy things be counted piously.” See St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. Stephen Hildebrand (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 2011), 80.

¹³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 174.

¹³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 173. cf. G. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1959), 228.

¹³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 118.

¹⁴⁰ Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 42.15.

one Person of the Trinity implies the worship of all three Persons, for the three are one in honour and Godhead.¹⁴¹

Gregory uses the term *monarchia* in the moral sense of unity of mind and will referring to the three Persons of the Trinity taken together.¹⁴² But when he refers to how the Trinity emerged ontologically, he attributes the *monas* to the Father and not to all three Persons.¹⁴³ According to Gregory of Nazianzen, the Trinity is a *movement* initiated by a Person, the Father.¹⁴⁴ As Gregory writes,

For this reason, the One (*monas*) having moved from the beginning (from all eternity) to a Dyad and stopped (or rested) in Triad. And this is for us the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The one as the Begetter and the Emitter (*gennetor kai proboleus*), without passion of course and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner, of whom the others are one of them the begotten and the other the emission.”¹⁴⁵

This movement of divine personal being is, according to Gregory, neither “a spontaneous movement of the three persons” nor “a dynamism of their *ousia* or of their mutual communion.” It is the movement of one person, God the Father. As Zizioulas explains,

It is clearly a movement with *personal initiative*. It is not that the Three, as it were, moved simultaneously as ‘persons in communion’; it is the *one*, the Father, that ‘moved’ (*monas kinetheisa*) to threeness.... There is no movement in God which is not initiated by a person. When Gregory says the above words, he paraphrases causality: the Trinity is a ‘movement’ initiated by a person.¹⁴⁶

This leads us back to consider the crucial point of whether the *monas*, as used by Gregory, refers to something common to the three Persons out of which the Trinity emerged, such as to the divine *ousia*, or to the Person of God the Father. Zizioulas is of the view that Gregory was referring to the Father when speaking of the *monas* because of the ordering of the divine names and their mutual relations to each other (begetter, emitter, begotten, emission, etc.).¹⁴⁷ When Gregory uses *monarchia* in the moral sense of the unity of mind and of will, he refers to the three Persons taken together.¹⁴⁸ However, when Gregory refers to “how the Trinity emerged ontologically, he identifies the *monas* with the Father.”¹⁴⁹

Finally, according to Zizioulas, Gregory uses the terms *tropos hyparxeos* and *schesis* but

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 189. Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 5.12; 14 (PG 36, 148; 149).

¹⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 132.

¹⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 133-34. Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 42.15.

¹⁴⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 131.

¹⁴⁵ Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 3.2. This was quoted from J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 133.

¹⁴⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 131. Italics original.

¹⁴⁷ See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 132-33.

¹⁴⁸ Zizioulas is here commenting on a text in Gregory Nazianzus, *Theol. Or.* 3.2. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 132-34.

¹⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 134.

not *atomon* to define the divine Persons.¹⁵⁰ Gregory thus emphasizes the *relational* aspect of God the Father. He says, “The Father is a name neither of *ousia* nor of *energeia* but of *schesis*.”¹⁵¹ This further supports Zizioulas’ relational ontology based on the concept of the unique person who is defined in relation to others through love and communion.

5.3.4. Gregory of Nyssa

Recently, Turcescu has accused Zizioulas of ‘misreading’ the Cappadocians.¹⁵² Turcescu asserts that Zizioulas does not know his Cappadocian theology well, particularly their concept of personhood.¹⁵³ He argues that Zizioulas’ fails to understand that both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa understood a person as a “collection of properties” and that the enumeration of individuals was a feature of their concept of person.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Turcescu argues that Zizioulas is wrong to say that the Cappadocian Fathers distinguished person from individual and never used them interchangeably.¹⁵⁵ Turcescu suggests that Zizioulas is influenced by 19th and 20th century insights and “foists” a personal ontology on the Cappadocian Fathers.¹⁵⁶ Zizioulas’ relational understanding of personhood owes more to Buber’s *I and Thou* and to Macmurray’s *Persons in Relation* and *The Self as Agent*.¹⁵⁷

Zizioulas defends himself against Turcescu by reminding us of Gregory of Nyssa’s caution about the use of language. Zizioulas writes,

In his *Ex communibus notionibus*, Gregory of Nyssa is anxious to state that, in using the example of Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and so on, as three particular beings or *hypostases* in order to illustrate the three persons of the holy Trinity, we do so ‘by misuse of language’ (*katachrestikos*) and not ‘accurately’ (*kurios*). Therefore, he adds, we must avoid applying to the Trinity things ‘which are not to be seen in the Holy Trinity.’¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ Zizioulas cites Gregory Naz. Or. 29 (PG 36, 96) in *Communion and Otherness*, 175, n. 33.

¹⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175, n. 33. Amphilochius, *Fragm.* 15 (PG 39, 112). Gregory Naz., Or. 29 (PG 36, 96).

¹⁵² L. Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’ and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa,” *Modern Theology* 18.4 (2002): 527-38. A. Papanikolaou has written an article in response to Turcescu in “Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu,” *Modern Theology* 20.4 (2004): 601-07. Zizioulas’ own response to Turcescu is found in *Communion and Otherness*, 171-77. Besides Turcescu, several scholars have also raised concerns over Zizioulas’ use of the Cappadocian Fathers. See A. D’Halleux, “Personalisme ou éssentialisme trinitaire chez les Père Cappadociens? Une mauvaise controverse,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 17 (1986): 129-55, 265-92. See also L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford:OUP, 2004) and “(Mis)Adventures in Trinitarian Ontology” in *The Trinity and an Entangled World. Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, ed. J. Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 130-45.

¹⁵³ L. Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’” 534.

¹⁵⁴ L. Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’” 531, 533.

¹⁵⁵ L. Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’” 534.

¹⁵⁶ L. Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’” 534. See also D. Knight, (ed.) *The Theology of John Zizioulas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 44.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 212-13, n. 12.

¹⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172. Zizioulas cites Gregory of Nyssa’s *Ad Graecos*, paragraph 23. See also D. F. Stromara Jr., “Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos* “How It Is That We Say That There Are Three Persons In The Divinity But Do Not Say There Are Three Gods” (To the Greeks: Concerning the Commonality of Concepts),” *The Greek Theological Review* 41.4 (1996): 384.

The following text from Gregory of Nyssa's *Ex communibus notionibus* sheds further light on the differences between humanity and the Trinity and why therefore we cannot say that there are three 'Gods' even when we call God three persons:

The definition of man is not always observed in the same individuals or persons, for while the former ones are dying others are coming into existence, and again while many of them still remain, yet others are being born, so that the defining measure of this nature, that is to say Man, is observed sometimes in these individuals here, sometimes in those there, sometimes in the very many and sometimes in the very few. Therefore, for this reason, that is the addition and subtraction, the death and birth of individuals, in whom the defining measure of man is perceived, we are constrained to say "many mans" and "few mans" because of the change and the alteration of the persons, the common usage being displaced along with the definition of essence, so that somehow we number essences along with the persons. No such thing ever results in the case of the Holy Trinity, for it is necessary to say that the self-same Persons exist and not another and another, always being the same and in just the same manner. We do not admit a certain addition resulting in a quaternity, nor a diminution into a duality. For neither is another Person begotten or brought forth from the Father or from one of the other Persons so that a quaternity arises from a former trinity; nor does one of these three Persons pass away even for the blink of an eye as it were, so that the trinity becomes a duality even in rational analysis. For there is absolutely no addition or diminution, change or alteration pertaining to the three Persons of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit so that our conception of the three Persons should be led astray and we be forced to admit "three gods."¹⁵⁹

According to Zizioulas, drawing from Gregory's lengthy text, what accounts for the deficiencies of the analogy between human and divine being are, for Gregory of Nyssa, the following:¹⁶⁰

- (a) Human mortality involving separation between human beings.
- (b) The possibility of addition or subtraction of human beings.
- (c) The transience and change of human persons.
- (d) The derivation of human persons from different personal causes.

According to Zizioulas, these points apply purely to *human* personhood and the Cappadocians deliberately avoided applying them to the divine persons. Thus, in speaking of the divine persons we must exclude:¹⁶¹

A) Addition or diminution

B) Alteration or change

C) More than one ontological cause and

D) Any other properties or qualities except those of ontological relations.

¹⁵⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos*, paragraph 24. See also D.F. Stromara Jr., "Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos*," 384-85.

¹⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172. See also Greg. Nys. *Ex. com. not.* (PG 45, 177-80); Jaeger's edition, III.1, 23f.

¹⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172. See also Gregory of Nyssa, PG 45, 177-180.

Zizioulas notes, “This last point is even more clearly stated in Gregory’s letter to Ablabius, where he writes that ‘*the only* distinction between the other and the other’ of divine persons is that of ‘cause and being caused,’ which indicates ‘the difference according to the *how* (God is),’ namely divine personhood.”¹⁶² Zizioulas concludes that

*Divine persons, in contrast with human ones, cannot be regarded as a concurrence of natural or moral qualities of any kind; they are distinguished only by their relations of ontological origination. It is thus clear that the analogy between human and divine persons breaks down when we speak of persons as a collection of properties. In speaking of persons as the concurrence of natural or moral qualities (baldness, tallness, etc.), Gregory describes a human hypostasis. No natural or moral quality would be used by any of the Fathers to describe a divine person, simply because such qualities are common to all three divine persons and cannot be personal qualities. All natural and moral qualities, such as energy, goodness, will (or consciousness in the modern sense), and so on, are qualities commonly possessed by the divine persons and they have nothing to do with the concept of divine personhood. Therefore, the concept of personhood, if it is viewed in the image of divine personhood, is, as I have insisted in my writings, not a ‘collection of properties’ of either a natural or a moral kind. It is only a ‘mode of being’ comprising relations (schesis) of ontological constitutiveness.*¹⁶³

This divine personhood is the basis for the concept of the person¹⁶⁴ This is what Zizioulas has worked out using the concept of the person that is based on reflecting on *divine* and not human personhood, just as the Cappadocian Fathers have done.¹⁶⁵

Zizioulas does not deny that the Cappadocian Fathers numbered human beings or that persons could be numbered. What Zizioulas has denied is “persons can be numbered in such a way as to involve *addition* and *combination*.”¹⁶⁶ This is precisely what the Cappadocian Fathers exclude when they apply the category of numbers to divine being. In one of the letters under Basil’s name but attributed to Evagrius, numbering is excluded categorically from divine being.¹⁶⁷ We note that Gregory of Nyssa had excluded the idea of addition and subtraction from the divine being, while allowing it in the case of human beings. Also, Basil had warned that we must apply the notion of number to the Trinity “reverently.”¹⁶⁸ This means that we cannot number the persons by addition, a point emphasized by Zizioulas on the basis of not just the Cappadocian Fathers but the entire Greek patristic tradition.¹⁶⁹ So although the Cappadocian Fathers enumerated persons, yet Zizioulas points out that they did

¹⁶² Gregory Nys., *Ad Ablabium, Quod non sint*. (PG 45, 133; Jaeger, 56). This is Zizioulas’ quotation of St. Gregory in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172.

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 173. Italics original.

¹⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 171.

¹⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

¹⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 174.

¹⁶⁷ Basil, *Ep.* 8.

¹⁶⁸ Basil, *De Sp.S.* 44-45.

¹⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 174.

so “reluctantly and with full consciousness of the deficiency of the use of such a language.”¹⁷⁰

As for the issue of the Cappadocian Fathers using *prosopon* and *atomon* interchangeably, Zizioulas reminds us that the term *atomon* was never used by them to refer to define the divine persons.¹⁷¹ In one passage, Zizioulas reminds his critics¹⁷² that the Cappadocian Fathers rarely used the word “*atomon*” in referring to the Trinity but used instead the term “*prosopon*.” “*Prosopon*” carries a *relational* dimension which the word “*atomon*” does not. This is crucial in the Cappadocian formula “one *ousia*, three *prosopa*.” Zizioulas is adamant therefore that *hypostasis* and *prosopon* were never identical with *atomon* in patristic thought.¹⁷³ According to Zizioulas, in summing up his arguments in *Ex. com. not.* (PG 45, 185), Gregory avoids using the word *atomon* in referring to the Trinity as he concludes, “Therefore, we speak of one God, the creator of all, though he is seen in three *prosopa*, that is *hypostaseis*, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”¹⁷⁴ Zizioulas insists that Gregory’s equation of *prosopon* with *atomon* “was not meant to be applied to divine personhood; Gregory himself limits its application to human beings.”¹⁷⁵ In fact, the term *atomon* never found its way into the official dogmatic vocabulary with regard to the Trinity, a point emphasized by Zizioulas.¹⁷⁶ Zizioulas contends that “a careful reading of Gregory of Nyssa shows that his use of *atomon* in relation to *prosopon* covers only one aspect of personhood, namely the idea of concrete, specific (*idike*) and indivisible existence of *ousia*: ‘for it is the same thing to apply to *prosopon* the (notion) of specific *ousia* as it is to apply it to *atomon*.’”¹⁷⁷

As for Turcescu’s allegations that Zizioulas has been influenced by existential philosophers like Buber and Macmurray, Zizioulas counters that he quotes these philosophers merely to highlight their attempts “to correct the Western equation of the ‘person’ with the ‘individual.’”¹⁷⁸ If these philosophers reject individualism, they do so merely from the standpoint of human personhood, from the study of the human being. Zizioulas, however, consistently refuses to draw his personalism in this purely human way. Instead, his personalism is developed from the study of the Trinity as it was by the Cappadocian

¹⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 173.

¹⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175-76.

¹⁷² Lucien Turcescu.

¹⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175.

¹⁷⁴ Greg. Nys. *Ex com. not.* (PG 45, 185) cited in J. Zizioulas *Communion and Otherness*, 175-76, n. 33. See also D.F. Stromara Jr., “Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos*,” 391.

¹⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175.

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175. See also his “Person and Nature,” 91.

¹⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 175. Zizioulas cites Gregory Nys., *Ex com. not.* (PG 45, 177).

¹⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 169. See also J. Macmurray, *The Self as Agent* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957) and *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961).

Fathers.¹⁷⁹ The basis of the concept of the person is divine personhood.¹⁸⁰ The concept of human personhood is drawn from the triune God and not from the study of the human person.¹⁸¹

Zizioulas dialogues at length with Buber because the latter has introduced a relational element into being by including the Other (the 'Thou') in the definition of the 'I.' According to Zizioulas, "Buber makes the Other co-constitutive with the I in the structure of being, and regards the two as of equal primordially," as Buber writes, "The I exists only through the relationship with the Thou."¹⁸² Zizioulas criticizes Buber's understanding of the Other because it lacks a-symmetry to the extent that relationship becomes a category of primary ontological significance even with respect to the Thou.¹⁸³ What seems to be the ultimate ontological category for Buber is not the "I" or the "Thou", but the *relationship* between the two, the point "between" where they meet.¹⁸⁴ In other words, Buber considers relation to be the ultimate ontological category. This was unacceptable to Zizioulas because if relationality was ultimately what 'caused' being, then the 'I' does not depend on the 'Thou' but on the relationship between them. This means that what matters ultimately is the relationship and not the 'I' or the Other. The 'I' is again not constituted by the Other but by a relationship with the Thou. Zizioulas asks whether in the end, this involves a primacy of the 'I' over the 'Other?'¹⁸⁵ Theologically, Buber's identification of the 'Between'¹⁸⁶ with God is problematic because, according to Zizioulas, if God were not the Father but the *unity* of the Father, Son and Spirit, then relationality becomes the ultimate reality and Christians cannot therefore address their prayers to the Person of the Father.¹⁸⁷ Given Zizioulas' criticisms of Buber's account of relationality, Turcescu's allegation that Zizioulas' concept of the person is influenced by Buber cannot stand.¹⁸⁸

Zizioulas has also been widely misunderstood for being influenced by social trinitarianism and for wrongly attributing the concept of the person to the Cappadocian Fathers. However, Zizioulas has repeatedly emphasized that personhood is to be understood neither from the concept of human persons nor from transferring analogies from human

¹⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

¹⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 171.

¹⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 176-77.

¹⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 47. See also M. Buber, "What is Man?," in *Between Man and Man*, trans. R. G. Smith, 1954, 205. Quoted by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 47.

¹⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 47.

¹⁸⁴ M. Buber, "What is Man?," in *Between Man and Man*, 204.

¹⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 47.

¹⁸⁶ M. Theunissen, *The Other*, 1986, 383.

¹⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 136.

¹⁸⁸ L. Turcescu, "'Person' versus 'Individual,'" 535.

personhood to the Trinity. Instead, the concept of personhood is understood in relation to *divine* personhood which derives from the mystery of the Trinity whose persons the Fathers admitted, cannot be illustrated but by a ‘misuse of language.’¹⁸⁹ Critics of Zizioulas often mistake *social* categories (communality and friendship) for *personal* categories (uniqueness and otherness) when speaking of persons. Being relational in Zizioulas’ terminology does not mean being social. Being relational means being defined as unique persons in relation to God through communion and otherness. Hence, Zizioulas insists that “the person, viewed in the light of the Trinity, is *not* an ‘individual’, in the sense of an identity which is conceivable apart from its relations; or an ‘axis of consciousness’; or a concurrence of qualities, natural or moral; or a number that can be subject to addition or combination.”¹⁹⁰ This was something we have learnt in the previous chapter and which has been emphasized repeatedly by Zizioulas against his critics.¹⁹¹ This is a critical point because his ecclesiology of communion is based on the model of divine personhood found in the Trinity. From a careful reading of Gregory of Nyssa’s works *Ad Ablabius* and *Ad Graecos*, I concur with Zizioulas that it is clear that this Cappadocian Father was well aware of the deficiencies of transferring to the Trinity the analogies from human personhood admitting that doing so is a ‘misuse of language.’¹⁹² We simply cannot transfer our customary use of language in describing humanity to speaking of God. If we do so, we must recognize with Gregory of Nyssa the severe deficiencies of applying the example of the enumeration of three particular human beings to the enumeration of the divine Persons. Therefore, Zizioulas is justified to say in response to Turcescu’s criticism that Zizioulas is wrong to cite from the Cappadocian Fathers that persons cannot be enumerated, “To take these deficiencies and use them as points of criticism, for not applying them to my idea of personhood, is more than bad criticism, it is a bad reading of the Fathers.”¹⁹³

5.3.5. Conclusion

The trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian Fathers is foundational for Zizioulas’ ontology of the person. God the Father, as cause, and God the Trinity, as a communion of persons who are God’s way of being are the key ideas of the Cappadocian Fathers’ concept of the Trinity. Zizioulas is indebted to this theological tradition for the concept of the person which the

¹⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172, 177.

¹⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

¹⁹¹ This is evidently so especially in Zizioulas’ defence against Turcescu.

¹⁹² Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabius*, paragraph 5 from P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893) and *Ad Graecos*, PG 45, 177-80; Jaeger’s edition, III. 1, 23f, cited in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 172 and 177.

¹⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

Cappadocian Fathers bequeathed the Church. Despite being charged by Turcescu of misreading the Cappadocians, Zizioulas has dismissed these criticisms in an article in direct response to Turcescu on the basis of Gregory of Nyssa's concept of the divine Persons in *Ad Ablabius* and *Ad Graecos*.¹⁹⁴ Turcescu himself has not responded back in kind.

5.4. St. Maximus the Confessor

5.4.1. Introduction

Besides the Cappadocian Fathers, Zizioulas cites extensively from the writings of Maximus the Confessor (580-662).¹⁹⁵ Maximus was a martyr for the faith, whose theological writings were at first condemned by his enemies. His tongue was cut off and his right hand amputated before he died in exile.¹⁹⁶ His teachings were later accepted by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.¹⁹⁷ He is described by Jaroslav Pelikan as someone fluent in both the language of spirituality and that of theology.¹⁹⁸ Meyendorff describes Maximus as "the real father of Byzantine theology."¹⁹⁹ It seems natural that Zizioulas would turn to him, and especially, given Zizioulas's work on the Cappadocians, to Maximus' commentary on Gregory of Nazianzen's Orations.²⁰⁰ Maximus seems to have been the official interpreter of the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzen in the *Ambigua*.²⁰¹

Maximus exerted a strong philosophical influence on Zizioulas, especially in helping Zizioulas to develop an ontology of otherness.²⁰² While Basil was influential in helping Zizioulas work out a personal ontology of communion, it is Maximus' ontology and cosmology that shaped Zizioulas' ontology of otherness. This has led Zizioulas to work out an ontology of love and freedom using the concept of *ekstasis* of being. In addition, Maximus' eschatological ontology has influenced Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology. We shall examine

¹⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, "Person and Individual – A 'Misreading' of the Cappadocians?," in *Communion and Otherness*, 171-77.

¹⁹⁵ This is especially so in later articles of Zizioulas' such as "On Being Other: Towards an Ontology of Otherness," in *Communion and Otherness*, and in a most recent book Zizioulas has published, entitled *Illness and Healing in Orthodox Theology* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2016), he particularly turns to St. Maximus the Confessor among the Fathers of the Church.

¹⁹⁶ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings. The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 5.

¹⁹⁷ N. Constatas, (ed. and trans.) *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua. Vol. 1*, vii.

¹⁹⁸ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor*, 11.

¹⁹⁹ J. Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*. Washington 1969. See also J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Vol. 2. The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 8.

²⁰⁰ See N. Constatas, *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers* for a good translation into English of Maximus' *The Ambigua*.

²⁰¹ N. Constatas, (ed. and trans.) *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, x.

²⁰² See J. Zizioulas, "On Being Other: Towards an Ontology of Otherness," in *Communion and Otherness*, 13-98, especially 19-32, where he argues that St. Maximus' ontology is grounded in the distinction between the *logos* of nature and the *tropos* of being. According to Zizioulas, St. Maximus roots his ontology of otherness and communion, more directly than Gregory Palamas, "in the personalism of Trinitarian theology, and eventually in the Incarnation of the *person* of the *Logos* (*hypostatikos*).\" See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 27.

this *ekstasis* of being and eschatological ontology in turn to see how they apply to the Eucharist.

The following are five areas of Maximus' work which particularly influenced Zizioulas.

- A) The concept of the *tropos* of being in Maximus' ontology
- B) Asceticism
- C) The Church's *mystagogy*
- D) Eschatological ontology
- E) The *ekstasis* of being

We shall look at each in turn.

5.4.2. *Tropos* of being in Maximus' ontology

One of Zizioulas' main questions regarding ontology is this: How can communion and otherness coincide in ontology, especially when the whole cosmos is divided because of difference, and the world is different in its parts because of its divisions?²⁰³ A partial answer can be found through consideration of two concepts employed by Maximus. Maximus speaks of a) The *logoi* of beings and b) the *tropos* of being. Both these concepts are indispensable for an ontology of communion and otherness.

- A) The *logoi* of beings and the *Logos* concept.²⁰⁴

According to Zizioulas, the *Logos* is a *personal principle*, modified by Maximus to serve as a basis for an ontology of communion and otherness.²⁰⁵ This ontology is applied to trinitarian theology and to Christology and cosmology.²⁰⁶

Zizioulas notes four points in Maximus' theology that relate to answering the question: "How can communion and otherness coincide in ontology?"²⁰⁷

- 1) The *logoi* of creation are providential, being products of God's will and love.²⁰⁸

To show that the world is not eternal and was created freely by God, Zizioulas contends that Maximus creatively used the concept of *Logos* to refer to the Son through whom the world was made and the *logoi* to refer to "the *wills* of God," not "the *thoughts* of God."²⁰⁹ By relating the *logoi* (the reasons for things) to wills, Zizioulas suggests that Maximus managed

²⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 2-3 and 23. See also Maximus, *Conf. Theol. Pol* 20; *Amb.* 67 (PG 91, 1400C).

²⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 21-22.

²⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 22.

²⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23.

²⁰⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23.

²⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23. Here, Zizioulas cites Maximus, *Amb.* 7 (PG 91, 1081A-C); 42 (PG 91, 1329C) in n. 30.

²⁰⁹ This is Zizioulas' interpretation of St. Maximus' ideas and I have quoted this from J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 87. Italics original.

to separate creation from necessity.²¹⁰

2) The *Logos* that unites the *logoi* of creation is a *Person* – the *Son* of the Father. Zizioulas explains that when united with the *Logos*, “the *logoi* of creation do not become part of God’s substance but retain their creaturely nature.”²¹¹

3) Through the Incarnation, the *logoi* of creation are truly united to God.²¹² Zizioulas takes this to mean that “the gulf of otherness between God and the world is bridged in a personal or hypostatic manner (*hypostatikos*).”²¹³ This is, according to Zizioulas, the key idea of Maximus: the ultimate union of all creatures in the Incarnate Word without an absorption of the diversity of creation by that union.²¹⁴

4) Zizioulas concludes that bridging the gulf of otherness between the world and God through the hypostatic union in the Person of the Son requires, philosophically speaking, an ontology conceived not based on *what* things are (their nature), but on *how* things are (their ‘mode of being,’ or hypostasis).²¹⁵ Maximus uses for this purpose, a distinction between the *logos* and the *tropos* of being.²¹⁶

B) The *tropos* of being

Maximus then proposes a distinction between *logos physeos* and *tropos hyparxeos*;²¹⁷ in every being there is a permanent and adjustable aspect.²¹⁸ The permanent is related to the *logos* of being while the adjustable aspect is related to the *tropos* of being. According to Zizioulas, Maximus proposed that all creatures possess a *tropos hyparxeos*²¹⁹ and even extended the term *hypostasis* to apply to everything that exists, not only to human beings. Drawing upon Maximus, Zizioulas argues that all created beings exist as different *hypostases* only because of their relation to, and dependence upon, the free *hypostasis* of the human being, and ultimately to the *Logos* of God, who “wills always and in all things to accomplish the mystery of his embodiment (*ensomatosis*).”²²⁰ Making further references to Maximus’

²¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 88.

²¹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23. Here, Zizioulas cites Maximus, *Quaest. Thal.* 35 (PG 90, 377C) and *Cap. Theol. econ.* 2, 10 (PG 90, 1129A) in n. 31.

²¹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23. Here, Zizioulas cites Maximus, *Amb.* 33 (PG 91, 1285C-1288A) in n. 32.

²¹³ Zizioulas points out that in Chalcedonian terminology, “the unity between God and the world takes place while the divine and the human natures unite *in a Person* ‘without confusion’, that is, through a communion that preserves otherness.” See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23.

²¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23, n. 33. See also L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup Lund, 1965), 434-35.

²¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23.

²¹⁶ Zizioulas has noted that this distinction goes back to the Cappadocian Fathers, but it is Maximus who first made use of this distinction as a key concept in theology. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23, n. 34.

²¹⁷ Maximus stresses that the various *logoi* did not exist in a ‘naked’ state but as “modes of existence” (see for example, *Amb.* 42, PG 91:1341Dff).

²¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 23-25.

²¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 24, n. 36.

²²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 24-25, n. 36. Maximus, *Amb.* 7; PG 91, 1084CD. This quotation is taken from N.

Ambigua on the importance of the Incarnation, Zizioulas writes that

In the Incarnation, the *logos physeos* remains fixed but the *tropos* adjusts being to an intention or purpose or manner of communion. In other words, the love of God bridges the gulf of otherness by affecting the changeable and adjustable aspect of being, and this applies equally to God and to the world: God bridges the gulf by adjusting his own *tropos*,²²¹ that is, the *how* he is, while created existence also undergoes adjustments not of its *logos physeos* but of its *tropos*. This amounts to a ‘tropic identity’, that is, to an ontology of *tropos*, of the ‘how’ things are. This is a matter of ontology, because the *tropos* of being is an inseparable aspect of being, as primary ontologically as substance or nature. God, therefore, relates to the world with a change not of *what* each of these identities are, but of *how* they are.²²²

Since every being exists in a particular ‘mode’ or *tropos*, the relation of God to the world is thus ontological. This ontological relationship allows for communion between God and the world *without a change of what each of them is*.²²³ God and the world retain their original substance. However, through their *tropos*, the divine and the creaturely natures can unite because the *tropos* is capable of adjustment. So following Maximus, Zizioulas contends that human beings can become *theias koinonoi physeos*²²⁴ in and through the Person of the *Logos*, who, through the Incarnation, became man in order that man may, so to speak, become God.²²⁵ Maximus’ ontology of deification that is derived philosophically using the concept of the *tropos* of being as applied to the Incarnation is, according to Zizioulas, philosophically the best way to work out an ontology of communion and otherness.²²⁶ It is a sound concept theologically because the doctrine of the Incarnation is instrumental in bridging the gulf between created and uncreated being.²²⁷ Maximus’ account of the Incarnation achieves this while avoiding the closed ontology of the ancient Greeks and maintaining the created-uncreated dialectic. The Incarnation of the Son of God made it possible for man to attain unto God through the Person of the Son. Therefore, Maximus has worked out a theology of divinization, made possible by the Incarnation, based on the concepts of the *logos* and *tropos* of being. As I. H. Dalmais has written,

Contas (ed. & trans.), *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers – The Ambigua. Vol. 1. Maximos the Confessor*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 107.

²²¹ Zizioulas points out that according to Maximus, the Incarnation affects the mode (*tropos*) of both created beings and God himself. See Maximus, *Amb.* 5 (PG 91, 1056) and 41 (PG 91, 1308C; esp. 1313C). See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 24, n. 35.

²²² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 24-25. Italics original.

²²³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 25.

²²⁴ 2 Pet.1.4.

²²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 25, n. 37. According to Pelikan, S. L. Epifanovich has identified deification as the chief idea of St. Maximus. See J. Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, 10.

²²⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 26.

²²⁷ According to Zizioulas, Maximus emphasizes that the gulf between created and uncreated being can only be bridged by the Incarnation of the Word. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 30, n. 51. Maximus, *Amb.* 5 (PG 91, 1057C).

The Logos assumes the human condition, thus radically suppressing all oppositions that broke the unity of the created universe, and rendering it possible for man to share in the filial condition, which is that of the Logos himself. Herein resides the “divinization” that begins for the Christian in baptismal birth that renews the “mode of existence” (*tropos*) without changing the “essential principle” (*logos*) in accordance with which he was created.²²⁸

Zizioulas’ concept of ecclesial being is derived from this new birth which is effected in a Christian’s baptism, which “divinizes” him so to speak by giving him a new mode of existence (*tropos*) *without removing from him his original nature that was his at birth*.²²⁹

5.4.3. Asceticism

In addition, Zizioulas’ account of the ascetic self-emptying for the sake of the Other is also deeply rooted in patristic thought, particularly in that of Maximus the Confessor.²³⁰ The aim of all ascetical effort is *love*, according to Maximus, himself a monk spending long years in the monasteries of Byzantium (ca. 610/613-626) followed by an even longer stint (ca. 626-645) in a cloister in North Africa.²³¹

Zizioulas credits Maximus with integrating “the best insights of asceticism into the eucharistic theology of the Church” by conforming “his theology to the lived experience of the Church.”²³² According to Zizioulas, Maximus was at first an Origenist but later drastically revised his views to settle on the side of eucharistic ecclesiology.²³³ Zizioulas writes,

(Maximus) insisted that it is the Eucharist that most fundamentally expresses the identity of the Church. For him the truth of the ecclesiology of individual purification lies in the transformation and the presentation in Christ of the entire tangible and intelligible world, and of all human relationships. There must be a process of purification by which all negative or worldly elements are driven out, but the purification itself is not the ultimate purpose of the Church. By lifting it and offering it to God, the Eucharist transforms all creation. The Church is the place in which this purification takes place, but rather than producing incorporeal angels, it brings about the salvation of this material world by giving it eternal communion with God. The process of purification must be understood as part of the eucharistic transformation of the world, not as rejecting or devaluing the material and bodily creation. Though at one time or another each of these aspects has

²²⁸ I. H. Dalmais’ Preface to G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, xiii.

²²⁹ See “Ambiguum 36” in N. Conostas, *The Ambigua*, vol. 2, 71-73. Zizioulas’ dependence on St. Maximus is evident here.

²³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 84.

²³¹ N. Conostas, (ed. and trans.) *On the Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, vii.

²³² J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 123.

²³³ Zizioulas refers to the recent scholarship on Maximus to reflect Maximus’ change in theological outlook. Von Balthasar identified Origenist elements everywhere in the thought of Maximus. See his *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003). Polycarp Sherwood showed that this was not true, and Von Balthasar later rectified his account of Maximus. See J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 123. Some scholars such as Demetrios Bathrellos do not accept that Maximus was ever an Origenist.

been given greater emphasis, the Church has always held to Maximus' synthesis.²³⁴

This eucharistic ecclesiology is similar to what Zizioulas has proposed using the concept of the eucharistic hypostasis of man that is realized in the Church. Zizioulas has written about an ecclesial hypostasis that has an ascetic side to it because of the eschatological aspect of the ecclesial hypostasis.²³⁵ This ascetic character of the ecclesial hypostasis is not derived "from a denial of the world or of the biological nature of existence itself," according to Zizioulas.²³⁶ Instead,

The ascetic character of the person, derived as it is from the eucharistic form of the ecclesial hypostasis, expresses the authentic person precisely when it does not deny eros and the body but hypostasizes them in an ecclesial manner.... in practice this means basically that eros as *ecstatic* movement of the human person drawing its hypostasis from the future, as it is expressed in the eucharist (or from God through the eucharist, as it is expressed in the Trinity), is freed from ontological necessity and does not lead anymore to the exclusiveness which is dictated by nature. It becomes a movement of free love with a universal character, that is, of love which, while it can concentrate on one person as the expression of the whole nature, sees in this person the hypostasis through which all men and all things are loved in relation to which they are hypostasized.²³⁷

Zizioulas' contention is that asceticism is the process by which the less one makes one's hypostasis rely on nature, the more one is hypostasized as a person.²³⁸ In asceticism, nature is not denied but is freed "from the ontological necessity of the biological hypostasis" which is itself subject to death and decay. In asceticism, nature is hypostasized "in a non-biological way" to give it real being. In this process of hypostasization, *eros* and the body are not abandoned but "hypostasized according to the 'mode of existence' of the ecclesial hypostasis." In this way, the body "as the hypostatic expression of the human person, is liberated from individualism and egocentricity and becomes a supreme expression of *community* – the Body of Christ, the body of the Church, the body of the eucharist."²³⁹

This type of "ecclesial asceticism" is very different from the usual ascetic mysticism of the Neoplatonic/Origenist type where the mind is purified from all sensible things in order to

²³⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 123-24.

²³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62.

²³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63. Here, Zizioulas refers to Maximus, *Amb.* 42, PG 91: 1340BC, 1341C to support his assertion that the *logos physeos* has no need of transformation but the *tropos physeos* demands it.

²³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63. Zizioulas claims here that "the great existential significance of patristic Christology consists in the fact that the capacity of the person to love in one person alone all things and all men is an attribute of God, who as Father, although He hypostasizes and loves one Son alone (the "only-begotten"), can "through the Son" love and bestow hypostasis on all creation." As the Scripture says, "All things were created through Him and for Him." (Col. 1.16). See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63-64, n. 68.

²³⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62, n. 66.

²³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63-64. Italics original.

concentrate on itself or on God and to obtain divine knowledge.²⁴⁰ This was rejected by the patristic tradition and, according to Zizioulas, Maximus seems to have been the decisive figure here.²⁴¹

5.4.4. The Church's *Mystagogy*

Zizioulas has written that Maximus insisted that the Eucharist “most fundamentally expresses the identity of the Church.”²⁴² He credits Maximus with bringing the Ignatian and the Cyprian schemes of ecclesiology together to show that “the divine Eucharist creates the Church as the foretaste of the *eschaton*.”²⁴³ For Maximus, the Church was “an image and figure of God”²⁴⁴ and also “an image of the world composed of visible and invisible substances.”²⁴⁵

Above all, Zizioulas follows Maximus in *The Church's Mystagogy*, a work in which Maximus explains how the Church is an image of both the world and of God,²⁴⁶ of God, because since the Church has the same activity as God does by imitation and in figure,²⁴⁷ of the world, because the Church, like the world, contains both unity and diversity.²⁴⁸ There is one world which is not divided by its parts. The world encloses “the differences of the parts arising from their natural properties by their relationship to what is one and indivisible in itself.”²⁴⁹

Zizioulas also notes in *The Church's Mystagogy* that for Maximus, “the holy Eucharist is understood as a movement, as progress toward a goal.”²⁵⁰ The Eucharist is also a *synaxis*, an assembly.²⁵¹ Thus, Zizioulas contends that movement and assembly are the two fundamental characteristics of the Eucharist.²⁵² It is a movement of the world and the Church towards the Kingdom of God.²⁵³ This is reflected in Maximus' description of the Divine Liturgy which, according to Zizioulas, is eschatological in nature as the eschatology of the Divine Liturgy is “a *movement and progression* towards the future.”²⁵⁴ Zizioulas also stresses that the Eucharist

²⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 305.

²⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 305. See also I. H. Dalmais, “Le doctrine ascétique de Maxime le Confesseur d'après le Liber Asceticus,” *Irénikon* 26 (1953): 17-39.

²⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 123-24.

²⁴³ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 131.

²⁴⁴ See chapter one of Maximus' “The Church's Mystagogy,” in G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 186-88.

²⁴⁵ See chapter two of Maximus' “The Church's Mystagogy,” in G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 188-89.

²⁴⁶ Maximus, *The Church's Mystagogy*. See G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 186-89.

²⁴⁷ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 186.

²⁴⁸ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 188.

²⁴⁹ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 188-89.

²⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61, n. 62. See also J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 48-49 and G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor*, 181-225.

²⁵¹ G. Berthold, *Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings*, 183, 215, n. 2.

²⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61.

²⁵³ J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 48-49.

²⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 56. Italics original.

is where the future is remembered in the present.²⁵⁵ This remembrance of the future can be better understood in the light of the eschatological ontology of Maximus.

5.4.5. Eschatological ontology

Maximus has been credited by Zizioulas for having introduced an eschatological ontology that locates the true nature of beings in the future.²⁵⁶ Maximus refers to the biblical images of shadow, image and truth.²⁵⁷ According to Zizioulas, he associates ‘shadow’ with the things of the Old Testament, ‘image’ with the things of the New Testament, and ‘truth’ with the future state.²⁵⁸ As Maximus writes,

[The Areopagite] calls ‘images (*eikones*) of what is true’ the rites that are now performed in the *synaxis*... For these things are symbols, not the truth... From the effects. That is, from what is accomplished visibly to the things that are unseen and secret, which are the causes and archetypes of things perceptible. For those things are called causes which in no way owe the cause of their being to anything else. Or from the effects to the causes, that is, from the perceptible symbols to what is noetic and spiritual. Or from the imperfect to the more perfect, from the type to the image; from the image to the truth. For the things of the Old Testament are the shadow; those of the New Testament are the image. The truth is the state of things to come.²⁵⁹

This is Maximus’ eschatological ontology based on the Eucharist where Maximus interprets the Eucharist as symbol and image in relation to the concept of causality. The truth of what is now accomplished in the *synaxis*, that is, what is performed in the Divine Liturgy, lies in the reality of the *future* Kingdom of God which is to come.²⁶⁰ This Kingdom is the *cause* of the Eucharist because it is the archetype of the Church.²⁶¹ Maximus therefore overturns the ancient Greek notion of causality. What causes things to be is the future, not the past.

Based on this, Zizioulas develops his idea of the ecclesial hypostasis that reveals man as a person whose truth and ontology belong to the *future* and are *images* of the future. Zizioulas calls this hypostasis a eucharistic hypostasis with “branches in the present but roots in the

²⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 58-67. See the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy used in the Orthodox Church, both that of St. John Chrysostom and that of St. Basil which includes the phrase, “...remembering then this saving commandment, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand and *the second and glorious coming again*, offering to Thee Thine own of Thine own, we hymn Thee...” See J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 59. See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 169, 180, 240.

²⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62, n. 63.

²⁵⁷ Hebrews 10.1.

²⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 136-37 and “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 44. See also Maximus, *Scholia on Dionysius’ Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3, 3, 2, PG 4:137D).

²⁵⁹ Maximus, *Scholia on Dionysius’ Church Hierarchy* (PG 4:137). Quoted from J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 44.

²⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Symbolism and Realism in Orthodox Worship,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 93.

²⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 44-45.

future,”²⁶² realized, according to Zizioulas, only in the Church and in the Eucharist.²⁶³ Zizioulas also bases himself firmly in the eschatological ontology of Maximus to argue for an ontology that makes “the end the cause of all that is, of the world’s being.”²⁶⁴ As Zizioulas sums up,

Eschatological ontology, therefore, is about the liberation of being from necessity; it is about the formation of being. Man and the world are no longer imprisoned in their past, in sin, decay and death. The past is ontologically affirmed only in so far as it contributes to the end, to the coming of the kingdom... Eschatological ontology is precisely the call to the salvation of our rationality to this bondage to the past, a call to faith in “the substance of things hoped for.”²⁶⁵

5.4.6. *Ekstasis* of being and the distinction between essence and energy in God

The concept of *ekstasis* is an ontological concept that is found in the mystical Greek Fathers, especially Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus.²⁶⁶ Zizioulas uses this concept in formulating his ontology of personhood. Personhood, according to Zizioulas, has two aspects of being, an ekstastic mode of being and a hypostatic mode of being.²⁶⁷ While the hypostatic aspect is the personal aspect of being, the ekstastic aspect allows for persons to move towards another in love. Love is possible only because of ekstastic being that moves *out of itself* towards another. *Ekstasis* is what makes love and communion amongst beings possible. It is a key concept in shaping an ontology of love.²⁶⁸

According to Zizioulas, Maximus adopted the idea of *ekstasis* from pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to answer the question of how otherness makes sense in ontology.²⁶⁹ The idea of *ekstasis* signifies that God is love and therefore “He creates an immanent relationship of love *outside Himself*.”²⁷⁰ The emphasis on the words “outside Himself” signify that “love as *ekstasis* gives rise not to an emanation in the neoplatonic sense, but to an *otherness* of being which is seen as responding and returning to its original cause.”²⁷¹ Maximus’ approach towards an otherness of being is ultimately related to the trinitarian being of God and not to cosmology as in Dionysius.²⁷² God loves the world by a personal love for the other – the

²⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59.

²⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 64.

²⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Towards an Eschatological Ontology.” In the conclusion of this paper, Zizioulas re-iterates the importance of Maximus’ eschatological ontology, the implications of which are, according to Zizioulas, “revolutionary, both historically and experientially.”

²⁶⁵ Conclusion of J. Zizioulas, “Towards an Eschatological Ontology.”

²⁶⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44, n. 40.

²⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 213.

²⁶⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 98.

²⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 86.

²⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 91. Italics original.

²⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 91. Italics original. See also Maximus, *Amb.* 23.

²⁷² P. Sherwood, *St. Maximus the Confessor: The Ascetic Life – The Four Centuries on Charity* (Ancient Christian Writers 21,

world in its ontological otherness. This relationship between God and the world is, according to Zizioulas, an “ontological otherness bridged by love, but *not* by ‘nature’ or by ‘essence.’”²⁷³ This is indicated by the distinction between nature and energy in God. According to Zizioulas, this distinction, “joined to the idea of ekstasis, represents the first attempt in the history of Christian thought to reconcile on a philosophical basis the biblical idea of God’s otherness with the Greeks’ concern for the unity of existence.”²⁷⁴ Zizioulas contends that the principal object of apophatic theology is “to remove the question of truth and knowledge from the domain of Greek theories of ontology in order to situate it within that of *love* and communion.”²⁷⁵ The result of this apophatic approach to truth and being through love is, according to Zizioulas, the discovery that

It is only through an identification with *communion* that truth can be reconciled with ontology. That this implies neither agnosticism nor a flight outside matter and history emerges from the thought of Maximus the Confessor. The great achievement of this thinker was to attain the most developed and complete reconciliation between Greek, Jewish and Christian concepts of truth.²⁷⁶

5.4.7. Conclusion – A Eucharistic Ontology²⁷⁷

Drawing on the two decisive contributions of Maximus’ ontology – being as ekstastic and being as eschatological, Zizioulas develops a eucharistic ecclesiology that considers the true nature of the being of man, of God and the world.²⁷⁸ How does he do this? Zizioulas suggests that Maximus achieved this through a Christological approach to truth and communion.²⁷⁹ It is suggested by Zizioulas that Maximus’ theology was unique because he succeeded in “developing a Christological synthesis within which history and creation become organically inter-related.”²⁸⁰ Maximus salvaged the *logos* concept by positing Christ as the *logos* of creation so that one must find in him all the *logoi* of created beings.²⁸¹ In Christ then is

1955), 32.

²⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 91. Italics original.

²⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 92.

²⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 92. Italics original.

²⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 92. Italics original.

²⁷⁷ N. Loudovikos was one of Zizioulas’ students who has done a study on eucharistic ontology based on St. Maximus’ eschatological ontology of being as ‘dialogical reciprocity.’ He is one of the key critics of Zizioulas’ ontology of being as communion. In the next chapter we will look more carefully at how he criticizes Zizioulas and develops his own ontology of being as ‘becoming in communion.’

²⁷⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63. It may be added here that two scholars who have studied St. Maximus are critical of Zizioulas’ interpretation of Maximus’ ontology. They are N. Loudovikos in his doctoral work entitled *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor’s Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, 2010 and J. C. Larchet in his works *La divinisation de l’homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1996) and *Personne et Nature* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2011). Zizioulas’ response to these critics and others such as L. Turcescu can be found in Zizioulas’ 2012 article “Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor,” 85-113.

²⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 93-98.

²⁸⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 96.

²⁸¹ I. H. Dalmais, “La théorie des logoi des créatures chez S. Maxime le Confesseur,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et*

recapitulated the whole cosmos, in fact all creation is hypostasized in Christ. This is accomplished in the Eucharist through the Divine Liturgy whereby the world is offered to God in Christ. This eucharistic offering of the world in the Body of Christ, the Church, is received by God the Father who sends the Holy Spirit on the offerings and transforms them into an ever-present living communion with Him so that they become eternal beings that survive in the *eschaton*. This is the eucharistic ontology that Zizioulas has appropriated from Maximus.²⁸²

5.5. Conclusion

Through the Patristic Fathers Ignatius, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, the Cappadocian Fathers and Maximus, Zizioulas has returned to the Patristic roots in Orthodox theology by expounding a eucharistic ecclesiology of communion and an ontology of personhood. Zizioulas' interpretation of these Patristic Fathers not only presents the Patristic tradition in a fresh and profound way, it is also largely faithful to this tradition.

Théologiques (1952): 244-49.

²⁸² Loudovikos has some reservations about Zizioulas' "communional" personalism and ecclesiology. He has explained his criticisms of Zizioulas in his book *A Eucharistic Ontology* (2010). I will discuss some of these criticisms in chapter six.

PART III

A Dialogue with Zizioulas and his Critics

Criticisms of Zizioulas

6.1. Introduction

We have seen in chapter five that Zizioulas has been criticized for his use of the Cappadocian Fathers to work out an ontology of the person. This chapter further discusses several criticisms of his ecclesiology as found in his doctoral dissertation, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. We shall examine how theologians like Bathrellos, Loudovikos and Volf have critiqued Zizioulas' ecclesiology of communion. A common criticism amongst these three critics is Zizioulas' excessive elevation of the bishop which tends to devalue the rest of the orders. This chapter also highlights some concerns raised by some scholars over his apparent existential and personalist approach to articulating an ontology of personhood, and over his insistence on the *monarchia* of the Father. Zizioulas has defended himself against these charges and we shall see how he does so. These scholarly debates revolving around Zizioulas' trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology based on an ontology of communion and otherness in personhood and the Church will help me further consider in the next chapter the strengths and weaknesses of Zizioulas' ecclesiology and doctrine of God.

First, we begin with Zizioulas' self-criticisms of his work. Zizioulas raises two key criticisms of his own early work.¹ The first concerns the lack of Pneumatology in his doctoral dissertation. In *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, Zizioulas, following his teacher Florovsky, emphasizes the Christological aspect of ecclesiology. But Zizioulas later reflects that a proper synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology in ecclesiology is what is needed in theology. The second issue concerns the structure of the Church. Zizioulas concedes that his *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* did not examine conciliarity and primacy, concepts that Zizioulas later identifies as crucial for the being of the Church. In response to these observations Zizioulas stresses in his later work the constitutive character of Pneumatology in ecclesiology. He also gives more attention to ecclesial structures and considers in some detail the structures in local and regional synods. This is a system of conciliarity whereby the one head bishop will not interfere directly into the affairs of a local church in his region without the agreement of his brother bishops. Neither will the bishops of a regional synod do anything without the consent

¹ This is found in the French translation of his thesis, *L'Eucharistie, l'Evêque et l'Eglise durant les trois premiers siècles*, trans. Jean-Louis Palierne (Paris: Theophanie, Desclee de Brouwer, 1994), 7-8. These have been noted by Bathrellos in his "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 139-40.

of the head bishop of the synod.²

6.2. Demetrios Bathrellos' Criticisms of *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*

In a 2007 paper, Bathrellos summarized the key points of Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* and pointed out a few further areas for criticism. First of all, he notes that Zizioulas has not followed up on his own critique of Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology where Zizioulas writes that

The unity of the Church is expressed in time and space par excellence by the sensible incorporation of the faithful in Christ as this is brought about in a truly unique manner in the Eucharist. But the notion of the Church and her unity, is not expressed to the full in a eucharistic unity *which lacks any preconditions*. The Church has always felt herself to be united in *faith, love, baptism, holiness of life*, etc. And it is certainly true that all this was incorporated very early in the Eucharist.³

Bathrellos points out, however, "a more detailed and integrated approach to these poles of unity and the way they relate to the eucharist is not to be found either in the thesis, or in Zizioulas' later theological work."⁴

Bathrellos also notes that Zizioulas tends to overlook the risen and ascended 'eschatological' Jesus but concedes that this is corrected in his later works where Zizioulas emphasizes the importance of eschatology in theology. Bathrellos also thinks that Zizioulas has always been "strongly in favour of an institutional ecclesiology" in which "the structure and office are more important than the charisma, so the bishop rather than the prophet or saint."⁵ Here is another instance, according to Bathrellos, in which the 'pneumatological' aspect of the Church is not given enough emphasis while the 'christological' aspect receives too much emphasis.⁶ Bathrellos questions the role that the "non-ordained charismatic persons in Church's life" play as Zizioulas seems to say little about the significance of what Bathrellos terms "charismatic leadership" in the early Church.⁷ What is the relationship between the "ordained" and the "non-ordained" leaders? Must ordinands be charismatics before they can be "considered mature enough to receive the charisma of ordination?"⁸ These are questions, Bathrellos contends, Zizioulas needs to answer.

² Zizioulas quotes canon 34 of the apostolic canons as the golden rule for all bishops to follow. He then *extends* this rule to his concept of primacy and argues that a universal primate must also follow this canon if he were to exercise primacy in a universal synodical context. See J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach," in *The One and the Many*, 272.

³ J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 17.

⁴ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 138.

⁵ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 139.

⁶ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 139.

⁷ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 139.

⁸ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 139.

I wish to point out here that Bathrellos may have missed Zizioulas' point that there are no 'non-ordained' persons in the Church. Baptism itself is an ordination, so to speak, to a ministry because baptism allows the baptized to take up an order (*taxis*) in the Church. In other words, the laity (laics) are 'ordained' to ministry in the Church alongside those ordained to the diaconate or the priesthood. This is a very important point often missed by those who wish to make sharp distinctions between the so called 'ordained' and the 'non-ordained' in the Church. In Zizioulas' view, there are no 'non-ordained' persons and as such, all in the Church are 'ordained' and are "charismatics," that is, all have the charisma of the Holy Spirit. However, it is true that Zizioulas has little to say regarding how 'charismatics' such as Christian ascetics and members of monastic orders fit into the overall structure of the present-day institutional Church led by bishops. Neither does Zizioulas pay much attention to the ministry of the prophet. Zizioulas has perhaps over-emphasized the ministry of the bishop by neglecting the laity, who, even though they do not have the authority to preside over the Eucharist, they do have the gifts of the Holy Spirit who empowers them to function in the Church and minister in their own unique ways.

Next, Bathrellos goes on to argue on the basis of Clement in the *Stromateis* "that the true presbyter is he who teaches and acts in accordance with the Lord. In the eschaton this man will have his seat on the twenty-four thrones mentioned in the book of *Revelation*, even if he has not been ordained by men."⁹ According to Bathrellos, Clement uses eschatology "to confer dignity on the 'charismatic' rather than the minister."¹⁰ But Bathrellos claims that Zizioulas does the opposite by using eschatology "just to validate the bishop and hierarchy of the Church." Thus, Bathrellos contends that Zizioulas is one-sided in this approach. Zizioulas' overemphasis on structure also creates tension in his theological system by contrasting nature with person, "relating the former with what is common, given and necessary, and the latter with particularity and freedom."¹¹ For Zizioulas, Bathrellos contends,

To overcome nature and in so doing to become a person through an *ecstasis* from nature is an essential element of Christian life, Zizioulas' one-sided ecclesiological emphasis upon structure, which tends to be seen as a 'necessary' and unchangeable ecclesiological 'nature,' does not seem consistent with his 'existential personalism.' This ecclesiology runs the risk of leaving little room for proper particularity, development and differentiation in space and time. All these tendencies are reflected in Zizioulas' exclusive emphasis on the bishop's structural prerogatives over against his *personal* charisma. This... seems to overlook the fact that, for instance, canonical but unholy or unwise bishops may well damage the well-being and even the unity of the Church.¹²

⁹ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140.

¹⁰ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140.

¹¹ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140.

¹² D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140.

Bathrellos' concern for the well-being and unity of the Church is correct. His warning to the Church on "canonical but unholy" bishops is timely and appropriate. However, Bathrellos has not really appreciated Zizioulas' emphasis on the authority and charisma of the bishop as being exercised within the eucharistic community of which the bishop is head. There is no "personal charisma" that we can attach to a particular bishop as though it was given to him as his possession, according to Zizioulas. The bishop's 'ordination' is always in the context of the eucharistic community which acts as what Zizioulas has called, the 'many' who are opposite the 'one' – bishop. The bishop may be the head of the eucharistic community, but if the eucharistic community disappears, he too disappears because he is an organic part of that community.¹³ Zizioulas has always emphasized the importance of the eucharistic community in relation to the bishop and therefore has stressed this time and again in *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* where he argues right from the start that the bishop and the eucharistic community can never be separated in the Church. The 'one' needs the 'many,' and *vice-versa*.

Bathrellos is not happy that "Zizioulas says too little about the emergence of the office of the bishop."¹⁴ He complains that Zizioulas does not sufficiently discuss the theory that the leadership of the Church was initially exercised in some cases by a college of presbyters-bishops and that only at a later stage was one of these presbyters-bishops raised to the status of the (one) bishop."¹⁵ Citing Jerome, Bathrellos argues that a presbyter was the same as a bishop and that one of the presbyters "should be elected and preside over the others, and that the care of the Church should wholly belong to him, that the seeds of schism might thus be removed."¹⁶ This theory has been, according to Bathrellos, accepted by the majority of scholars in the Episcopal and the non-Episcopal traditions. Thus, he contends that Zizioulas needs to revise some of his assumptions and conclusions concerning the bishop.¹⁷

Bathrellos also disagrees with Zizioulas' claim that the presbyter in the early Church was not simultaneously a priest.¹⁸ This needs some clarification here. What Zizioulas wrote in his doctoral dissertation was that in the early Church, "*only the bishop* was originally called by

¹³ The bishop is always the bishop of a certain place, e.g. bishop of Rome, of Pergamon, of Singapore, etc.

¹⁴ Afanasiev says much more on this issue in his *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 133-253. Scholars such as F. A. Sullivan have done detailed study on this issue in his book *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York: The Newman Press, 2001).

¹⁵ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 141.

¹⁶ *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus*, I, 6-7, cited in Eric G. Jay, "From Presbyter-Bishops to Bishops and Presbyters: Christian Ministry in the Second Century: A Survey," *The Second Century*, 1 (1981): 159. This was also a view shared very similarly by Afanasiev in his *The Church of the Holy Spirit*.

¹⁷ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 141.

¹⁸ D. Bathrellos, "Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 141. See also J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 201f.

the title *hiereus* or *sacerdos*.”¹⁹ Bathrellos has not given a reference to any of Zizioulas writings to support this contention here.²⁰ He does mention, however, that Zizioulas’ main argument for this contention is that “in the ordination prayer for the bishop that is included in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus there is a reference to the celebration of the Eucharist, whereas in the ordination prayer for a presbyter there is no such reference.”²¹ Bathrellos highlights that this seems to contradict another passage in the *Apostolic Traditions* where it says that the deacon is not ordained to the priesthood as only the bishop lays on his hand.²² Bathrellos then argues that the presbyter, unlike the deacon, is ordained to the priesthood because other presbyters lay hands on him at his ordination.²³ I think that there is some confusion here over the term priest. Zizioulas is saying that the presbyter does not usually preside over the eucharistic assembly because the act of presiding is the bishop’s ministry as the *high-priest* in the Church.²⁴ Presbyters may, however, preside *in the name of the bishop*. Therefore, Zizioulas considers presbyters as priests, though not in the same way as a bishop is priest.

Bathrellos then goes on to assert that Zizioulas tends to devalue the presbyter and over-emphasize the bishop in his works.²⁵ Perhaps Zizioulas has unintentionally devalued the presbyter by making the bishop out to be the sole presider of the eucharistic assembly, but it must also be stressed that he closely follows Ignatius who writes that the presbyters and the bishops are united together indivisibly.²⁶ How then can we say that presbyters are of less value compared to bishops? Zizioulas actually maintains that “the bishop is inconceivable apart from the *presbyters*.”²⁷ As Zizioulas emphasizes, an absence of any of the orders, deacons included, distorts the image of the eschatological community and of the Kingdom of God. If there are no laics, who will say the ‘amen’ to the prayers offered to God by the bishop?²⁸ Zizioulas insists that the bishop cannot say the ‘amen’ in the Eucharist.²⁹ Neither

¹⁹ Zizioulas does mention that in the first three centuries of the Church, the presbyter was not identified (in the same way as the bishop was) as a priest, i.e. in the sense of offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God and presiding over the eucharistic assembly. This changed, as noted by Zizioulas, beginning in the fourth century, with the presbyters beginning to do the work of the bishop (except ordaining). See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 201f.

²⁰ At least he has not in his paper “Church, Eucharist, Bishop.” He later provided a reference in his examiner’s report to this dissertation.

²¹ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 141.

²² D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 141. See also *Apostolic Traditions*, 8.1-2.

²³ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 141, n. 22.

²⁴ This high-priestly ministry is also recognized by Afanasiev in his *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 237-38.

²⁵ This is a sentiment shared also by N. Loudovikos in his “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 125.

²⁶ Ignatius, *Eph.* 4.1. See also J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 224.

²⁷ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 224.

²⁸ Volf opines that Zizioulas devalues even the laity when he seems to exalt the bishop who, according to Zizioulas, assumes “the place of God.” See M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 114.

can he take up the part of the deacon or the presbyter.³⁰ According to Zizioulas, “in a strict liturgical order, a bishop cannot celebrate vespers or matins.”³¹

On the issue of Zizioulas’ use of Ignatius’ model of the Church, Bathrellos asserts that “Zizioulas idealizes the Ignatian model of only one eucharist under the bishop, surrounded by the presbyters, the deacons, and the people of God, and tends to identify it as *the* model of the early Church.”³² He also disagrees with Zizioulas’ argument that “we must reproduce the Ignatian model, which will thus become the norm for the Church in all places and at all times.”³³ This is not exactly what Zizioulas argues for. In fact, Zizioulas argues that the Church must not go back in time to the days of the early Church and copy that model even though a bishop today could actually claim no more immediacy to the apostles than Ignatius could. The Holy Spirit works in new and diverse ways, Zizioulas reminds us. What then can we learn from Ignatius’ model for today? I think that Ignatius’ model points us to an eschatological model of worship in heaven.

Bathrellos is skeptical about Zizioulas’ idea of creating smaller dioceses whose Eucharist is celebrated by the bishop.³⁴ He charges Zizioulas with “romanticizing the past that overlooks the present reality of the Church.”³⁵ Zizioulas’ idea of making smaller dioceses seems to be a good one because it allows the bishop to get closer and more personal with a smaller eucharistic community that presently, Zizioulas notes, sees the bishop infrequently.³⁶ However, this is very difficult to achieve in the large cities today.³⁷ As for Bathrellos’ charge of romanticizing the past, this claim is an exaggeration. Zizioulas does not insist we become a Church modelled after one in second-century Antioch. What he says is this:

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that the post-apostolic generation opted in a way that led naturally to the Ignatian notion of episcopacy, simply by opting for the ultimate authority of the local Church and associating *episkope* with the Eucharist. This, however, does *not* oblige all subsequent generations to do the same, even if the Holy Spirit was then at work, for the Holy Spirit can point to new ways at different times. We must *not* venerate history in a conservativistic manner. So what the first three centuries did is *not* obligatory for the Church today. Is there anything that period can offer?³⁸

²⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 252.

³⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 251-52. An example of this can be seen in the Greek Orthodox Church in Singapore where a weekly Eucharist is celebrated on Sunday presided by a metropolitan. There are no deacons, however, and thus the Divine Liturgy cannot be celebrated in full. The drama of the Liturgy is not played out fully because the deacon’s part is missing.

³¹ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 252.

³² D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 142.

³³ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 142.

³⁴ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 142.

³⁵ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 142.

³⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Bishop,” in *The One and the Many*, 238.

³⁷ I have proposed smaller dioceses based on suburbs (or villages) rather than on cities.

³⁸ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 233. Italics mine.

Zizioulas argues that episcopacy in its Ignatian form maintained clearly the vision of the eschatological Kingdom of God by keeping “faithfully the Christological and the apostolic aspects of *episkope*.”³⁹ Based on this vision, can we re-align our churches today so that they are not modelled after worldly structures?

Bathrellos’ critique of Zizioulas’ insistence that only the bishop celebrates the Eucharist brings out one other very valid point. If Zizioulas is correct, we will need many bishops in any one region. If there are not enough bishops to go around presiding the Eucharist in the churches, one may actually end up with having a very large church with one bishop presiding over an enormous and diverse eucharistic community or many smaller churches with one bishop exhausting himself presiding over many smaller eucharistic communities. How then can a bishop get up close and personal with every member of the eucharistic community? The pastoral implications of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology needs to be carefully looked into. For we know that in a big city cathedral today, as Bathrellos correctly observes, “usually individualism reigns in the anonymity of the crowd, that massive congregations tend to undermine the communion which must characterize the relationship of the Christians with each other and with God.”⁴⁰ This is why Zizioulas’ suggestion of smaller dioceses is, at first sight, a very good idea pastorally. However, I think this is going to be very difficult because cities today are so big that a diocese of say a small but densely populated city like Singapore cannot but be huge. Similarly, Zizioulas cannot expect a city like say, Wellington, to have but one bishop! Perhaps, Zizioulas may have to allow for a few bishops in one city, say one bishop for a small region (e.g. a suburb) and we can have many smaller local churches each with its own corresponding bishop. So, like in Upper Hutt City, we have several suburbs. We can have a bishop of say, Trentham, a good sized suburb with a small Christian community and another bishop of Silverstream a few miles away. This would mean a change in canon law to allow for more than one bishop in one city, i.e. several bishops, each looking after one suburban church of that city.⁴¹ Consequently, many more bishops will need to be consecrated.

6.3. Nicolas Loudovikos and an Ontology of Dialogical Reciprocity

Bathrellos is certainly not the only scholar to have engaged with Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, he is a constructive critic even though at times, as I have shown, he has overlooked some things

³⁹ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope and Episkopos*,” in *The One and the Many*, 235.

⁴⁰ D. Bathrellos, “Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 143

⁴¹ This contravenes canon 8 of Nicaea which, according to Zizioulas, stipulates that there is to be only one bishop for one city. In view of the changes in the size of the modern city today, this canon should be reviewed in my opinion.

Zizioulas has said. There are others such as Loudovikos, an ex-student of Zizioulas', whom we shall see, are even more critical of Zizioulas.⁴² Loudovikos belongs to one of the younger generation of Orthodox theologians who want "to interrogate his (Zizioulas') theology, again and again, in depth."⁴³ He feels deeply that this interrogation "comes from the responsibility towards Orthodox theology, as well as its ecumenical witness and its possible spiritual involvement in the modern theologico-philosophical quest."⁴⁴ In a paper first given in 2009 and published two years later, Loudovikos wants to question Zizioulas' sources for his book *Communion and Otherness* and "examine his ideas in themselves."⁴⁵

Loudovikos first takes issue with Zizioulas' contention in his *Communion and Otherness* that God's freedom is assured only if "the Father 'as a person and not substance' (p.121) makes a 'personal rather than ousianic' (p.120) constitution of the other two hypostases."⁴⁶ Loudovikos asserts that "in Zizioulas' vocabulary, this always opposes nature/necessity to person/freedom, even in God."⁴⁷ Loudovikos quickly concludes that "the two characteristics of Zizioulas' Triadology are therefore: first, its rather non-ousianic character, and second, the rejection of any element of *reciprocity*... the Cappadocians as well as Maximus never supported such views."⁴⁸ Concerning the first characteristic, Loudovikos complains that "Zizioulas never explains what the role of nature is in the divine generation."⁴⁹ However, in a 2012 paper given at a conference on Maximus, Zizioulas does explain the role of nature when he writes,

The Fathers realize that God as well as humanity possess a unity, a one-ness. This unity does not produce difference – this would have produced Neoplatonism. Nature does not give being to hypostases, as if it were their "cause," but it holds them together in one *koinonia tes physeos*. The function, therefore, of nature is this and nothing else: *to relate the hypostases to each other; to make them relational*.⁵⁰

Applied to God, I think Zizioulas extends the role of *ousia* to making the divine Persons relational. Zizioulas insists that it is the person and not nature that 'causes' things (God

⁴² See N. Loudovikos, "Possession or Wholeness? Maximus the Confessor and John Zizioulas on Person, Nature and Will," *Participatio* 4 (2013): 258-86. This article critiques Zizioulas' 2012 articles on trinitarian freedom in the Cappadocian Fathers and on person versus nature in St. Maximus the Confessor. Loudovikos' earlier 2011 article, "*Eikon and Mimesis*," responds to Zizioulas' use of the Maximian term *icon* in J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop as the President of the Eucharist," *Diabasi* 54 (2005): 5-10, and to the idea that the bishop seems to dictate the other charisms in J. Zizioulas, "The Three Hierarchs and the Identity of the Church," *Diabasi* 64 (2006): 4-14.

⁴³ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 684.

⁴⁴ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 684.

⁴⁵ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 684.

⁴⁶ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 689. The pages in the text quoted are Loudovikos' page references to Zizioulas' *Communion and Otherness*.

⁴⁷ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 689.

⁴⁸ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 689. Italics original.

⁴⁹ N. Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 689.

⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Person and Nature," 90.

included) to be. As Zizioulas contends, nature holds hypostases together “in one *konoinia tes physeos*.”⁵¹ Persons must be free to relate with each other in love and otherness. The Father loves the Son freely and it is the love of the Father that is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. When we say that God is love, Zizioulas reminds us that it is the Father who is love and this same love extends to the Son and the Holy Spirit through whom and in whom we have been loved by God.

Loudovikos asserts that the Cappadocians “did not desire to abandon ‘substance’ or ‘homoousion’; on the contrary concerning trinitarian theology, they worked diligently to tie their ‘personalist’ language with the ‘substantialist’ content.”⁵² Loudovikos then cites Gregory of Nyssa: “The term God does not mean person but substance... (par. 5).” Loudovikos points out that in this text, Gregory is showing that “when we say God we mean either the one substance, or ‘the one cause along with his caused’ (par. 10).”⁵³ Loudovikos goes on to show that in another text of Gregory’s, his *Great Catechetical Sermon* (ch. 3, 2), Gregory explicitly identifies monarchy with the unity of substance. Then in *Antirr. A* (par. 530-31), Loudovikos writes that Gregory “identifies the one deity with the one principle of it, which he defines as the ‘concurrence of the similars’ –a very important remark to which we must return.”⁵⁴ Loudovikos, like Turcescu before him, argues that Gregory identifies *prosopon* with *atomon* in his *Ad Ablabius* (par. 6 and 7). Loudovikos even manages to find a passage from John Damascene who “does not hesitate to identify hypostasis not only with *prosopon* but also with *atomon*.”⁵⁵ Speaking of the Trinity ‘therefore the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are *hypostases* and *atoma* (individuals) and *prosopa* (persons); and the *eidos* (species) that contains them is the superessential and unfathomable deity.’⁵⁶ This text proves, according to Loudovikos, that *prosopon* was not opposed to *atomon* in the Greek patristic tradition. Loudovikos argues,

It is futile for Zizioulas and his adherents to attempt to project modern (inter-) subjectivism on the Patristic tradition. By attempting this Zizioulas on the one hand closes the *atomon*/self to person/communion, for *atomon* now means a non-relational entity that exists somehow by itself (like blind nature) but can enter into communion only in a second ‘step’; on the other hand he tries to make a radical break with anything that reminds him of substance, such as the *homoousion*.⁵⁷

That Zizioulas seldom uses the term *homoousion* in his trinitarian theology is certainly true.

⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, “Person and Nature,” 90.

⁵² N. Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 689.

⁵³ N. Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 689.

⁵⁴ N. Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 689.

⁵⁵ N. Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 689-90.

⁵⁶ John Damascene, *Elementary Introduction to Dogma*, 7. Quoted by Loudovikos in his “Person Instead of Grace,” 690.

⁵⁷ N. Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 690.

Zizioulas stresses person in his ontology to the neglect of *ousia*. It is no secret that he is seeking to replace a substance ontology with an ontology of the person and of love and communion. By so doing, he may well be one-sided in his emphasis on persons who, he insists are not individuals. By catching out Zizioulas on the usage of the term *atomon* to refer to the divine persons, Loudovikos has a case against Zizioulas' insistence that the Fathers never equated persons with individuals. However, as Alexis Torrance writes, "Zizioulas had already recognized that some texts use *atomon* to describe the persons of the Trinity, yet maintains that any non-conciliar references to any divine person as *atomon* cannot be considered as normative."⁵⁸

Like Bathrellos, Loudovikos contends that the presbyters did not merely make up the bishop's council as Zizioulas implies.⁵⁹ Instead, Loudovikos argues that the presbyters were

Christological manifestations of the 'harmony of love': without a lyre there are no strings, just as without strings there is no lyre. The service of the bishop is *eschatologically* prior as the frame to which the strings are strung. The ontological basis of this unity is not always perceived by Zizioulas' readers, so they have used him to argue for excessive institutional elevation of the office of the bishop in an authoritarian legal and institutional structure, rather than the harmony of spiritual gifts to which St. Ignatius refers.⁶⁰

It is definitely not Zizioulas' intention to excessively elevate the bishop. He has always emphasized that although the bishop has a special *ordo* in the Church, that of presiding and ordaining in the context of his eucharistic community, he cannot exceed the limits of this *ordo*.⁶¹ To answer those who argue that Zizioulas' conception of the bishop sounds too episcopocentric, Zizioulas has this to say,

Episcopocentric it is, for everything in the Church centres on the bishop. But it is not episcopalistic, for the bishop in true Orthodox doctrine never exists or is conceived or acts alone. He is surrounded by the presbyter, assisted by the deacons, and in need of the people. He is head of the community, but always a part of it. Even when he teaches in council or decides in synod, he needs the "Amen" of the people of God before he can act authoritatively. Authority in the Church is a product of communion, for the Church herself is in her essence an event of communion.⁶²

Loudovikos further points out that Zizioulas tends to neglect the patristic sources of the first two centuries that seem to indicate the equality in rank of the bishop and the presbyter in the

⁵⁸ Alexis Torrance, "Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the Debate," *The Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011): 704. See also J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 171-77.

⁵⁹ Loudovikos refers to J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 249. See also N. Loudovikos, "Christian Life and Institutional Church," 126, n. 3.

⁶⁰ N. Loudovikos, "Christian Life and Institutional Church," 126. *Italics original*.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 251.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, "The Bishop," in *The One and the Many*, 252.

primitive Church,⁶³ a fact Zizioulas himself acknowledges when he notes that the term *presbyteros* is used interchangeably with that of *episkopos* even as late as Irenaeus.⁶⁴

Loudovikos also contends that Orthodox theology unjustly fears the word ‘individualism.’⁶⁵ This is perhaps a criticism of Zizioulas who seems to avoid associating person with individual and who seems to stress on the Church as an institution. Loudovikos wants to pay far more attention “to the particularity of the individual subject.”⁶⁶ He warns us that “our fear of individualization, internalization, or subjectivism should not lead us to an institutional understanding of the Church and Christian life, in which the person and his gifts simply service the institution.”⁶⁷ This emphasis on the institution is, according to Loudovikos, “due to the fear of individualism.”⁶⁸ He continues,

We must equally be careful not to lose the individual within the Church institution and hierarchy. The one Holy Spirit brings embodiment to the community. Wholeness and communion can be lost or inauthentic when the integrity of the individual and his or her gifts are not secured. We do not avoid individualism by turning the institution of the Church into a kind of meta-individual.⁶⁹

This is a fair warning to those who want to negate all individuality in the Church or to make the Church an instrument of totalitarianism or collectivism. However, I do not think that Zizioulas emphasizes the institutional Church for fear of individualism. Loudovikos has not fully appreciated what Zizioulas sees as the dangers of individualism. Zizioulas does not simply emphasize institutionalism at the expense of the freedom of the person. We must remember that for Zizioulas, the Church is instituted by Jesus Christ and constituted by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the freedom that we have in Christ and in the Church. The institutional aspects of the Church provides the structure and blueprint for the charismatic aspects of love, freedom and communion amongst the persons who constitute her to flourish. I believe that this is what’s so special about Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of communion.

Loudovikos also contends that an ecclesiology of communion risks the “loss of the relationship of communion and history.”⁷⁰ He opines that any consideration of the institution of the Church is “in danger of losing touch with its historical origins” when it is not linked to

⁶³ N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 285.

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, “*Episkope* and *Episkopos* in the Early Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 225.

⁶⁵ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 127.

⁶⁶ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 127.

⁶⁷ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 127.

⁶⁸ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 127-28.

⁶⁹ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128.

⁷⁰ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128.

“the call of catholicity.”⁷¹ He also writes that “if ‘relationships’ become more significant than communion the Church will cease to be a pilgrimage led by the cross. The Spirit does not present us with static social structures, but brings us into communion freely and of our own volition.”⁷² Loudovikos hereby appeals to Maximus’ eucharistic ontology whereby, according to Loudovikos, Maximus insisted,

The Spirit gives us a Christ-centred orientation, and frees us for this communal apophatic imitation of the life of God. What occurs to the individual is just what happens in his or her communion in Christ: the being of that person remains part of the mystery. Although that life is given, experiential and measurable, this life consists in its *existence*, opened up for life.⁷³

Loudovikos contends that when the Church is conceived in Maximus’ eucharistic ontology, it teaches us to see the eucharist as activity in time and space. It is not solely and utterly above us, but a cooperative act in and with Christ. The gift of the Church is constituted by ‘life’ and ‘institution’ simultaneously and indivisibly. ‘Life’ and ‘institution’ are transcended because every spiritual gift is a ‘particular’ christological manifestation of the whole Church.⁷⁴

I have taken the pains to quote Loudovikos in full here as this is the central thesis in his “Christian Life and Institutional Church” where he attempts to balance contemporary orthodox theology with what he has called “a *consubstantial* theology that understands all the endowments of the Church as manifestations of the whole Christ in the Spirit.”⁷⁵ He continues,

The institution does not constitute the ‘being’ of the Church or the spiritual gifts its ‘action.’ Ecclesial existence does not merely ‘exist’: it is dialogically *actuated*. No gift or action replaces the Church. Rather, according to Maximus, it moves in a line towards it, because this is the authentic and objective act and Word of God, in Christ, in history.⁷⁶

This is, according to Loudovikos, the basis of Maximus’ eucharistic ontology – an eschatological ontology of being as “dialogical reciprocity.”⁷⁷ Loudovikos asserts that Zizioulas has misconceived this aspect of Maximus’ ontology as evidenced in Zizioulas’ *Communion and Otherness*. Loudovikos writes,

Following unconsciously a long Kantian tradition, brought into Orthodox theology by Berdyaev, along with a Hegelian affirmation of relationship as constitutive of being and a Heideggerian identification of being with its ecstatic mode of existence, Zizioulas

⁷¹ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128.

⁷² N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128.

⁷³ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128. Italics original.

⁷⁴ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128.

⁷⁵ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128. Italics original. Loudovikos has gone on to describe an apophatic ecclesiology of consubstantiality. See his *Church in the Making* (2016).

⁷⁶ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 128. Italics original.

⁷⁷ See N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor’s Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010).

identifies nature with blind necessity and person with freedom as an ecstatic outlet from nature – and falsely attributes his position to the very quintessence of Greek patristic tradition. Thus for Zizioulas nature is practically – though not explicitly – identified with fall as we saw in Origen... In his (Zizioulas') Trinitarian theology as well as in his ecclesiology and his theory of intersubjectivity, Zizioulas seems to copy Levinasian heteronomy (that is, Levinas's concept of asymmetrical relationship where the Other prevails and dominates the I) with an essential alteration: Zizioulas changes Levinas's *ethical* priority to a completely *ontological* one. Thus God the Father, the Bishop, the Other, are *ontologically prior* to the rest of the persons, thus tending to create a kind of dictated otherness where reciprocity and dialogue become unrealistic indeed. But how then can we have real communion? Thus the so-called eucharistic theology of nowadays must be profoundly corrected.⁷⁸

Loudovikos then goes on to argue on the basis of Maximus that “nature is already a gift, it is already in the order of grace... And furthermore, nature as gift is already and always personal, already and always reciprocity; nature is an eschatological, dialogical becoming and not just a frozen ‘given.’ Out of the above context nature (along with person) can turn out to be death, but within it, *nature can be freedom.*”⁷⁹

Loudovikos also corrects Zizioulas' ontology of being as communion by modifying it to “becoming-in-communion.”⁸⁰ He argues that Maximus strongly emphasized the ontological importance of becoming. Loudovikos explains,

Becoming is not a becoming of God Himself... but it is His becoming through His uncreated loving wills/*logoi* within creatures; a becoming by which He also becomes, through the Human response, *a God for the creatures*. Thus by introducing becoming in ontology, Maximus introduces the real history in theological cosmology and anthropology, an act which prevents ecclesiastical communion from being *transcendental*, i.e., a heavenly structure imposed by God on things. Maximus's only “structure” *is an event of a historical becoming in communion*, step-by-step, by imitation of (or participation in), the divine Logos, through his uncreated *logoi*, through our gnomic will. The event of the Church is thus an absolutely existential one, one of a freely-stepping historical dialogue between man and God.... The natural space within which beings *are*, as they experience this becoming-in-communion, is for Maximus the Church, and above all its heart which is the divine Eucharist.⁸¹

Finally, Loudovikos wonders whether abstract structural models such as Zizioulas' ‘one and the many’ are adequate.⁸² He questions whether we can call the Father as the ‘One’ and the other divine persons are the ‘Many.’ Can Christ be the ‘One’ and the members of his Body the ‘many?’ Similarly, is the bishop the ‘one’ in the Church and the rest of the

⁷⁸ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 9-10. Italics original.

⁷⁹ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 10. Italics original.

⁸⁰ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 202.

⁸¹ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 203. Italics original.

⁸² N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 129. See also his “Eikon and Mimesis: Eucharistic Ecclesiology and the Ecclesial Ontology of Dialogical Reciprocity,” 123-36 and N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 280-81.

eucharistic community, the ‘many?’⁸³ Loudovikos cautions us to exercise care when “dealing with the parallels between the Trinity, christology and the Church” because “analogies between them risk becoming merely the inventions of piety. The Church is truly an icon of the *eschata*, but apophatically, not transcendently.”⁸⁴ According to Loudovikos,

First, in patristic trinitarian theology the ‘monarchy’ of the Father does not elevate the Father ontologically above the others who are caused by Him. ‘The Father is not God because he is Father, but *because of the common essence*, which is Father and Son and within which the Father is God and the Son is God and the Spirit is Holy God,’ according to Gregory of Nyssa, writing against Eunomius. Gregory adds: ‘For God is One and the same, *because he has one and the same essence*, thus each of the Persons are in the essence and God.’⁸⁵ Thus, in the Holy Trinity only one person ‘in the essence,’ the Father, is the principle of the begetting and procession of the other persons. God is these three persons, causing and caused, and not an underlying principle of communion.⁸⁶

Loudovikos is anxious to highlight that the relation of ‘the one and the many’ in the Trinity is different from that in the Church.⁸⁷ He explains,

In the first case, there is absolute ontological identity of essence and will between the ‘one and the many,’ while in the second there is not even an ontological identity of nature (of the divine nature of Christ), nor of course an ontological identity of will. There is only the mystery of participation by grace through the mysteries in the uncreated will and work of God in Christ through the Spirit.

Finally, in the third case in which the model of the one and the many relates the bishop and the Church, Loudovikos argues that things get even more complicated here.⁸⁸ He writes,

Here the will to unify the one and the many belongs, not to the bishop, but to Christ. The bishop, however (who, as a member of the Church, himself belongs also to the many for whom the one is Christ), can, through humble cession of his *autexousion* to Christ be, in the words of St. Ignatius, ‘in the mind of Christ’, actuating the gift of unity in the name of Christ. The bishop does not ‘possess’ various gifts, which he distributes according to his will, as Christ does. The bishop does not ‘represent’ Christ in the Church as though Christ was effectively absent. It is Christ who gives out the gifts in the mysteries, and every such gift is he himself in a specific and particular incarnation. Christ thus *has* the gifts and *distributes* the gift.⁸⁹

Loudovikos reminds us that the bishop is only “the *icon* (not representation) of, the Church in that place” and his office is “above all the office of *pastor*.”⁹⁰ I agree with Loudovikos fully

⁸³ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 129.

⁸⁴ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 131.

⁸⁵ *Against Eunomius* 3, cited by Loudovikos from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdsman Publishing, 1954 [1892]) vol. 5. See also N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 129.

⁸⁶ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 129. Italics original.

⁸⁷ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 130.

⁸⁸ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 130.

⁸⁹ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 130. Italics original.

⁹⁰ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 130-31. Italics original.

on this last point, that the bishop is not only someone who presides over the eucharistic assembly, more importantly, he is the chief pastor of the local church.

What ‘eucharistic ecclesiology’ has neglected is, according to Loudovikos, the ‘dialogical’ aspect of the Eucharist whereby “the mind and intention of the people” actively participate in the “eucharistic relation of man with God in Christ.”⁹¹ For Loudovikos, “The discipleship of the Christian life is *the eucharist lived out* as a gracious loving response and return to my already-granted eternal being, back to its giver who loves me self-givingly.”⁹² This understanding of the Eucharist “demands a dialogical ontology, rather than a transcendent structure which simply *reflects* the Kingdom.”⁹³ He explains,

The eucharistic mysteries are aspects of the life in Christ, which is why, in his fourth saying in *The Life in Christ*, Cabasilas stresses their ‘eucharistic’ character. The divine eucharist is their fulfilment, goal, meaning and christological fullness. Baptism is no independent, self-sufficient sacramental event, nor is chrismation some self-sufficient wellspring of gifts. For Cabasilas, passing on the tradition of the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor, these mysteries constitute the sacramental introduction of each member of the Church into the fullness of Christ, by which every member uniquely takes on Christ in the divine eucharist. This eucharistic dialogue between Christ and man is the catholic offering of the personally given gift of eternal life to man by Christ, and the catholic response, in the continual appearance of new forms of fullness in this life, in the gifts from Christ to the baptized Christian. This allows us to say that the eucharist is the foundation of life in Christ. The eucharistic relation of man with God in Christ cannot truly progress if it is not truly ‘dialogical.’⁹⁴

In summary, Loudovikos disapproves of Zizioulas’ ontology as it is not ‘dialogical’ and it does not take into account the dynamic aspect of becoming. He faults Zizioulas’ ecclesiology for being overly conditioned by *structure* and *institution*, neglecting the free response of humanity who stands as a free and not dictated ‘other’ in relation to God.⁹⁵ Loudovikos stresses *mutuality* and *reciprocity* in the trinitarian relations between the divine Persons and between Christ and humanity. He has raised many important points for us to reflect in his attempts “to give greater consistency to the idea of the person, which is seriously impaired, in his view, in the ‘communional’ personalism and ecclesiology of Yannaras and Zizioulas by their ontology of community.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 131-32.

⁹² N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 132. Italics original.

⁹³ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 132. Italics original.

⁹⁴ N. Loudovikos, “Christian Life and Institutional Church,” 131.

⁹⁵ See also N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality* (Yonkers: New York: SVSP, 2016). Here, Loudovikos critiques both Afanasiev’s eucharistic ecclesiology and Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of communion.

⁹⁶ Yannis Spiteris, o.f.m. cap, in the back-cover of N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology*.

6.4. Miroslav Volf

Volf has been critical of Zizioulas' ecclesiology of communion and of his concept of the 'one' and the 'many.' Volf contends that putting the bishop in the place of God "to act *in persona Christi*, makes the eucharistic gathering into a strictly *bipolar event*"⁹⁷ and also devalues the laity who, in Volf's eyes, "say the 'amen' as a response to the grace they have received."⁹⁸ Volf also writes,

The presbyters and deacons surround the bishop and stand opposite the people; together with the bishop, they constitute the one pole, while the laity represents the other pole. This bipolarity allegedly corresponds to the Pauline church order, according to which the people are to speak the "amen" in the charismatic worship services (1 Cor. 14:16).⁹⁹

Perhaps Volf is not familiar with how the Divine Liturgy is celebrated in the Orthodox churches. This apparent bipolarity simply does not exist in the Divine Liturgy which consists of a complex array of liturgical actions and responses from all orders of the Church. The laity do not only say "amen" to everything the bishop prays. The laity sing the hymns, recite the creeds and exclaim "Alleluia!" Volf has therefore an over-simplified view of the Divine Liturgy. Has he not seen the deacon *facing* the bishop while he prays in fervent supplication on behalf of the people and he goes forth from the bishop to the people to minister to them? Has he also not observed that the bishop does not just stand opposite the people, he also moves amongst the people and at certain times faces the altar looking towards the East in the same direction together with the laity? The Divine Liturgy can hardly be described as a 'bipolar' event. It is a multi-faceted con-celebration of the Eucharist.

Volf also faults Zizioulas for overlooking the Pauline teaching in 1 Cor. 6:19 "that the body of every Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit" and for conceiving every communicant in the Eucharist as Christ.¹⁰⁰ This has made it impossible to particularise each member of the Church. As Volf writes,

If every person is indeed the whole Christ, then that person cannot distinguish himself from other persons, since he is constituted through the one relation of the Son to the Father. But if the entire community is the whole Christ, then individual persons can be particularized through their respective locus within the community, e.g., person-bishop, person-layperson... this does not really enable one to conceive the particularity of *every* person. To avoid this difficulty, one would either have to recognize the "substance" of human beings... as the principle of differentiation of persons, or have to view personhood as grounded through the individual relation of God to each human being.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 116. Italics original.

⁹⁸ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 114.

⁹⁹ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 116.

¹⁰⁰ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 89. See especially note 90.

¹⁰¹ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 89. Italics original. Volf is reacting to Zizioulas' assertion that "every communicant is the whole Christ and the whole Church." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60-61.

I think it is more appropriate to describe every baptized person as a member of the Church and who has put on Christ or who is becoming more and more like Christ. Persons are not differentiated only through their respective places in the *ordo* of the Church. Rather, the *ordo* tells us a person's place in the eucharistic assembly but not his particular identity which is found only in Christ, and according to Zizioulas, in his "*sacramental or eucharistic hypostasis*."¹⁰² When Zizioulas describes the ecclesial/eucharistic hypostasis as something different from the biological hypostasis, he is referring to the transformation of the biological hypostasis to the ecclesial hypostasis in the Eucharist.¹⁰³ Zizioulas writes,

The transcendence of the ontological necessity and exclusiveness entailed by the biological hypostasis constitutes an experience which is offered by the eucharist... understood in its correct and primitive sense... – the eucharist is first of all an assembly (*synaxis*), a community, a network of relations, in which man "subsists" in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body which transcends every exclusiveness of a biological or social kind. The eucharist is the only historical context of human existence where the terms "father," "brother," etc., lose their biological exclusiveness and reveal, as we have seen, relationships of free and universal love. Patristic theology saw in the eucharist the historical realization of the philosophical principle which governs the concept of the person, the principle that the hypostasis expresses the whole of its nature and not just a part. There Christ is "parted but not divided" and every communicant is the whole Christ and the whole Church. The ecclesial identity, consequently, in its historical realization is eucharistic. This explains why the Church has bound every one of her acts to the eucharist... United... with the eucharist, they (the sacraments) become not a blessing and confirmation of the biological hypostasis, but a rendering of it transcendent and eschatological.¹⁰⁴

Understood in the context of the Eucharist, every communicant has his biological hypostasis transformed into the ecclesial hypostasis, a hypostasis, Zizioulas contends, "not of this world – it belongs to the eschatological transcendence of history... The ecclesial hypostasis reveals man as a person, which, however, has its roots in the future and its perpetually inspired, or rather maintained and nourished by the future. *The truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future.*"¹⁰⁵ Though we do not see every person as Christ now, nor do we see the Christ and the Church as identical, we believe that in the Eucharist, the ecclesial hypostasis is revealed as eschatologically transforming into Christ's image and likeness in the Church. Zizioulas equates this ecclesial hypostasis with "the assurance (*hypostasis*) of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Heb. 11:1)."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 59.

¹⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60.

¹⁰⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60-61.

¹⁰⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 61-62.

¹⁰⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62.

Finally, one implication of Zizioulas' ecclesiology is that the Church must be *episcopal*. This insistence on the importance of the bishop in constituting the Church itself does raise a major question of the ecclesial status of the many non-episcopal churches. While Zizioulas accords "ecclesial significance" to such churches, he does not recognise them as the Church in the same way as Volf does. This is itself problematic because not only are the identity of the many existing "free" churches negated for the lack of the bishop and an episcopal structure, it has tended to reduce ecclesiology to just a single form of *organisation*. Volf puts it very well in the following question the potential absurdity of Zizioulas' position:

Should, for example, a Catholic or Orthodox diocese whose members are inclined more to superstition than to faith and who identify with the church more for nationalistic reasons – should such a diocese be viewed as a church, while a Baptist congregation that has preserved its faith through the crucible of persecution *not* be considered such?¹⁰⁷

No doubt Volf has used a very general case to press home his point that episcopacy cannot be the *sole condition* for defining the Church. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should be the true condition for ecclesiality. I agree with Volf on this point but I would seriously continue to explore the advantages of episcopacy in ecclesiology. It would be hard to accept that the Church *must* be episcopal in nature, though I am inclined to view Zizioulas' concept of communion as conceptually helpful in any ecclesiology. This is because making the episcopal churches the only true churches in this world excludes many other Christian faith communities. What is more important is to establish the *relationship* between the episcopal churches and the non-episcopal churches. The concept of communion provides a way of establishing this relationship though it must be carefully worked out what this communion actually entails in practice. This is where Zizioulas' studies on conciliarity and authority in the early church, together with his life-work on ecumenism can point a way forward in working out a framework for communion among all churches. By studying how the early churches historically organized themselves the Church regionally and on the global scale, we can re-align our churches organisationally in the light of the eschatological vision provided by Zizioulas, a vision that the early Church in her unity constantly kept in view, at least in the first three centuries of the Church through the ecclesial experience of the early Church Fathers. This ecclesial experience was, according to Zizioulas, based on the Church Fathers' participation in the Eucharist which constituted the Church. It is in this Spirit of the Church Fathers, bishops such as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons that Zizioulas understood eucharistic ecclesiology, an ecclesiology that was pneumatologically conditioned right from

¹⁰⁷ M. Volf, *After our Likeness*, 133-34. Italics original.

the start. This one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church found its early unity in the bishops, the early conciliar structure of the Church and in the Eucharist. All critics of Zizioulas do well to remember the primary aim of Zizioulas' theology – to understand and develop an ecclesiology that holds in tension the historical and the eschatological, the Christological and the pneumatological. For Zizioulas, these tensions are held together in the person of the bishop, an icon of Jesus Christ, and who possesses the *charismata veritatis* of the Holy Spirit. He is essential to the very structure of the Church and her “proper relation with God and the world.”¹⁰⁸ Without him, who will be the ‘one’ to embody the unity of the local church in the Eucharist? Who will be the ‘one’ to connect the local church to the other churches, thereby uniting his church *in* the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church? Who will be the ‘one’ to preside over synods and the universal Church? The answer can only be the *bishop* of a *local church*! This is exactly what Zizioulas has pointed out to us in his ontology and ecclesiology of communion.

However, Volf contends that Zizioulas has over-emphasized the importance of the bishop in the local church. He questions the *asymmetrical reciprocal relationship* between the bishop and the laity which tends to devalue the laity (the individual lay person) and make the local church highly dependent on the bishop for its very existence and leadership, “an empty demand in danger of degenerating into ideology.”¹⁰⁹ And must all the laity be present for a valid Eucharist? This condition seems to Volf to be too onerous and is impossible to fulfil.¹¹⁰ Is the Church to be defined *only* in terms of the four orders (bishop, presbyter, deacon and laity)? Isn't the particularity of each person in his respective order lost in such an arrangement in the Church? Zizioulas first reminds us of the Christological character of the Church's ministry. Then he points to the Holy Spirit as the one who makes Christ's ministry a personal reality.¹¹¹ This personal aspect of ministry in the Church is what Zizioulas stresses when he speaks of ordination which “existentially relates the ordained person to a community.” Zizioulas insists that “each person, while being existentially related to other persons, remains absolutely unique and unrepeatable” and this makes the ministry hierarchical.¹¹² He writes,

The notion of hierarchy is usually connected with a classification established with the help of objective criteria of value, etc. But if we get our notion of hierarchy from, for example, Trinitarian theology, we see that this notion is determined not by such criteria

¹⁰⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 245.

¹⁰⁹ M. Volf, *After our Likeness*, 112-14.

¹¹⁰ M. Volf, *After our Likeness*, 114-16.

¹¹¹ J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 187.

¹¹² J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 187.

but by the specificity of each divine person. In this sense, hierarchy is an essential result of ordination, and it is in this light that the distinction between clergy and laity or the development and existence of the three-fold ministry, etc., should be placed. The distinctions inherent in the multiplicity of ministries bear no value judgement. Those ministries that for historical reasons do not fall under the established categories of ministry are not inferior in any way. The role of the bishop in this action of hierarchy is precisely to transcend in the communion of his community any division that may occur because of the multiplicity of ministries.¹¹³

So, the bishop is conceived by Zizioulas as the unitive force in the Church whose members are all “ordained” to a specific ministry. Zizioulas cites St. Paul who asks, “Are we all Apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers?” (1 Cor. 12:29) He reminds us that only Christ is “all in all.”¹¹⁴ The rest of the members of Christ’s Body are all related to each other and it is ordination that makes us related to each other. Viewed in the light of communion, ordination leads to ministry and hierarchy in the Church as authority and relations in the Church are established through ordination.

6.5. Further Criticisms of Zizioulas and his Response

6.5.1. Introduction

Criticisms of Zizioulas’ trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology and his ontology of the person have also come from some other quarters in recent years.¹¹⁵ Their criticisms usually revolve around two areas:

- A) His apparent existentialist and personalist approach to theology.
- B) His grounding of the being of God solely in the free Person of God the Father, who is the “cause” of all being, including the Trinity.

It is the aim of this section is to elaborate on these two areas of criticism and to discuss the responses of Zizioulas to them. Zizioulas has written several articles in direct response to some of his critics¹¹⁶ whose criticisms are directed at Zizioulas’ ontology of personhood, the basis of which he constructs an ecclesiology of communion. How Zizioulas defends himself sheds further light on his trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology and his ontology of the person.

¹¹³ J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 187-88.

¹¹⁴ J. Zizioulas, “Ordination and Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 187.

¹¹⁵ A good introduction and discussion of some of Zizioulas’ critics can be found in N. Russell, “Modern Greek Theologians and the Greek Fathers,” *Philosophy and Theology* 18.1 (2006): 86-87.

¹¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, “The Father as Cause: Personhood Generating Otherness,” in *Communion and Otherness*, 113-56, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 17-40, “Person and Individual – A ‘Misreading’ of the Cappadocians?,” in *Communion and Otherness*, 171-77.

6.5.2. Zizioulas' apparent existentialistic and personalistic approach to theology

The charge of being an existentialist and a personalist has been levelled at Zizioulas by two Greek Professors I. Panagopoulos and S. Agouridis.¹¹⁷ They question the faithfulness to patristic thought of Zizioulas' alleged theological personalism.¹¹⁸ In addition, the late T. F. Torrance has also reckoned Zizioulas to have interpreted the Greek Fathers in a rather existential manner.¹¹⁹ Their criticisms are serious because if what they say is true, then Zizioulas' ecclesiology would be based on a 'personalist' and 'existential' theology. Zizioulas defends these criticisms vigorously to base his trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology firmly in the Patristic Tradition which he argues is personalist and existential.

A) Panagopoulos and Agouridis' charge

Panagopoulos and Agouridis object to Zizioulas' attempt to relate the meaning of person to the Being of God.¹²⁰ They assert that what Zizioulas has attempted to do is wrong because of theological *apophaticism*. They accuse Zizioulas of philosophical personalism and being an existentialist.¹²¹ They invoked the idea of theological apophaticism as a support for their thesis that "the meaning of person in reference to the being of God should remain an unapproachable mystery for theology."¹²² Zizioulas' attempt to link the two is allegedly "philosophical 'personalism' and smacks of 'existentialism.'"¹²³

Zizioulas' Response

The response to these criticisms came in one of Zizioulas' articles that was published in Greek.¹²⁴ First, Zizioulas begins by defining personalism as a philosophical movement which has as its roots the understanding of the concept of the person introduced in the West by Augustine and formulated by Boethius in this well-known definition "a person is the individual substance of the rational nature."¹²⁵ This was the starting point for the whole of

¹¹⁷ I. Papagopoulos, "Ontology of Theology of the Person?," *Synaxis* 13 (1985): 63-79; 14 (1985): 34-47 and S. Agouridis, "Can the Persons of the Holy Trinity provide the basis for Personalistic Views of Man?," *Synaxis* 33 (1990): 67-78. See also J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 17-40.

¹¹⁸ See also J. Zizioulas, "Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor," 106. Here, Zizioulas defends himself by pointing out that many of his critics had deliberately and grossly distorted his views to the point that any response to these distortions is meaningless as they are "far from being a model of unbiased, constructive, and academically honest criticism."

¹¹⁹ J. R. Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers*, 138-39, n. 147.

¹²⁰ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 17.

¹²¹ I. Papagopoulos, "Ontology of Theology of the Person?," *Synaxis* 13 (1985): 63-79; 14 (1985): 34-47 and S. Agouridis, "Can the Persons of the Holy Trinity provide the basis for Personalistic Views of Man?," *Synaxis* 33 (1990): 67-78. Zizioulas cites them in "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 17-40.

¹²² Quoted by Zizioulas in "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 17.

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 17.

¹²⁴ This was published in English as "The Being of God and the Being of Man: An Essay in Theological Dialogue," in Zizioulas' *The One and the Many*, 17-40. It first appeared in Greek in *Synaxis* 37 (1991).

¹²⁵ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 20. See also Boethius, *Con. Eutych. et*

Western personalistic thought found in Descartes and then on to the Enlightenment and to the American personalists of the early twentieth century. Neither the French personalism of Maritain, Mounier nor the Russian personalism of Berdyaev correspond to Zizioulas' brand of personalism.¹²⁶ Zizioulas' view on the person can be constructed as follows:¹²⁷

1) The person is not the centre or subject of consciousness or of psychological experiences. The persons of the Trinity together have only one will, one "consciousness" and one "psychological experience." All things in personalism that constitute essential elements in the concept of the person are connected by the Fathers with the one nature or essence of God that is common to all three Persons of the Trinity. These essential elements are but properties relating to the essence of God. They are not hypostatic, personal properties that define the person.

2) The three Persons of the Trinity are distinguished from each other because they co-exist so that each Person may not exist without the other. What is common, i.e. the nature, is not in contrast with the personal otherness which relates to the otherness of ontological origin. Person and essence do not conflict each other, as in the personalism of existentialism. Therefore, freedom, according to Zizioulas is a "positive and affirmative stance" that "is identified with love."¹²⁸

3) Love which is common to the three Persons of the Trinity, relates to the essence of God. The "Person which is 'indicative of relationship' (Maximus) expresses its particularity and identity not by being opposed to the common essence, but by holding it in common with the other Persons." Therefore, it is not accurate for Agouridis to say that Zizioulas' concept of the person is presented "without reference to any essence of God."

Concerning the person, Zizioulas has stressed repeatedly that the person cannot be conceived of without the essence and that God's essence cannot be conceived of "in a naked state," without the person.¹²⁹ It is worth quoting in full Zizioulas' position:

The basic ontological position of the theology of the Greek Fathers might be set out briefly as follows: No substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, *but* the ontological "principle" or "cause" of being – i.e. that which makes a thing to exist – is not the substance or nature but the *person* or hypostasis. Therefore being is traced back not to substance but to person.¹³⁰

Nest. 3, cited in Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1.

¹²⁶ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 21.

¹²⁷ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 22.

¹²⁸ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 22.

¹²⁹ J. Zizioulas, "The Being of God and the Being of Man," in *The One and the Many*, 22.

¹³⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41-42, n. 37. Italics original.

Thus, when Zizioulas is charged with being “anti-essence”, this is obviously not the case. Neither is Zizioulas guilty of being an existentialist because the statement that “the only divine essence of God is his existence” made by his critics is a complete distortion of Zizioulas’ concept of the person. What Zizioulas has done is to trace the *cause* of being to the person instead of to substance. This is what he calls the ontological revolution introduced by the Cappadocian Fathers. Zizioulas sums up his approach to personhood,

The theological concept of the person is not a borrowing from philosophy (personalism, existentialism, etc.) because the content of this concept is radically different from that of philosophy. The theological concept of the person is drawn from the givens of the revelation of God in Christ, the revelation that presents to us “how God is,” meaning His personal existence, without of course telling us anything about “what God is,” meaning His nature or essence. A vital point differentiating the theological concept of the person from the philosophical is that the personal existence of God (the Holy Trinity) is not determined by a concept of person that applies *also* to God, among others, nor by a concept of *communion-sobornost*, which has a self-contained and more general application (a Trinitarian existence of logical necessity, as developed by Florensky and implied in Lossky). Rather, it is determined by the identification of God *with the Father* as “cause” of the personal divine being. The Father, who is revealed to us as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is He who defines “how God is,” because as cause of the Trinity He is cause of the personal divine existence. In consequence, the theological concept of the person is drawn from there, not from philosophy.¹³¹

This last point is crucial because Zizioulas’ ontological starting point is the person of the Father and not substance. For him, God the Father is the cause of all being and all existence, including the existence of God. Zizioulas’ ‘personalism’ is closely connected with God the Father as the principle and *arche* of being. This *trinitarian* personalism is clearly distinct from all other brands of personalism.

As for the charge of existentialism, I will deal with this matter below having considered the Torrance’s charge.

B) The Torrances’ Charge

T. F. Torrance once said that even though he had admired Zizioulas’ talents and had brought him to teach in Scotland, he later could not support Zizioulas anymore because of the latter’s “existentialism.”¹³² Like his uncle, A. J. Torrance has also been critical of Zizioulas’ “personalism.”¹³³ Zizioulas’ exposition of the Trinity is, according to A. J. Torrance, “over-conditioned at points by a ‘personalist’ ontology.”¹³⁴

¹³¹ J. Zizioulas, “The Being of God and the Being of Man,” in *The One and the Many*, 38-39. Italics original.

¹³² See Radcliff, *T. F. Torrance and the Church Fathers*, 138-39, n. 147 on T. F. Torrance’s letters archived in Princeton Theological Seminary.

¹³³ This is noted by Zizioulas in his *Communion and Otherness*, 141, n. 84.

¹³⁴ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion. Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 290.

Zizioulas' Response

Zizioulas has not defended himself directly against T. F. Torrance. But Zizioulas has defended himself against A. J. Torrance's charge of Zizioulas being under the influence of existentialist personalism and that Zizioulas is wrong to assume the *monarchia* of the Father,¹³⁵ a teaching that risks projecting into God subordinationism which "begins to smack of a cosmological theology."¹³⁶ Because A. J. Torrance's charge of personalism is linked with the issue of the Father as cause, I will examine the two issues together here.

Zizioulas has responded by pointing to the ordering or *taxis* in the Trinity. According to Zizioulas, "the Father *always* comes first, the Son second, and the Spirit third in all biblical and patristic references to the Holy Trinity."¹³⁷ He cites Gregory of Nazianzen who speaks of the ordering in the Immanent Trinity, "the union (*enosis*) is the Father from whom and to whom the *ordering (taxis)* of persons runs its course."¹³⁸ According to Zizioulas this ordering is not limited to the economic Trinity but also to the Immanent Trinity.¹³⁹ Thus the phrase, "the Father is greater than I" (John 14.28), "does not imply a hierarchy of value or importance, for such an implication would be anthropomorphic and would have no place outside created existence."¹⁴⁰ The attachment of causality to the level of personhood and not to nature by the Cappadocians ensures that the deity of the three persons of the Trinity *is indeed equal*. There can be an order in the Trinity amongst the trinitarian persons who are equal in deity. This is because, according to Zizioulas, divine nature "does not exist prior to the divine persons.... Divine nature exists only when and as the Trinity emerges, and it is for this reason that it is not 'possessed' by any person in advance" for this *a priori* possession of the divine nature by any person would imply the existence of this nature prior to personhood.¹⁴¹ Zizioulas has often insisted that nature does not precede personhood. Instead, nature exists in personhood so that the person and not nature is what is ontologically ultimate. Theologically,

In saying that 'God as person – as the hypostasis of the Father – makes the one divine

¹³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54.

¹³⁶ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 289.

¹³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 137.

¹³⁸ Gregory Naz., *Or* 42.15; cf. Basil, *C. Eun.* 1.20; 3.1: The Son is second to the Father 'because he came from him,' i.e., not in the economy but in the Immanent Trinity. According to Zizioulas, Gregory of Nyssa insists on this order with regards to the third place that the Holy Spirit occupies in the Immanent Trinity. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 138, n. 76 and Gregory Nyssa. *Quod non sint* (PG 45, 133).

¹³⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 138. Here, Zizioulas notes that Lossky, in his *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, New York: SVSP, 1974), 92f, makes this ordering refer only to the economic Trinity. So too does T. F. Torrance who follows Calvin in *Trinitarian Perspectives. Towards Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 32. Gunton also seems to support this view. See C. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), 196f.

¹⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 139.

¹⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 140.

substance to be that which it is: the one God', we automatically exclude the priority of substance over personhood, and at the same time its privileged possession by the Father, which would introduce the risk of inequality of deity in the Trinity. The co-emergence of divine nature with the Trinitarian existence initiated by the Father implies that the Father, too, 'acquires', so to speak, deity only 'as' the Son and the Spirit are in existence (he is inconceivable as Father without them), that is, only 'when' divine nature is 'possessed' by all three. Thus the Father is shown to be 'greater' than the Son (and the Spirit) *not in nature*, but in the way (the *how*) the nature exists, that is, in the hypostasization of nature. Trinitarian ordering (*taxis*) and causation protect rather than threaten the equality and fullness of each person's deity.¹⁴²

This makes sense of what Zizioulas maintained right at the start of his trinitarian theology: that the Trinity is a primordial ontological concept with the Father as the ontological cause of the Trinity. If we project time into the concept of cause, then we are not able to say that the Trinity is a primordial ontological concept and the Father is the ontological cause of the Trinity. However, if we allow for the emergence of an ontology of personhood and the concept of *timeless* causation in the trinitarian being of God, we will be able to maintain that God the Father is the principle and cause of the Trinity. This answers in the affirmative A. J. Torrance's question whether Zizioulas is being consistent with himself when he says the Trinity is a primordial concept but is also at the same time 'caused' by the Father.¹⁴³ In other words, A. J. Torrance's suggestion that Zizioulas has actually made the Father the primordial ontological reality is not correct. What Zizioulas is arguing for is that the Father, who caused the Son and the Spirit, are *together* with them, the primordial ontological reality. What do the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit *together* constitute? Nothing but the Trinity which is one and three at the same time, one when conceived as nature and three when conceived as persons.

Alan Brown has also defended Zizioulas against personalism and existentialism by arguing that Zizioulas is looking for an ontology in the Cappadocian Fathers to apply to theology in order to defend his concept of the person.¹⁴⁴ He is not insisting on finding out the exact meaning of individual terms *hypostasis* and *prosopon* as they had been used by the patristic Fathers. What Zizioulas is doing in fact is to examine the way in which the Fathers used these terms to articulate an ontology that could be used to better defend the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in the face of the challenges of their days. With reference to the Cappadocian Fathers, Zizioulas maintains that their ontology of the person made it possible to explain the concept of the Trinity in Orthodox terms against the Eunomians and the

¹⁴² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 140. Italics original.

¹⁴³ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 92.

¹⁴⁴ A. Brown, "On the Criticism of *Being as Communion* in Anglophone Orthodox Theology," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 66-68.

Sabellians. Zizioulas' ultimate interest is in theology and not the semantics of individual Greek words. If these meanings have changed over time, Zizioulas is interested in the implications they have on theology today. Never mind how the exact meaning of a word, say *hypostasis*, was applied by each Patristic Father, rather, what is important is actually how the concept of God influenced its usage by the Fathers in their day and how we may use present day words to express what the Fathers meant. In the words of Zizioulas,

We have said that we cannot simply repeat the theology of the Fathers word for word. We may use their terminology, but we must also do the conceptual work that is required in order to interpret them and be faithful to their meaning. If we are to learn from them, so that their theology is allowed to challenge the way we understand ourselves, we have to take the vocabulary and conceptuality of our own age and use them to interpret the Fathers' theology faithfully. Then the theology of the Fathers will change our conceptuality and influence the way we think about ourselves.¹⁴⁵

The concept of the trinitarian God and the philosophical and theological semantics of key terms used by the Fathers have a *mutually conditioning effect*. This is something that many theologians who accuse Zizioulas of using the Patristic Fathers to support his theology of personhood do not seem to understand.

The charge of Zizioulas being an existentialist is perhaps due to his interest in the themes that existentialists are usually interested in. In addition, it is true that Zizioulas extensively employs the word 'existential' and derivatives of it in his writings.¹⁴⁶ It is also certainly true that Zizioulas is concerned with life and existence. He is equally concerned about freedom and authentic being as the modern existentialists are also. But can that equate to being an existentialist? I certainly do not think so. Why then has Zizioulas been labelled an existentialist? I contend that Zizioulas has been associated with existentialism because he has engaged widely with Dostoevsky's writings often using Dostoevsky's themes as starting points for his theological reflection.

According to Zizioulas, it was Dostoevsky who brought the issue of ontological freedom to the fore.¹⁴⁷ Ontological freedom was not a freedom in a restricted moral sense but one that is related to the being of the world and to existence itself. It was also a freedom from existence and from ontological necessity. This theme of freedom is explored by Zizioulas as he examines Dostoevsky's concept of freedom in the character of Kirilov in Dostoevsky's book *The Possessed*. Here Zizioulas reflects that the ultimate way to freedom was suicide. Man can only exercise his absolute freedom by the very act of killing himself. This freedom

¹⁴⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 25.

¹⁴⁶ For example, he uses the term "existential ecumenism" in his response to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

¹⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 164.

is seriously considered by Zizioulas in the following words from the mouth of Kirilov who is the main character of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*,

Every man who desires to attain total freedom must be bold enough to put an end to his life.... This is the ultimate limit of freedom; this is all; there is nothing beyond this. Whoever dares to commit suicide becomes God. Everyone can do this and so bring the existence of God to an end, and then there will be absolutely nothing...¹⁴⁸

Dostoevsky's *Possessed* highlights the problem of man's createdness.¹⁴⁹ He cannot escape from the necessity and givenness of his existence. How can a man be truly free if he must accept the givenness of his existence? Taken to the extreme, man can exercise absolute freedom only in the act of killing himself. This kind of freedom ultimately leads to nihilism.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, when a person tries to be free by transcending the necessity of his existence, he finds that nihilism is the only way.

Zizioulas reacts to this by looking to theology and not philosophy to counter what he calls the negation of ontology by the person.¹⁵¹ He contends that philosophy can confirm the reality of the person, but "only theology can treat of the genuine, authentic person, because the authentic person, as absolute ontological freedom, must be "uncreated," that is, unbounded by any "necessity," including its own existence... If God does not exist, the person does not exist."¹⁵²

Zizioulas has critiqued Dostoevsky's concept of freedom in his writings. In Zizioulas' opinion, the problem of freedom in man has been presented to exist in two extremes by Dostoevsky. First, man wants to be so independent that he wants to be free to create and to destroy.¹⁵³ Zizioulas quotes from Dostoevsky's *Letters from the Underworld* to remind us that, however, reasonableness and harmony are not the ultimate goals of humanity in existence. Humanity has great capacity to create and to destroy. Yet this is not true freedom in the sense of being truly free to be. For humanity to be absolutely free, he must not only transcend his "givenness," he must in a sense, become God.¹⁵⁴

Second, man longs for a form of suffering.¹⁵⁵ This is probably influenced by Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* in which the protagonist in the novel longs for a suffering that leads to his redemption. In Zizioulas' view, this suffering may not, as

¹⁴⁸ Quoted from J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 42.

¹⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 235 and *Being as Communion*, 42-43.

¹⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 43, 50-51.

¹⁵¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 43.

¹⁵² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 43.

¹⁵³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 233.

¹⁵⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 43, n. 38f.

¹⁵⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 234.

Dostoevsky seems to be saying, lead to the redemption of man and to freedom in man. According to Zizioulas, what Dostoevsky's interpretation of freedom in terms of suffering has revealed is "the mystery of freedom as the capacity of man to embrace fully his incapacity, that is, as his ability to turn weakness into strength or rather to realize his power in weakness."¹⁵⁶ This paradox of man's 'capacity *in* incapacity' will not make sense when we consider human capacity and incapacity as "concrete endowments and possessions of human nature." Zizioulas is of the view that,

Man in his freedom appears to deny any natural possession, any capacity – only by so doing he proves fully that he is free, and thus shows himself to be capable of something that no impersonal creature has. It is this kind of freedom that the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* cannot forgive to Christ who stands before him having – and offering man – nothing, no worldly or religious security, but 'freedom.'¹⁵⁷

Thus, man's capacity willingly to embrace suffering to the ultimate point demonstrates that even in the 'givenness' of his fallen state, man remains a free person.

As Zizioulas has noted, all this makes Sartre's assertion that "man is condemned to be free" sound quite true.¹⁵⁸ But this kind of freedom is viewed negatively in the sense that man cannot free himself from his freedom and existence unless he kills himself. Zizioulas also criticizes Sartre's notion of freedom as a kind of moral freedom that is ultimately a matter of decision and a choice. These are not what freedom is ultimately about. Freedom has an ontological content that is not based on a choice among many possibilities. Instead, Zizioulas locates freedom in what he calls a "movement of love."¹⁵⁹ True freedom is ultimately a corollary of love. Love and freedom are ontological notions.

This is a revolutionary way of conceiving freedom in terms of love and being. What Zizioulas is saying here is that the existence of the world and any existent thing is a product of freedom.¹⁶⁰ This is derived from the Patristic Fathers who broke the closed ontology of the Greeks. This was accomplished by what Zizioulas has called, the two leavenings that have taken place in the field of patristic theology.¹⁶¹

The first leavening concerns what Zizioulas has termed "the ontological absoluteness of cosmological necessity."¹⁶² Ancient Greeks conceived the world as ontologically necessary. The Patristic Fathers, however, traced the being of the world not to anything of the world, but

¹⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 234.

¹⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 234.

¹⁵⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 234-35.

¹⁵⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 237.

¹⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

¹⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

¹⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39.

to the person of God himself through the biblical doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. The “*arche*” of the world was then, according to Zizioulas, “transposed to the sphere of freedom.”¹⁶³ This means that whatever existed was liberated from itself. The being of the world became, in this sense, free from necessity.¹⁶⁴ Then, there is a second leavening where the being of the world was traced back to the being of God, identified with the person.¹⁶⁵ This arose out of the theological disputes on the Holy Trinity through the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, chiefly through Basil. Zizioulas’ contention here is that in the philosophy of the Patristic Fathers, the being of the world was not linked to substance itself but to the person of the Father. This way of perceiving the world meant that we can now possibly talk of a *personal* ontology replacing an ontology of substance that we have grown so familiar with from the ancient Greeks.

Dostoevsky’s writings makes Zizioulas consider the problem of freedom in humanity which Zizioulas argues, comes from a person and not from nature. I consider Dostoevsky the problem poser for Zizioulas who wrestles with one of Dostoevsky’s most important themes in his novels: freedom. Yet Zizioulas does not answer Dostoevsky’s question in an existentialist way starting with humanity. Instead, Zizioulas points to the Trinity in search for an answer to the problem of freedom.¹⁶⁶ Thus, Zizioulas can hardly be called an existentialist. His philosophizing style is so very different. Though like Sartre, he is interested in authentic being and sometimes even uses illustrations from Sartre’s novels,¹⁶⁷ yet Zizioulas does not philosophize in the way Sartre does. Neither does he reflect on existence in the various spheres, whether religious or aesthetic, as Kierkegaard does. But like the Fathers, he is concerned first of all with *trinitarian existence* and he wants to use that as a model for human existence.¹⁶⁸ He is also concerned to trace all existence to the person of God the Father, the personal cause of all being.

¹⁶³ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 39-40.

¹⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40.

¹⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40.

¹⁶⁶ See his “Trinity and Freedom.”

¹⁶⁷ For example, Zizioulas has reflected on the problem of consciousness in the case of Sartre’s character Pierre arriving in a cafe. See J. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*.

¹⁶⁸ This has been noted by one of Zizioulas’ critics, Loudovikos in his “Person Instead of Grace and dictated Otherness,” 694. Here, Loudovikos contends that Zizioulas belongs “to the wider context of existentialism.” This is based on Loudovikos’ definition of existentialism, according to him, “the *exaltation of the mode of existence above being in general*.” This is a misrepresentation of Zizioulas’ position. Zizioulas never exalts the mode of existence above being. Zizioulas contends that being is a mode of existence which is personal, that is, being is personal existence. I don’t see how Loudovikos can say that Zizioulas exalts personal existence over being, because for Zizioulas, being is a personal mode of existence which encompasses both person and nature. See J. Zizioulas, “Person and Nature,” 86-87.

6.5.3. Zizioulas' grounding of the being of God solely in the Person of God, the Father, and in his freedom (*Monarchia* of the Father).

The *monarchia* of the Father is generally rejected by Protestants such as T. F. Torrance, A. J. Torrance, Volf and P. Cumin.¹⁶⁹ John Wilks also opines that Zizioulas is incorrect to insist on the *monarchia* of the Father.¹⁷⁰ Gunton, though more sympathetic to Zizioulas' position, admits that "Zizioulas might indeed arouse suspicions that he attributes too little part in the constitution of the deity to the Son and the Spirit" when he insists that the Father is the cause of the Trinity.¹⁷¹ Gunton notes here that there are only hints of this causal relation from the Cappadocian Fathers and cites Basil who wrote that the Spirit "completes the divine and blessed Trinity."¹⁷² If Zizioulas stresses overly on the *monarchia* of the Father, he may be suspect of an excessive "monotheism of the Father" which detracts from the true fundamental insights about what Gunton calls "the priority of the Father."¹⁷³ Gunton also does not think that the Father alone causes communion in God because it does not allow for "an adequate theology of the mutual constitution of Father, Son and Spirit."¹⁷⁴ Orthodox theologian Papanikolaou has questioned Zizioulas' grounding of the being of God *solely* in the freedom of the Father.¹⁷⁵ This "raises the question of whether the Son and the Spirit possess the same freedom as the Father, and thus, are persons in the same way as the Father." Here again Zizioulas' ecclesiology is indirectly called into question because his ecclesiology is modelled on the relational structure of the Trinity. If the 'cause' of the Trinity is not the person of the Father, then there is no true freedom in God and also in the Church.

Zizioulas' Response

Zizioulas himself acknowledges that the most controversial point for many is his stress on the Cappadocian Fathers' concept that the Father is the 'cause' of the trinitarian existence of God.¹⁷⁶ Zizioulas asserts strongly that it was the Cappadocian Fathers who taught that "the Father is the 'cause' of the Son and of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity."¹⁷⁷

This has had tremendous ramifications in theology especially with respect to the *Filioque*

¹⁶⁹ See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 123, n. 37, M. Volf, *After Our Likeness* and P. Cumin, "John Zizioulas and Being Free," 152 and 157-58.

¹⁷⁰ J. Wilks, "The Trinitarian Ontology of John Zizioulas," *Vox Evangelica* 25 (1995): 79.

¹⁷¹ C. Gunton, "Persons and Particularity," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 103.

¹⁷² St. Basil, *Hexameron* II.6, cited in C. Gunton, "Persons and Particularity," in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 103.

¹⁷³ C. Gunton, "Persons and Particularity," 103.

¹⁷⁴ C. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 196.

¹⁷⁵ A. Papanikolaou, "Contemporary Orthodox Currents on the Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Trinity*, eds. G. Emery & M. Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 337.

¹⁷⁶ J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, 22.

¹⁷⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 123. Zizioulas has underlined and promoted this view in many of his writings. See, for example, J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17 and 44, etc. and J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 106, 113-54, 161-62, 186-87.

controversy that has dogged the Church for centuries. But since the break in communion in 1054 between the Eastern and Western churches on this issue, there have been great strides towards doctrinal agreement on this.¹⁷⁸ The Roman Catholic Church had made a big step toward doctrinal reconciliation when the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity published the following statement that Zizioulas considered a very valuable statement on this thorny issue:¹⁷⁹

East and West can easily continue dialogue also as regards the *Filioque* question providing there is full acceptance of the doctrine of tradition on the *monarchia* of the Father. The *monarchia* of the Father means that the Father is the sole cause/origin both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁰

Zizioulas has defended himself against A. J. Torrance in an article “The Father as Cause.”¹⁸¹ In this paper Zizioulas acknowledged the objections raised against him¹⁸² and the Cappadocians by A. J. Torrance¹⁸³ and T. F. Torrance.¹⁸⁴ In his defence, Zizioulas first clarifies the Cappadocian’s use of causal language – a *timeless causality* which is applied strictly to persons and not to *ousia*.¹⁸⁵ Then Zizioulas distinguishes clearly the level of *ousia* and that of person in divine being.¹⁸⁶ The divine *ousia* is related to the ‘what’ of God while that of person relates to the ‘how’ of God. So, giving existence or being to the Son by the Father is, according to Zizioulas, “a matter not of nature, of *what* God is, but of *how* God is.”¹⁸⁷ Zizioulas further clarifies that what the Father ‘causes’ is a *transmission of personal otherness* (i.e., of the *how* of being) and not of *ousia*. Causality in God distinguishes the persons and “involves the emergence of otherness in divine being.”¹⁸⁸ Zizioulas explains,

The Father as ‘cause’ is God, or *the* God in the ultimate sense, *not because he holds the divine essence and transmits it* – this would indeed endanger the fullness of the divine being of the other persons and would also turn him into an individual conceivable prior to the other persons – *but because he is the ultimate ontological principle of divine personhood*.¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁸ See the recent statement on the *Filioque* in *L’Osservatore Romano*, September 20, 1995: 3 and 6. See also J. Zizioulas, “One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the *Filioque*,” in *The One and the Many*, 41.

¹⁷⁹ J. Zizioulas, “One Single Source,” in *The One and the Many*, 41.

¹⁸⁰ The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, “The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit (The Vatican Clarification on the *Filioque*),” *L’Osservatore Romano*, September 20, 1995: 3 and 6, cited in J. Zizioulas, “One Single Source,” in *The One and the Many*, 41.

¹⁸¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 113-54.

¹⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 123.

¹⁸³ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 288-93.

¹⁸⁴ T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988 and *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

¹⁸⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 128.

¹⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 129.

¹⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 129.

¹⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 129-30.

¹⁸⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 130.

Zizioulas also hastens to add that if this is truly understood, then there should no longer be any fear of the loss of any fullness of the deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

For, in fact, the equality of the three persons in terms of substance is not denied by the Father's being the cause of personhood; it is rather ensured by it, since by being cause *only as a person and for the sake of personhood* the Father guards against locating substance primarily in himself.¹⁹⁰

Zizioulas concludes that causation in God does not destroy ontological equality. Rather, it produces what he calls "otherness of 'wholes of the whole.'"¹⁹¹ This brings about what Zizioulas had earlier proposed about the person, "otherness in communion and communion in otherness."¹⁹² In addition, Zizioulas emphasizes that

By not being a matter of transmission of substance, causality involves freedom in personal being and makes God the Trinity not a necessary but a free being, exactly as Gregory Nazianzen states in explaining why causality is a matter not of nature but of personhood: 'so that we may never introduce an unfree (*akousion*) generation'.¹⁹³

Zizioulas also explained that the idea of cause was introduced into divine being to indicate that in God, there is not only substance, relational and dynamic, but also *otherness*, which is also dynamic.¹⁹⁴ This dynamism in God involves a movement initiated freely by a person. Here, Zizioulas follows Gregory of Nazianzen who describes the mystery of the Trinity precisely as a *movement* initiated by the person of God the Father.¹⁹⁵ It is this initial movement by the person of God the Father, the one "*arche*," that makes him to be the 'cause' of being, which includes also the being of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit through the *monarchia* of the Father.

Zizioulas' reliance on Gregory Nazianzen for the concept of the monarchy of the Father makes him especially vulnerable to critics who fear that an over-emphasis on God the Father leads to forms of hierarchical structures that are totalitarian and oppressive in the Church. It is not hard to see why theologians like Volf, who comes from the free Church tradition, rejects this totally.¹⁹⁶ Even Zizioulas' student Loudovikos has argued against a form of 'dictated otherness' in Zizioulas' ontology.¹⁹⁷ In view of the dangers of misrepresenting Gregory's

¹⁹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 130. Italics original.

¹⁹¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 130.

¹⁹² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

¹⁹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 130. See also Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 3.2.

¹⁹⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 131.

¹⁹⁵ Gregory of Nazianzen, *Theol. Or.* 3.2.

¹⁹⁶ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

¹⁹⁷ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology* and "Person instead of Grace, and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position," *Heythrop Journal* 52.4 (July 2011): 684-99. See also Alexis Torrance's response to Loudovikos in his "Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the Debate," *Heythrop Journal* 52.4 (July 2011): 700-07.

Nazianzen's controversial concept of the *monarchia* of the Father, Gunton is wise to advise a toning down of the emphasis on the *monarchia* of the Father. A return to the biblical sources such as the Gospel of John, whereby the evangelist attests to the fact that the Father is in the Son and vice versa (John 17.21), is probably the best starting point to evaluate any concept of monarchy, including Gregory Nazianzen's concept of the *monas*. This is why T. F. Torrance's alternative proposal of the *monarchia of all three Persons of the Triune God* is, in my estimate, more balanced and correct in our understanding of God.¹⁹⁸

Zizioulas has personally defended himself comprehensively by listing the merits and consequences (anthropological, ecclesiological and evangelical) of considering the Father as cause.¹⁹⁹ Although his arguments based on the Cappadocian Fathers' concept of causality and ordering are convincing, yet the Torrances do give a very serious warning not to over-stress the Cappadocian Fathers' concept of causal relations in the Trinity because this can easily lead to a form of the *subordination* of the Son (and the Holy Spirit) to the Father. I agree that this may also cause misunderstanding that the Father is ontologically prior to the Son and the Holy Spirit and lead to a *monism* of the Father. It would be safer to speak of the *monarchia* residing in the Trinity, as T. F. Torrance has done.²⁰⁰ Zizioulas could modify this to the *monarchia* of the three Persons of the Trinity in each other²⁰¹ if he wants to link *monarchia* strictly to persons and not to the one divine nature. I don't see why this cannot be done because the Trinity is, for Zizioulas, "a *primordial* ontological concept."²⁰² I know Zizioulas will not agree because he insists on the monarchy of one person – the Father. This is an Orthodox theological doctrine and it is also Zizioulas' foundation for his concept of the one and the many which extends to the relationships between the bishop and the community, the Church and the local churches, and the primate and the bishops in a synod.

¹⁹⁸ This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁹⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 140-54.

²⁰⁰ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 65. See also T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 10. Here Torrance notes that it was Athanasius who accepted "the doctrine of completely interpenetrating or co-indwelling relations between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.... This carried with it a revised conception of *ousia* as being considered in its internal relations, and of *hypostasis* as being considered in its objective inter-relations. It was in this sense that he accepted the formula 'one Being, three Persons,' which carried with it a doctrine of the *Monarchia* as identical with the one indivisible being of the Holy Trinity."

²⁰¹ It would be hard to define the monarchy to be of three persons because the monarchy refers to one source, i.e. the Father in Zizioulas' case. However, if we view the three persons to be one triune God, one can say that it is the *monarchia* of the triune God.

²⁰² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17. Italics original.

6.6. Conclusion

To conclude this long chapter, I first want to summarize the main criticism of Zizioulas' ecclesiology that is commonly shared by Bathrellos, Loudovikos and Volf. These three critics together present the view that Zizioulas tends to elevate the bishop and devalue the presbyter and the laity. The danger of a 'monism' of the bishop in the diocese which can easily be extended to the 'one' primate in the Church is clearly evident here. This can lead to a top-down pyramidal structure in the Church, something Zizioulas claims can be avoided when Pneumatology conditions ecclesiology. We may ask however, whether by over-emphasizing the institutional structure of the Church consisting of bishops and of synods comprised only of bishops, Zizioulas has neglected the *charismatic elements* and the dimension of *dialogical reciprocity* in the Church? The *charismatic participation* in the Eucharist of members other than the bishop in the Eucharist is surely as important as the structural organisation of the Church (e.g. synods and other conciliar structures). After all, the Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to all in the Church according to His will. A strong Pneumatological element in ministry should thus also be emphasized in addition to the structural orders of ministry in the Church.

In recent years, Zizioulas has come under attack for his alleged personalism and existentialism. Yet he has defended himself well and has clarified his personalism which he derives from the patristic concept of the person and not from the study of the human being.²⁰³ His brand of 'existentialism' concerns humanity's life and existence in relation to God in the Church and in the world. It is definitely not the kind of modern existentialism typically associated with the atheistic philosophers such as Sartre who argued that existence precedes essence.

Finally, the Father as the 'cause' of every being, even of God, has been the most difficult concept for Protestants to accept. This has been worked out by Zizioulas on the basis of the Cappadocian Fathers in some of his most profound papers which many have not taken the pains to engage rigorously.²⁰⁴ It seems that one must avoid reading Zizioulas' superficially, which Zizioulas has charged some of his critics such as Turcescu and with having done, leading to their misunderstanding of his own points of view and accusing him of 'misreading' the Fathers.²⁰⁵ These criticisms are serious because they call into question Zizioulas' *faithfulness to the Patristic Fathers* which I have tried to argue for in this dissertation. The

²⁰³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 177.

²⁰⁴ In particular, his papers "The Father as Cause," and "The Trinity and Personhood: Appreciating the Cappadocian Contribution," in his *Communion and Otherness*, 113-77.

²⁰⁵ As in the case of Turcescu. See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 141, n. 84; 171-77 and his "Person and Nature," 90-91.

criticisms also indirectly impact Zizioulas' trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology by undermining his concept of personhood according to the Cappadocian Fathers and St. Maximus.

In the next chapter, I shall assess Zizioulas in the light of some general criteria so that we can ascertain the overall strengths and weaknesses of Zizioulas' theological projects before recommending a few possible improvements to Zizioulas' theology to make it more universally applicable in the modern world and in the Church today.

Assessment of Zizioulas' Theology

7.1. Introduction

Having considered the main criticisms (and counter-criticisms) of Zizioulas, this chapter is my assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Zizioulas' theological position based on some broad criteria. These criteria include orthodoxy, catholicity and evangelical witness. I will also propose some improvements on Zizioulas' ontology with the help of some Patristic Fathers such as Athanasius and Augustine. We will see how later interpreters of these Church Fathers like Aquinas and T. F. Torrance can enrich the theology of Zizioulas.

7.2. Some criteria for Assessment

7.2.1. Evangelical Witness and Practicality

Evangelical witness is broadly defined as bringing the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ to humanity so that humanity may believe and obey. By evangelical we do not mean a denomination or a Christian movement that holds on to certain confessions. We mean "that which is according to the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ" as revealed in the Bible.

Zizioulas' theology is *good news* for mankind. He tells of the hope that humanity has in *overcoming death* and living forever. This hope is based on an *ontological solution* to the problem of sin and death through the Person of Christ. He reminds us that man is ultimately created in the image of God and that God's creation is good and that it will be redeemed through Christ. He also specifies a vocation for man as a priest of creation to bring back the whole of creation to God. This is no sentimental affection for creation on the part of man but humanity's true compassion for all created being. For in the words of Zizioulas, "we all share in the fall of Adam, and we all must feel the sorrow of failing to bring creation to communion with God and the overcoming of death. Holiness in the Church passes through sincere and deep *metanoia*."¹ We are reminded of the Gospel preached by St. Peter when he called on those who heard him to repent and to believe in the Gospel in order to be saved.² This is why Zizioulas says that "the essence of Christian existence in the Church is *metanoia* (repentance)."³ This ecclesiology is *not* triumphalistic but acknowledges the Church's

¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

² Acts 2.38.

³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

fragility even when the Orthodox position insists that she is “holy and sinless” in her essence.⁴

Zizioulas’ theology is also *forward-looking* and takes into special account the *transfiguration* of all of history including all suffering and pain into the new creation in the Kingdom of God. By being constituted by what is to come, Zizioulas’ ecclesiology need not be restricted to the paradigms of the past but it can be open to the eschatological truth of the being of the future things of which the Eucharist is an icon. An *iconic ecclesiology* is evangelical because it is based on the *hope* of better things which are prepared for those who love God and who patiently wait in *anticipation* of the Kingdom of God to fully break into time at any moment. In Zizioulas’ words, “Man and the world are no longer imprisoned in their past, in sin, decay and death. The past is affirmed in so far as it contributes to the end, to the coming of the kingdom.”⁵

But how practicable is Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, especially with his rejection of the parish as the local Church? In the face of the fragmentation of the Church into many denominations and sects (including the division of the Orthodox Church into national and geographic jurisdictions),⁶ how is it possible to have only one local Church in one city today? Consider cities like London, New York and Shanghai, there are well-over ten million people of various ethnicity in each megapolis. The sheer size and diversity of the people of a major city is enough to create difficulties for the one Church in that city. Take, for example, two fairly large capital cities like Wellington⁷ and Singapore,⁸ the Orthodox Church in these cities are divided into the Greek, Russian and Syrian Orthodox Churches, each led by a bishop of the respective nationalities. Truly, we are seeing parishes of the different ethnicities growing and making up the Orthodox Church in these cities. They are still divided culturally and linguistically. For the smaller cities, we also need to consider the growth in the size and the cultural diversity of the local congregation as the city expands. Bishops (and those he appoints to represent him) may need to speak several languages to serve all the peoples in one locality and may need to travel long distances to reach inaccessible rural areas for the Eucharist there to be valid. One wonders if Zizioulas’ eucharistic ecclesiology with his concept of the episcopacy can ever be replicated in most parts of the world at all.

⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Towards an Eschatological Ontology,” 19. Quoted by D. Knight in “Zizioulas on the Eschatology of the Person,” in *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, ed. D. Knight, 197.

⁶ For example, the autocephalous Churches (North America) and the various National Churches.

⁷ In Wellington city, one can find the Greek Orthodox, the Romanian Orthodox, the Serbian Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox and the Antiochian Orthodox Churches each headed by different bishops.

⁸ One can find the Greek Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox and the Syrian Orthodox Churches in the city of Singapore.

It certainly can if we are bold enough to change the present structure of many Orthodox churches today. Yannaras has also argued for a reduction in the size of the Orthodox parish so that the Eucharistic truth of the Church may again be recognized and experienced as a living reality.⁹ This is a good step in the right direction towards improving the general ecclesial consciousness of being a eucharistic community. However, this will mean a radical re-orientation of the present structure of the episcopal dioceses, some of which may be so large and multi-functional that it may prove impractical to break them into smaller eucharistic communities without painful divisions in the Church and the breaking up and separation of key ministries in the Church. This may work if the Church is not broken up along cultural and linguistic lines but preserve the unity in the person of the bishop who needs to be a ‘universal’ figure speaking many languages and being acquainted with the various cultures in which he ministers.

Then, there is the problem of providing enough bishops and clergy to serve these smaller eucharistic communities. With the dwindling numbers of people in Western countries responding to the call to priesthood, this will prove to be a challenging task indeed! Churches in the West have been amalgamating congregations to maintain their numbers in the local Churches and selling off their Church buildings. Zizioulas has observed that in Greece, the local worshipping community has almost vanished and the number of titular bishops is increasing rapidly.¹⁰ It is presently difficult to see how we could reduce the size of parishes and increase the numbers of local worshipping communities in the West. Unless there is a substantial effort to win people back to the Church and unless we rely less on the ministry of the so-called ‘full-time’ workers, we will not be able to divide and multiply our parishes. There will also be the need to multiply the numbers of bishops and priests. In the face of shrinking Church membership and donations in some Western countries, one may also have to rely more on non-stipendiary ministers. If there is any hope of realizing such a vision, one must look to places where the persecution of Christians has driven the local churches underground in large numbers. For example, in China, there has been an explosion of underground house-churches that gather in a way very similar to the early church communities that also faced much persecution. These house churches do not usually have full-time priests that are adequately trained for the priesthood to minister at the Eucharist. One can see why Zizioulas’ ecclesiology, while very good in theory, is hard to realize. This is

⁹ C. Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, 227-29.

¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141. Here, Zizioulas attributes the problem to the Church not reflecting the true balance between the ‘one’ and the ‘many.’

not to say that his eschatologically conditioned ecclesiology is faulty. It may well be the fault of parishioners not catching the vision of the Church as an eschatological community which gathers around their bishop to celebrate the Eucharist together with all the saints and the whole company of angels in heaven and on earth. The Church is after all not merely an institution where ministers pursue ‘careers’ and ‘run’ services for the benefit of parishioners. Rather, as Zizioulas has constantly reminded us, the Church is the worshipping community of God’s people who gather in the event of the Eucharist to be the Church – an icon of the eschatological community on a *journey* into the Kingdom of God.

7.2.2. Orthodoxy

The criterion of orthodoxy is a key one for assessing any theology. A good theology is one that is true all the time and everywhere. Orthodoxy is defined in these respects:

A) The right glorification of God.

The meaning of orthodoxy here is taken to be that of the meaning of the Greek word *orthodoxia* – correct glorification (of God) as opposed to correct opinion or beliefs. This refers to worshipping God correctly in Spirit and in truth (John 4.24), and giving him the glory due to his name.¹¹

B) The correct doctrine according to the Word of God.

This is the usual sense of the word orthodox to mean correct opinions and beliefs with respect to Christian doctrine and practice. For the Eastern Church, to be orthodox is to be faithful to the early Church Fathers and to Scripture.

We will see in the next section that Zizioulas’ theology is strong in these aspects.

7.2.3. Catholicity

Besides being orthodox, it is important that any theology be catholic because the Gospel is for the salvation of all mankind and to be believed by all in the world.¹² As Pelikan writes, “Catholicity was a mark both of the true church and of the true doctrine, for these were inseparable.”¹³ The term catholic can be defined in these respects:

A) Universally or generally applicable.¹⁴

¹¹ Isidore of Seville defines an orthodox teacher as “a man who is correct in how he gives glory [to God], a name to which someone is not entitled if he lives otherwise than he believes.” (*Orig.* 7.14.5, PL 82:294) See J. Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 14.

¹² Rom. 1.16.

¹³ J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 334.

¹⁴ According to Isidore of Seville, Catholic was synonymous with “universal” or “general.” In his *Origins*, he writes “Catholic [means] universal, that is, according to the whole.” Isidore, *Orig.* 7.14.4 (PL82, 294). See J. Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, 14.

There is a kind of *ecumenism in space*. It refers to a unity of the Church as it is represented by the diverse Christian communities spread-out in the world.¹⁵ A catholic theology should be able to, through its ‘wholeness,’ unite the Church towards “eucharistic communion” which is the goal of ecumenism.¹⁶

B) Timelessness of the truth.

There is a kind of *ecumenism in time*, an ecumenism that unites all the Christian saints in history, a unity of generations of the faithful.¹⁷ A catholic theology is faithful to the witness of the Church, especially to the witness of the Church Fathers.

We will see in the following section that in general, Zizioulas’ theology is universally applicable subject to some important qualifications. To be catholic, I contend that his theology needs to engage more with the Augustinian tradition and Thomism. These are discussed in two subsequent sections in this chapter. But first, let us note briefly the strengths of Zizioulas’ theology.

7.3. Strengths

Our modern society in the West is one that tends towards individualism – the trend towards emphasizing personal identity,¹⁸ personal rights and individual responsibility. Even if human beings were to form associations, they are formed along exclusive lines to the neglect of the ‘other.’ As a result, minority voices are often suppressed and society becomes divided. This is what Henri Nouwen has observed in the fragmentation of man leading to loneliness, separation and the lack of inter-personal communion.¹⁹ This is a kind of individualism that Zizioulas tries hard to combat against. Zizioulas has attributed this problem to the *fear* of the ‘other’ that is in our *nature*.²⁰ He has also identified the source of this problem to be located in humanity’s refusal “to refer created being to communion with God”²¹ leading to the *rupture between being and communion*, between man and God, and between man and the rest of God’s creation. This loss of communion with the other has resulted in the oppression and exploitation of the other as evidenced in our present day ecological crisis and the wars that have been fought. How can this communion be restored so that individualism and the negative effects associated with making created humanity “to be the ultimate point of

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 317.

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 317.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, “Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in *The One and the Many*, 319.

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 27 and *Communion and Otherness*, 1.

¹⁹ See H. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer. Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 3-8.

²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1-2.

²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 102.

reference in existence (to be God)” can also be removed? I believe that Zizioulas’ theology points us back to the truth. Zizioulas, like many Patristic Fathers, has raised the awareness among Christians that we need the Holy Spirit who is *koinonia*.²² Zizioulas reminds us that He is also “the Spirit of truth,” so often emphasized by Scripture.²³ We need to recognize the crucial importance of the Holy Spirit in shaping our understanding of God, of Christ and of the truth about communion because the Holy Spirit is *personal* and He *makes* God as communion.

Most importantly, the Church needs to know her identity in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Without doubt the Church is the Church of Christ. The Church is also the Church of the Holy Spirit. In the face of the *institutionalization* and *individualization of Christ* in the Church, Zizioulas’ emphasis on the Holy Spirit who de-individualizes Christ, and in a sense *de-institutionalizes* Christ, makes room for the corporate and non-institutional dimensions of the Church to become more apparent. Too often some churches become rigid institutions that become lifeless because there is no Spirit of God in them. In some places, churches are shaped along sociological lines and as such, are structured much like the societies of their day. When society changes with time, the Church also changes, being led along by society. This makes us wonder whether the Church is built on a permanent foundations or whether she is built upon the shifting sands of time. Has the Church lost her original nature as the Church *of Christ and the Holy Spirit*? Have we substituted other ‘christs’ and other spirits in the Church? If we have done so, the Church will become dead apart from Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit who is also the Lord and the giver of life.²⁴ Therefore, the emphasis on the Holy Spirit in the Church as her Lord is of utmost importance today. Theologically, this means, for Zizioulas, that we must allow Pneumatology to condition Christology. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the One who makes Jesus the Person he is – the Christ (the anointed One). The Holy Spirit also reveals Jesus Christ to be the Son of God in the Church.²⁵ Most importantly, the Holy Spirit descends upon the Church and makes her Christ’s Body by de-individualizing her members.²⁶ We must allow our understanding of Christ to change from an individualistic understanding to one that allows for an understanding of Christ as a *corporate Body*.²⁷ This is the mystery of the one and the many. This is how we can understand the Church better if we were to understand the Church as one corporate Body of Christ. As Pope Gregory I has

²² 2 Cor. 13.14.

²³ John 14.17; 15.26; 16.13. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 113.

²⁴ The Nicene Creed: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Giver of life.

²⁵ See the baptismal accounts of Jesus.

²⁶ This occurs at the *epiclesis*.

²⁷ See 1 Cor. 10.17.

written, “The churches, although many, make up one catholic church, diffused throughout the world.”²⁸

However, there is also an inherent danger in thinking of the Church as the one universal Church that is centered on one particular See that controls all the other churches. As Afanasiev and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have constantly reminded us that *every* local church is catholic because the fullness of God dwells in every local church where the Eucharist is celebrated by all members of that local church. The catholicity of the local church is due to Christ alone and not due to any particular see or patriarchate. As long as Christ’s body (the body of Christ that is broken, shared and communicated in the Eucharist) is present in the eucharistic community – the Body of Christ, there is the Catholic Church (recalling Ignatius’ famous dictum).²⁹

The local church as the catholic Church does not mean that it is catholic on its own. She is the Catholic Church because she is in *communion with* the other local churches. This is where Zizioulas emphasizes more, the concept of communion in time and space, than does Afanasiev who insists on the full catholicity of the local church regardless of its relation to the rest of the churches. Zizioulas’ concept of the unity of the Church in the person of the bishop who is in turn in communion with other bishops through the synods allows for the visible unity of the Church to be expressed through structures and councils that have ecclesiological significance.

All these require that the concept of communion be decisive in ecclesiology. This means that we condition the being of the Church pneumatologically. This does not mean that the Church is merely a charismatic society without a definite form. It is not so. The Church is also the Body of Christ (recall Florovsky’s insistence on ecclesiology as “a chapter of Christology”)³⁰ as well as the Temple of the Holy Spirit.³¹ The Church cannot simply be described as one that is of togetherness (*sobornost*)³² or a community on its own or a society with some common aim.³³ Zizioulas constantly reminds us that the Church is pneumatologically conditioned when it is the Body of Christ modelled on the eschatological

²⁸ Gregory, *Mor.* 17.29.43 (PL 60:30), cited in J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 334.

²⁹ St. Ignatius, *Smyr.* 8.

³⁰ G. Florovsky, “Le Corps du Christ vivant,” 12.

³¹ 1 Cor. 3.16.

³² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 124. Here, Zizioulas refers to Alexis Khomiakov’s critique of Western thought in the 19th century and the famous idea of *sobornost*. Zizioulas opines that Khomiakov’s views make sense only “if a strong dose of Pneumatology is injected into ecclesiology” which Johannes Möhler had already done in his work *Die Einheit in der Kirche, oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus*, 1825. Zizioulas is in agreement with Florovsky that Möhler was overly strong in his emphasis on Pneumatology in the Church that it turned the Church into a “charismatic society” rather than the “body of Christ.”

³³ Zizioulas is against a sociological definition of the Church as he deems sociology too utilitarian. See J. Zizioulas, “The Institution of Episcopal Conferences,” in *The One and the Many*, 260.

Kingdom of God. What is the Church like in this Kingdom? Here Zizioulas gives us a beautiful vision which he appropriates from Ignatius – it is one where Christ is seated on His throne with all the rest of creation surrounding Him and offering Him the worship He deserves.³⁴ In the Church, this vision is actualized in the Eucharist where all orders of the Church participate as icons of the Church in the eschatological Kingdom of God: the bishop as Christ, the presbyters as the elders surrounding the throne of God, the deacons as those who minister to the people of God, and the laics as the multitudes of people from all nations and races.

In the face of exclusivism and discrimination in the Church, Zizioulas' call to include peoples of all gender, social class and ethnicity in one locality to gather as the Church to celebrate the Eucharist makes the Church truly what it is, namely the image of the Kingdom of God where all tribes, nations and peoples will gather to be with God.³⁵ This is an eschatological vision transcending all cultures that is in line with the basis and the goal of ecclesiology which are the trinitarian economy and the Kingdom of God respectively. This is a truly ecumenical vision that is widely needed in the face of sectarianism in the world and in the Church today.

Zizioulas' concept of communion amongst local churches opens every church to the wider Church while guaranteeing the autonomy and fullness of every local church. It does away with a "super-structure" that has too many hierarchical positions in the Church which are more than necessary to maintain the fullness of the Body of Christ. By promoting the bishop to be the head of every eucharistic assembly and the highest-ranking member of every local church, there is no need for additional titles such as "Pope" or Cardinals, titles that suggest a past Roman hierarchical structure modelled after society and not one that is modelled after the eschatological eucharistic gathering in the Kingdom of God.

Having said that, this does not mean that all structures that facilitate communion between the local churches, structures such as synods and councils of all forms, serve no purpose. Zizioulas maintains that these possess "ecclesiological significance" even if they are not accorded with the status of being a Church.³⁶ They still serve the all-important function of creating "*a network of communion of Churches, not a new form of Church.*"³⁷ This means that even structures such as the Roman curia, the WCC and the patriarchates of different Orthodox Churches have ecclesiological significance when they encourage a network of

³⁴ Revelation 4-5.

³⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 255.

³⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 331.

³⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 258.

churches in communion, even if they are strictly speaking not Churches *per se*. In this communion of Churches all around the world, the question of Church unity demands that a universal primacy be considered since, according to Zizioulas, “there can be no communion of local Churches without some form of universal synodality, and no universal synodality without some form of universal primacy.”³⁸ “For such a primacy to be accepted and applied, an ecclesiology of communion rooted deeply in a theology – and even an ontology – of communion would be necessary.”³⁹ Zizioulas has provided this necessary framework for a universal primacy.

As we have noted, Zizioulas is theologically faithful to the Orthodox Patristic tradition. He has been able to *identify* truth with communion through considering the development of several Greek Patristic approaches towards the concept of truth by the early Church Fathers.⁴⁰ He has also integrated into the major fields of theology (Christology and Pneumatology) the philosophy of the Cappadocian Fathers regarding the concept of the person and personhood. Zizioulas has also assimilated the philosophical thoughts of Maximus to reconcile communion with otherness. This has widened the philosophical and theological foundations of an ontology to include the most basic of non-substantialistic ontological categories such as love and personhood. I regard these as Zizioulas’ most original and major achievements to date.

Zizioulas’ eucharistic ecclesiology provides an integration between the Eucharist and ministry. These two are inter-related and cannot be divorced from each other. The very structure of the ministry of the Church is found in the Eucharist and extends from it. This is a very important concept because all Church ministry is an extension of the worship of the trinitarian God. Therefore, ordination also follows from the celebration of the Eucharist. When ordination is seen in the light of the Eucharist, according to Zizioulas, this enables us to understand the relationship between all orders of the Church *ontologically* rather than *functionally*. A priest’s identity is closely tied to the eschatological Kingdom of God, of which he is an *icon*. Seen in this light, we can understand better why the priesthood is not

³⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Institution of Episcopal Conferences,” in *The One and the Many*, 259.

³⁹ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church,” in *The One and the Many*, 273.

⁴⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Truth and Communion,” in *Being as Communion*, 67-122. In this paper, Zizioulas chronologically discusses the merits and shortcomings of six Greek patristic approaches to the concept of truth: 1) The *Logos* approach exemplified by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen. 2) The Eucharistic approach exemplified by Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons. 3) The trinitarian approach exemplified by St. Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers. 4) The Apophatic approach exemplified by Dionysius the Areopagite and St. Maximus. 5) The Christological approach exemplified by St. Maximus. 6) The iconological approach exemplified chiefly by St. Athanasius and St. Maximus. Through this development of the concept of truth in Greek Patristic theology, Zizioulas argues that the Greek Fathers’ main success in their attempt at a synthesis of Greek Patristic thought concerning truth is simply this: “the identification of truth with communion.” See especially J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 101.

merely a role to be played; it is part of the structure of the Kingdom of God. Every bishop, priest, deacon and laic does not only *have* a function in the Church; each person *is* a part of God's Kingdom. Thus, the relationship between the priest and the rest of the Church is of an ontological kind, of an order (*taxis*) that reflects the ontological relationships in the Kingdom of God and in the Trinity.⁴¹

All these are reflected in the worship of the eucharistic community when it gathers to celebrate the Divine Liturgy.⁴² It is in the Eucharist that the true worship of God, the proper giving of glory and praise to God is done as a public work (*leitourgia*) by all the faithful in a local community together with all the saints in heaven and on earth. All these imply that we need a concept of communion which makes all these things possible. Communion with God and communion in the Church is what Zizioulas has been turning our hearts to in his theology.

McPartlan notes that Zizioulas' emphasis on the Eucharist and on ecclesial being has prompted criticism from some quarters favouring a baptismal ecclesiology in that his treatment of Baptism is inadequate.⁴³ Two such persons are J. Erickson and Baillargeon.⁴⁴ Erickson concedes that "the Church is a eucharistic organism, but only because the Church is a baptismal organism."⁴⁵ Therefore, he suggests a fuller study of Baptism which he thinks would "complement and correct eucharistic ecclesiology at a number of points."⁴⁶ It may well be true that Zizioulas focuses on the Eucharist in his ecclesiology, but it is also true that he bases his eucharistic ecclesiology on the people of God who are baptized in the name of God. His idea of the ecclesial hypostasis is one that is obtained through baptism. Only the baptized can participate in the Eucharist. He writes that "the *sine qua non* condition for the Eucharist is Baptism."⁴⁷ Baptism, ordination and confirmation are not simply individual rites of the Church instituted by the Lord Jesus but are united in the liturgical life of the Church in the one mystery of Christ.⁴⁸ Zizioulas stresses the "essential unity" between all three and criticizes any attempt to view them separately which would lead to "serious theological and historical problems."⁴⁹ This integrative view of the key sacraments of the Church is no doubt a strength of Zizioulas' theology. Yet all theology have their weaknesses and limitations,

⁴¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 145.

⁴² There are mainly two in the Orthodox Church, that according to St. John Chrysostom and the other according to St. Basil.

⁴³ See the introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xvii-xviii, n. 30.

⁴⁴ J. H. Erickson, "The Local Churches and Catholicity. An Orthodox Perspective," *The Jurist* 52 (1992): 505-06. G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur L'Eglise-communion*.

⁴⁵ J. H. Erickson, "The Church in modern Orthodox thought: towards a baptismal ecclesiology," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*. Vol. 11, no. 2-3 (May-Aug 2011): 146.

⁴⁶ Introduction to J. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many*, xvii.

⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 80.

⁴⁸ See J. Zizioulas, "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist," in *The One and the Many*, 91-100.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist," in *The One and the Many*, 93.

Zizioulas' included. The following section will highlight some of these weaknesses.

7.4. Weaknesses

Zizioulas main weakness is probably a one-sided reading of the Church Fathers on the issue of *ousia* in ontology. By being overly focused on the person, he has overlooked some significant advantages of conceiving being as 'essence.' By frequently neglecting the history of fallen humanity and its response to eschatology, Zizioulas' eschatological ontology is too futuristic can be perceived to be too 'out of this world' to be of any immediate practical relevance for an ordinary man on the street because it over-focusses on the future state of things sometimes to the neglect of the consideration of the present practical state of affairs. There is so wide a chasm between the ideal and the practical in the Orthodox Church. Zizioulas does note and lament the state of affairs in the Orthodox Church today with regards to her practices and theology.⁵⁰ In fact, he is critical of the current situation, even admitting that the Orthodox theology he advocates is very different from current Orthodox practice.⁵¹

7.4.1. The issue of nature in ontology

I agree with Papanikolaou that a theology of created nature is lacking in Zizioulas leading him to be biased against nature as an ontological concept.⁵² More recently, Zizioulas has clarified, "Any negative statements about nature apply to ontology only when a disjunction or conflict between nature and person occurs either at the level of thought (e.g., in classical Greek philosophy, especially in ancient Greek tragedy, or in later Medieval and modern philosophy) or in the experience of our actual (fallen) existence."⁵³ Must ontology always be only defined in a personal way? Is there room for a substantialist ontology in theology? I believe there is. After all, Greek Patristic ontology begins with the concepts of essence (*ousia*), nature (*physis*) and form (*morphe*).⁵⁴ Chalcedonian Christology points us also to an ontology of nature in the Divine Person of the Son. The human and the divine natures are clearly distinct but united in one Person. So, the Council of Chalcedon did put emphasis on natures *enhypostasized* in the Person of Christ. Would not this point to a substantialistic

⁵⁰ J. Zizioulas, "Symbolism and Realism in Orthodox Worship," in *The One and the Many*, 114-17.

⁵¹ See his paper "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God" where he constantly contrasts the present performance of the Divine Liturgy to that of the original one of St. John Chrysostom. He even laments that presently, the Liturgy has "suffered at the hands of its clergy." J. Zizioulas, "The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God," in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 46.

⁵² A. Papanikolaou, Review of *A Eucharistic Ontology*, 155-56.

⁵³ J. Zizioulas, "Person and Nature," 111.

⁵⁴ These form the discussion topics of the first chapter of St. John Damascene's *Elementary Introduction*. See also A. Louth, *St John Damascene*, 38.

ontology with the natures *possessed* by the person, and hence nature is as fundamental an ontological category as the person?⁵⁵ One qualification needs to be made though, according to Zizioulas, that the nature does not subsist by itself but is always “*the nature of a hypostasis*.”⁵⁶ At this point I would also like to point out that being conceived as ‘nature’ allows us to understand more clearly the fallen ‘nature’ of humanity which is inherent in humanity’s nature and the person. Zizioulas does not dwell on the “fallenness” of humanity’s being, choosing to define the fall as a break in communion with God. This does not take into account the ‘fallenness’ of humanity’s nature in itself which is of course linked to the ‘fallenness’ of the *hypostasis* of humanity. The redemption of this hypostasis together with the nature in this hypostasis is what Christ has come to do. Persons and nature are both redeemed and reformed in Christ so that His nature and person is fully formed in humanity. Christ has not only come to save us from death but also from our sinful and fallen *nature*.

7.4.2. The issue of eschatology

I also agree with Volf that Zizioulas tends towards an *over-realized eschatology* that relies too heavily on the eschatological approach (and in general Johannine eschatology) of Ignatius to apostolic succession in the Church.⁵⁷ According to Volf, Zizioulas “has no place systemically in the experience of salvific grace for the theologically necessary presence of unredemption.”⁵⁸ This charge is also pursued by Scott MacDougall in his book *More than Communion: Towards an Eschatological Ecclesiology*.⁵⁹ Volf points to Baillargeon’s charge of Zizioulas’ with having presented an over-realized eschatology.⁶⁰ Though Zizioulas tries to balance this with a more historical approach (that of 1 Clement), he still bases his ecclesiology on the eschatological, iconological, liturgical and meta-historical dimensions of the Church.⁶¹ This is characteristically an Eastern Orthodox approach which, as Zizioulas has reminded us, “lives and teaches its theology liturgically; it contemplates the being of God and the being of the Church with the eyes of worship, principally of eucharistic worship, image of

⁵⁵ Zizioulas has acknowledged that there is a substance ontology that co-exists side by side with a personal ontology. He concedes that there is no person in a “naked state” i.e. without substance. See his *Being as Communion*, 42, n. 37. Here, Zizioulas stresses what makes something exist is not substance or nature, but the person or hypostasis. In other words, the ontological principle (or cause) of being is the person.

⁵⁶ J. Zizioulas, “Person and Nature,” 89.

⁵⁷ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 101.

⁵⁸ M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 101.

⁵⁹ S. MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology. Ecclesiological Investigations*, Vol. 20 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 2015.

⁶⁰ G. Baillargeon, *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur L’Eglise-communion*, 256f. Here, Baillargeon suggests that Zizioulas free himself from this charge by conceiving eschatological reality as having been realised in history. See M. Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 102, n. 161.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 176.

the ‘*eschata*’ *par excellence*.’⁶² This gives the impression that the Kingdom of God has already come fully and that what has happened in history is no longer relevant to theology because all things have been made new and nothing in the old age survives. Thus, since what passes ultimately has no true being in the eschaton, what ultimately has true being is only that which survives *in the future*, i.e. eschatologically. Hence evil has no being because it is not present in the *eschaton*. This eschatological ontology of Zizioulas can easily be misunderstood as a form of over-realized eschatology. Volf’s charge would be true if Zizioulas has emphasized that the Kingdom has already been fully realized in the now or near future. However, Zizioulas does recognize that the Kingdom is now but not yet at the *same time*. This apparent paradox is apparent in the event of the Eucharist which Zizioulas has repeatedly emphasized to be the *foretaste of and a movement towards* the Kingdom of God that is to come.

An over-realized eschatology or an over-emphasis on eschatology brings to our minds the danger that whoever does not consider the mistakes of history is bound to repeat them.⁶³ Zizioulas’ apparent over-emphasis on the eschatological approach to ecclesiology may make him susceptible to repeating the mistakes found in Church history. This does not nullify the eschatological approach of the Eastern Church to the liturgy and to the Eucharist and the Church, but it does mean that theologians must take into serious account what has happened in the past, to identify the mistakes and avoid making them again. Mistakes in the past are made not because the eschatological vision is wrong, but they occur in our wrong ways of achieving this eschatological vision. As we cannot live only in the future but our lives are lived in the present moment of time and anchored in our history, we still need to have a *sense of history* in our being and in the being of the Church. Historical events are not just accidents of the past, nor are they the necessary occurrences in time. They are the accounts of being and truth as they occurred freely in the past. So, we must not only remember and proclaim the future resurrection and coming of Christ, but also the past, especially the life of Christ and His crucifixion (1 Cor. 1.23; 2.2).

Thus, the cross and Jesus Christ crucified must feature prominently in any theology, for this is the wisdom and power of God (1 Cor. 1.17, 24). This is something Zizioulas has rarely mentioned in his writings except in one instance where he says, “Communion with the other requires the experience of the cross.”⁶⁴ As a result, he has sometimes been accused of

⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 19.

⁶³ George Santayana, “Those who do not know history’s mistakes are doomed to repeat them.”

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5. Here, Zizioulas acknowledges that the cross is necessary for communion with God. Zizioulas writes that unless we sacrifice our will and subject it to God in the same way Jesus did at Gethsemane, “we

Docetism through downplaying the crucifixion of Christ.⁶⁵ Even if the Orthodox tradition tends to stress more on looking forward towards the glorious resurrection of the dead in Christ and of the life of the world to come, especially in the Eucharist, we also need to equally remember and proclaim the cross as well as the resurrection and second coming, otherwise Christ died and suffered for nothing (Gal. 2.21), and the cross is emptied of its power (1 Cor. 1.17). But we also need to remember not to repeat the mistakes of the past that crucified the Lord of glory. In other words, repentance, new birth and regeneration need to be a constant process in the present because of the ever presence of sin in our lives and the Church. Even if sin has no ontological reality because in the *eschaton*, it is no longer a reality in the Kingdom of God, it is still a living reality in this *present* world affecting all under its power. It is the ontological reality of sin in the present (not to mention also the past) that affects everybody, in society and in the Church. This makes what Augustine had to say about sin even more poignant. Therefore, we must not neglect the Augustinian legacy that has made us conscious of this reality of sin which the Law of God has made clear to us, and also our need for grace.⁶⁶

7.4.3. The Augustinian Legacy

A key deficiency in Zizioulas' theological system is this: He includes very little of Augustine of Hippo's theology of the Trinity into his system. Zizioulas quotes relatively little from Augustine's works and when he does, he repeatedly asserts that Augustine is responsible for an individualistic understanding of the person who is merely a psychological being with a self-consciousness.⁶⁷ It seems such a pity that he had failed to pay more heed to the Augustinian legacy on trinitarian theology that was followed-up by several key "Western" theologians including Aquinas who himself had extensively engaged the "Eastern" tradition (via his work on Pseudo-Dionysius' *On The Divine Names*) and used Augustine as a theological authority in his massive work *Summa Theologica*. This would have enriched and made Zizioulas' theology and vision more "catholic" and acceptable to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

When Zizioulas does refer to Augustine or Aquinas, he asserts that the identification of truth and of knowledge with love is expressed in the Western Tradition by Augustine and

cannot reflect properly in history the communion and otherness that we see in the triune God."

⁶⁵ See A. Lewis, "The Burial of God: Rupture and Resumption as the Story of Salvation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40.3 (1987): 350. This was noted by A. J. Torrance in his *Persons in Communion*, 303-04.

⁶⁶ Romans 3.20.

⁶⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 1 and 168. On page one of *Communion and Otherness*, Zizioulas does not quote directly on this issue from any phrase or sentence from Augustine's writings. He merely writes in footnote 3 that Augustine wrote Confessions "as an exercise in the Christian self-consciousness of the believer."

Aquinas by putting knowledge before love.⁶⁸ We can attribute this to Augustine who pondered, “How could we love anything we do not yet know?”⁶⁹ Again, this knowledge being prior to loving comes from the collect attributed to Augustine, “Lord, grant that I may know you, so that I may love you.” This, however, has contradicted the Eastern views on knowledge in relation to love. For the Orthodox, love is knowledge.⁷⁰ Love is from the heart, the organ of knowledge.⁷¹ No wonder Zizioulas has not favorably assessed Augustine. Despite this, there is value in considering Augustine’s theology of sin and grace, even if it seems to be applied to the individual. But above all, it is Augustine’s doctrine of the Trinity that we turn to for a truly universal trinitarian theology. We begin with a famous text where Augustine writes,

In God to be is not one thing, and to be a person another thing, but it is wholly and entirely one and the same. *When we say the person of the Father, we mean nothing else than the substance of the Father.* Therefore, as the substance of the Father is the Father Himself, not insofar as He is the Father but insofar as He is, so too the person of the Father is nothing else than the Father Himself. *For He is called a person in respect to Himself, not in relation to the Son or to the Holy Spirit, just as He is called in respect to Himself, God, great, good, just, and other similar terms.*⁷²

The language of substance is very strong in this description of God the Father. Zizioulas is not at all happy with such a definition whereby the person of the Father is equated with substance. This is because Zizioulas holds firmly to the position that the oneness of God “is safeguarded not by the unity of substance as St Augustine and other Western theologians have argued, but by the *monarchia* of the Father.”⁷³ Zizioulas feels that Augustine allows substance to have ontological priority “over against personal relations in God in Augustine’s trinitarian theology.”⁷⁴ This is in contrast to Cappadocian theology which associates, in Zizioulas opinion, the “divine *monarchia* in its ontological sense with the person of the Father *and not with the divine substance.*”⁷⁵ No wonder Zizioulas consistently views Augustine in negative light! When Augustine refers the person of the Father to mean nothing but the substance of the Father, it seems that he is suggesting that the Father is absolutely alone in his substance and without relation to the Son and the Spirit for substance does not have personal relations. So, if the Father is a person in Himself, the Son and the Spirit are also persons in themselves,

⁶⁸ J. Zizioulas, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *The One and the Many*, 215 where he quotes Augustine, *De Trin.* 10, 1. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* 101, 2ae, 4.

⁶⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, “Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity,” in *The One and the Many*, 215.

⁷¹ A tradition extending from St. Macarius to St. Maximus.

⁷² St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 7.6.11 (PL 42, 943) quoted from C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 88-89. Italics hers.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 5.

⁷⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 33.

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 34.

then one of the main charges that can be levelled at Augustine would be tritheism. Why are there then not three gods? According to Catherine LaCugna, this problem is tackled by Augustine when he sets out to determine what the Father, the Son and the Spirit have in common, either in genus or species.⁷⁶ The most obvious commonality is that they are all persons, so they have a common personhood, so to speak. Zizioulas could have called this divine personhood. The term person is thus either their specific or generic name; either there is one God and one person, or three gods and three persons. Acknowledging that the Greeks who spoke of “one essence, three substances (hypostases)” and the Latin Fathers who spoke of “one essence or substance and three persons” were together combating Arianism and Sabellianism when they came up with these formulae, Augustine was dissatisfied with the word substance (*substantia*) when used of God in the plural and therefore he believed that God was improperly called substance. God should instead be properly called essence in whom attributes like goodness and wisdom belong.⁷⁷ LaCugna concludes, “The Trinity must therefore be understood in terms of essence (*ad se*) and relation (*ad alterum*).”⁷⁸ This is taken from an Aristotelian understanding of relation as accidents that subsist in an object but are not the same as its substance. Accidents are also correlated with the substance in which they inhere.

How would the Person of the Father differ from the Person of the Son if they had the same substance? According to LaCugna, for Augustine, “Persons are distinguished by their immanent processions. Processions found the relations.”⁷⁹ This is where Zizioulas would have found some commonality with his trinitarian theology. The Father begets the Son and the Son is begotten of the Father.⁸⁰ The Father “breathes out” the Spirit and the Spirit proceeds from the Father. So, the relations constitute the persons, distinguishing them by means of the different ways each person is “caused.” In speaking of the Persons of the Trinity this way, we are referring to each Person *relationship-wise* and not *substance-wise*. To say that God is good and so on, this is speaking about the essence of God and about God *substance-wise*. For Zizioulas, this way of speaking of God is common to all three Persons because each Person shares all the same divine attributes in the one divine nature. Augustine’s insistence on the substance of the Father helps protect the oneness of God in the one essence and maintain the equal status of the Son with the Father through the concept of

⁷⁶ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 87.

⁷⁷ St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 7.5.10 (PL 42, 942).

⁷⁸ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 88.

⁷⁹ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 90.

⁸⁰ Heb. 1.5.

the *homoousion*. There will not be the danger of subordinating the Son to the Father because they are both of the same substance (*homoousion*). Subordinating the Son to the Father is a danger which has constantly been highlighted by the Torrances, especially A. J. Torrance in his critique of Zizioulas' causal language used for God.⁸¹ However, Zizioulas is not satisfied with Augustine's understanding of relations as subsisting within divine substance, thus making substance ontologically primary and giving priority to the one God over the Trinity.⁸²

Besides his negative assessment of Augustine, Zizioulas' refusal to engage extensively with some of the Western doctors of the Church (Aquinas) on the basis of their regarding substance to be "the highest form of being", makes him less of a universal theologian and his theology less catholic. By emphasizing the person to be the most basic ontological category, this makes him susceptible to accusations of being one-sided in his theology, whether with regards to his ontology of the person or with regards to his ecclesiology and eschatology. But this can be partially corrected as we shall see in the next section.

7.5. Enriching Zizioulas' Theology

With the help of a distinguished Protestant theologian, T. F. Torrance, and a Doctor of the Church, Aquinas, I will give a few suggestions on how we could enrich Zizioulas' theology after having considered some of the strengths and weaknesses in Zizioulas' theological system.

7.5.1. T. F. Torrance's central concept: *Homoousion*

T. F. Torrance is widely known to be a theologian of the Trinity.⁸³ He has also been famous for expounding the doctrine of the *homoousios* with regard to God the Father and the Son. Like Athanasius before him, he was truly a universal theologian in the sense of being ecumenical. It was Torrance who recovered Athanasius' theology to resolve sticky issues such as the *Filioque* issue that has dogged the Church for centuries. It is no wonder that the Eastern Church even named him a proto-presbyter in the Orthodox Church. This showed the high respect he was accorded by the Orthodox Church for his work in bringing Orthodox and Protestant churches together. He can be considered an ecumenical theologian and thus I have used one of his concepts to enrich Zizioulas' theology.

⁸¹ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 293.

⁸² J. Zizioulas, "Relational Ontology: Insights from Patristic Thought," 147-48, esp. n. 6. Here, Zizioulas critiques Augustine's idea of relation: the Three of the Trinity are neither substances nor accidents but relations that have real subsistence. See St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5-7.

⁸³ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*.

Zizioulas is aware of Athanasius' theology of the Son being of the same nature as the Father. But he seldom employs it in his theology. The most common concept that appears in Zizioulas is communion,⁸⁴ just as the concept that is foundational for T. F. Torrance is the *homoousion*. In fact, for Torrance, the *homoousion* is the "ontological and epistemological linchpin of Christian theology."⁸⁵ The *homoousios to Patri* was according to Torrance,

revolutionary and decisive: it expressed the fact that what God is 'toward us' and 'in the midst of us' in and through the Word made flesh, he really is **in himself**; that he is in the **internal relations** of his transcendent being the very same Father, Son and Holy Spirit that he is in his revealing and saving activity in time and space toward mankind.⁸⁶

According to Molnar, the *homoousios* refers to the "immanent personal relations in the Godhead" whereas *hypostasis* refers "to the persons of the Trinity in their inner enhypostatic or consubstantial relations in which each is fully God yet the Father is the Father and not the Son, and the Son is the Son and not the Father or the Holy Spirit."⁸⁷ For Torrance, God as Father, Son and Spirit is to be understood as "one Being, three Persons"⁸⁸ where the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis* both describe "'being' as such."⁸⁹ Yet Torrance makes a further important distinction here, according to Molnar: "Being or *ousia* is being considered in its internal relations, and Person or *hypostasis* is being considered in its otherness, i.e. in the objective relations between the Persons."⁹⁰ Then Torrance makes an even further distinction between the Father "considered absolutely as he is in himself" and "the Father considered relative to the Son." This double reference means that the Father "is God *in se* as *ousia* (being) and at the same time the Father is *ad alium* (for others) as *hypostasis* (person)."⁹¹ There is a 'substance-wise' reference to God as well as a 'relation-wise' one so that God is not to be thought of as "isolated in himself" but rather he is also a "*Being for others (ad alios)*."⁹² In this respect, Torrance comes close to Zizioulas' idea that the Trinity is a communion in otherness.

The major difference in emphasis between Zizioulas and Torrance concerns the *nature-person distinction*. For Zizioulas, person is the ontological category that defines being. On the

⁸⁴ Zizioulas follows St. Basil's idea that the meaning of *homoousios* is better expressed in terms such as *oikeia kai symphyes kai achoristos koinonia*, i.e. by the employment of the term *koinonia* (*De Sp. S.* 68; *Ep.* 52, 3; *C. Eun.* II, 12 etc.).

⁸⁵ T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 95.

⁸⁶ T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 130. Bold original. See also his *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 130. According to Molnar, Torrance had in mind here the revolutionary character of the *homoousion* formulated at the Council of Nicaea which stressed that "what God is toward us he is in himself." Thus, the ground was cut out from under dualism, modalism and tritheism. See P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 55, n. 110.

⁸⁷ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 55-56.

⁸⁸ T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 131 and *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 130-31.

⁸⁹ T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 131.

⁹⁰ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 56. See also T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 131.

⁹¹ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 56.

⁹² T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 131.

other hand, Torrance sticks with nature as the basic ontological category. Therefore, Torrance, unlike Zizioulas, did not attach the principle of the Trinity (the *monarchia*) only to the person of the Father, but to the being of all three persons of the Trinity *taken together*.⁹³ This was a return to Athanasius that offered an interesting understanding of the procession of the Holy Spirit that avoided the *Filioque* controversy: The Holy Spirit proceeds “from the Father in the Son and not from the person of the Father only”⁹⁴ or even “from the one Monarchy of the Triune God.”⁹⁵ This is because the Holy Spirit belongs “equally and completely homoously with the Father and the Son in their two-way relation with one another in the divine Triunity.”⁹⁶ Such a definition of the procession of the Holy Spirit not only strengthens the *koinonia* between the Father and the Son, it also makes the Holy Spirit intrinsically and indivisibly related to both the Father and the Son *being defined together and in each other*.

As we can see, the concept of *homoousion* is central to T. F. Torrance who viewed it as a “bulwark against Sabellianism and Arianism, against Unitarianism and polytheism alike.”⁹⁷ This requires an ontology conceived in terms of *ousia*. Just as *koinonia* is an important concept to describe the unique and unbreakable relationship between Father and Son, so the *homoousion* is the all-important orthodox concept to describe the one and same nature of Father and Son. Both concepts are equally important in my view. We cannot neglect either concept when referring to the Trinity. So, I contend that Zizioulas’ (and the Cappadocian Fathers’) trinitarian theology would be greatly enriched if he could assimilate Torrance’s (and Athanasius’) concept of the *homoousion* into his trinitarian theology. This is because the *homoousion* “grounds the reality of our Lord’s humanity.”⁹⁸ The Son is not only *homoousion* with the Father from all eternity, he is *homoousion* with us in our humanity. Armed with Torrance’s concept of the *homoousion* as a hermeneutical and theological instrument,⁹⁹ Zizioulas can easily avoid the charge of Eutychianism¹⁰⁰ and Docetism¹⁰¹ if he also adopts Torrance’s (and Nicaea’s) *homoousion* in his trinitarian theology as an ultimate ontological concept complementing his ontological notions of communion and the person. By widening his ontological vocabulary to include the *homoousios*, I think Zizioulas will benefit tremendously by opening himself to being understood by those still leaning more to a

⁹³ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 65.

⁹⁴ Jesus had said that he is in the Father and the Father is in him (John 14.10).

⁹⁵ The latter definition takes into account the thought of Epiphanius. See T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 190.

⁹⁶ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 67. See also T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 190.

⁹⁷ P. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance. Theologian of the Trinity*, 55.

⁹⁸ Torrance, T. F. *The Trinitarian Faith*, 135.

⁹⁹ T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 129.

¹⁰⁰ D. Farrow, “Person and Nature: The Necessity-Freedom Dialectic in John Zizioulas,” 121-23.

¹⁰¹ A. J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 304.

substance ontology when speaking of God, and of Christ and His Church. In returning to a substance ontology, we are actually able to describe the nature of Christ and his humanity. It is certainly true that the human and divine natures are *hypostatically* united in the person of Christ. However, the natures *must exist in the first place* for any union to occur in Christ. So a personal ontology must always be balanced by a substance ontology. This extends to the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ has a nature, it does not exist only on account of the person. It exists because it already has a nature. By defining the Church in terms of nature, we can conceive her as divine-human *in nature*. We can conceive her as a personal and also a divine-human institution. In true life, the Church is a complex living organism which has both the divine and the human natures combined in her. She is not merely an event or a way of being, she is a being that is divinely and humanly constituted. In this way of speaking of the Church, we can more concretely specify if not the divine (which is ultimately unknowable) but at least the human (sociological/anthropological/structural) nature of the Church.

Not only will Zizioulas benefit from an expansion of a range of ontological concepts, it will help Zizioulas be more specific and precise in his theological expositions if he were to expand his philosophical vocabulary to include those of the high scholastics. In other words, he would be a better theologian if he had read and assimilated into his theology, for example, Aquinas as carefully as he did the Cappadocian Fathers. He will be better able to describe the Trinity, as we shall see in the next sub-section. A clearer conception of the Trinity leads to a clearer vision of the Church since the Church is an image of the Trinity.

7.5.2. Aquinas and Relation in Subsistence

Aquinas (1225-74) can be considered the greatest teaching authority in the Roman Catholic Church. This humble Dominican friar has written on almost every subject in theology and philosophy during the middle-ages. He was still actively writing late in his life, having embarked on writing a treatise on systematic theology entitled *Summa Theologica*, until a mystical experience led him to conclude that all his writings were like straw before dying on the road to a conference.

Zizioulas quotes surprisingly very little from this Doctor of the Church.¹⁰² One may

¹⁰² In his three major books published to date, Zizioulas has only two references to Thomas Aquinas. One is found in Zizioulas' *Communion and Otherness*, 151. Here, Zizioulas writes that Aquinas followed Augustine's solution to the problem of reconciling monotheism with trinitarian faith. According to Zizioulas, Augustine's solution was at the expense of trinitarianism because in Augustine's scheme, monotheism was safeguarded "by the one *substance* of God, the *divinitas*, which logically precedes the three persons." The Trinity merely indicated the relations within the one God, that is, "instances of his one nature, realized and expressed mainly in psychological or moral terms, as the memory, knowledge and

marvel at this fact. We can guess that Zizioulas was never impressed with the high scholastics of Aquinas' day. He has remained generally critical of Western philosophy and modes of thought. This is surprising, for Aquinas has much in common with Zizioulas to say about the Trinity. For example, LaCugna has examined Aquinas' treatise on the Trinity where he writes that even if the fecundity of God is rooted in the divine essence, the source of the Trinity remains the Father, the Unoriginate and Unbegotten.¹⁰³ Also, for Aquinas, there are two ways to view the Trinity: one is from the standpoint of what the persons share in common, and the other is in terms of the processions of Son and Spirit from God the Father.¹⁰⁴ It seems that Aquinas agrees with Zizioulas on the *monarchia* of the Father. So, it is a real pity that Zizioulas has not assimilated anything from Aquinas who also read and commented on Eastern saints such as Pseudo-Dionysius. Here, I will endeavor to make use of just one aspect of Aquinas' theology to enrich Zizioulas' theology.

Like Basil, Aquinas was not happy with the term substance (*substantia*) in trinitarian theology. So, he introduces some new terms. The concept that Aquinas introduces into trinitarian theology is that of subsistence (*subsistentia*). Aquinas notes that even if the terms used in trinitarian theology to describe the personal and relational being of God are inexact, the word 'person' is appropriately used of God because person means "that which is most perfect in the whole of nature, namely what subsists in rational nature."¹⁰⁵ Unlike Zizioulas, Aquinas follows Boethius' classic definition of the person as "individual substance of a rational nature" and applies it *analogically* to God. The term 'substance' has two meanings, according to Aristotle, 'first substance' and 'second substance.'¹⁰⁶ 'First substance' denotes what something is, *ousia*, essence. 'Second substance' is the supposit or that which underlies something, roughly equivalent to *hypostasis*: an individual substance. From this definition, it

love of a certain *individual* substance." Contrary to Zizioulas, the Trinity was for Augustine not a primary ontological category. See *Communion and Otherness*, 150-51. As a result of Aquinas faithfully following Augustine in this matter, Zizioulas writes that for Aquinas, "when we generalize or abstract from the trinitarian persons, what remains for thought is the one divine nature which is in general to be called 'God', not the three persons or only one of them." See also K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, 77ff. Zizioulas notes that this Augustinian-Thomistic solution to the problem of reconciling monotheism with trinitarian faith "makes it difficult logically to reconcile the one and the three in God." Zizioulas even attributes the 'eclipse of trinitarian theology in the West' to this western axis of thought. The consequences of this may have been the emergence of modern atheism of the existential type that rejects "the substantialist approach to God and thus God as such." See J. Zizioulas *Communion and Otherness*, 151, esp. n. 105. The other reference is found in *Communion and Otherness*, 231, esp. n. 35 where Zizioulas cites Aquinas' *Summa Theol.* Ia 2ae, 4. Here, Aquinas writes that love comes from knowledge. Zizioulas traces this manner of perceiving love to Augustine (*De Trin.* 10.1) and which has caused western theology to think that one must have knowledge first before one can love.

¹⁰³ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 151. cf. E. Bailleux, "Le personnalisme de saint Thomas en théologie trinitaire," *RevTh* 61 (1961): 27.

¹⁰⁴ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 153-54.

¹⁰⁵ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 154. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa.* Ia, 29.3.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, *Categories* 5, 2a, 11-16; *Metaphysics* VII, 11, 1037a. See also J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 38, n. 30.

would be technically correct to say that there are three secondary substances in God.¹⁰⁷ However, Aquinas notes that this would be misleading and thus he writes that *hypostasis* should be used as equivalent to subsistence (*subsistentia*), not substance (*substantia*).

According to LaCugna, the category that is key to Aquinas' trinitarian theology is that of *relation*, one of Aristotle's ten categories and the weakest of the categories since it belongs to a reference category.¹⁰⁸ However, in Latin trinitarian theology, beginning with Augustine and developed highly in the *Summa*, LaCugna opines that Aristotle's category of relation became "the supreme ontological predicate."¹⁰⁹ Relations may be 'real' or 'logical.' A *real relation* belongs to the very nature of something (e.g. Father-son). A logical relation is an accidental feature of something (e.g. location). God's relation to creation is considered a *logical relation* because it is not part of God's nature in being related to creatures. However, the creature's relation to God is real because creation is constituted by its very relation to God. Aquinas employs such a distinction between real and logical relations to preserve the category of relation as applied to God thereby enabling him "to establish the metaphysical basis for God's intrinsic relatedness without having to worry at this point whether creation is a necessary emanation from God."¹¹⁰ LaCugna writes,

What he (Aquinas) determines here will later become the basis for his understanding of God's *free* relation to creation; the divine nature is the only sphere in which we can predicate *necessary* relations. The divine persons arise out of real relations within God. If the persons were derived from logical relations only, then persons would be accidents of the divine nature. Divine simplicity precludes accidents in God, therefore relations are identical with the divine essence.¹¹¹ If relations were not the same as essence, this would be a return to Arianism: If Father and Son are different persons, then they are different in essence. Likewise, if persons were only different manifestations of the essence, this would be Sabellianism.¹¹²

Armed with the distinction between real relations and logical relations, together with the concept of subsistence, Aquinas is able to face some of the problems that Augustine had to deal with, such as: If person is used of God in the plural, how are there then not three gods? Furthermore, isn't divine essence itself a fourth person? Thomas' answer is that since relations in God are not accidents but are the divine nature itself, *relations subsist just as the divine nature subsists*. He writes, "Consequently just as Godhead is God, so God's fatherhood

¹⁰⁷ This has been noted by Zizioulas to be the opposite view to that of the Cappadocian Fathers who, according to Zizioulas, identified the term 'hypostasis' with Aristotle's 'primary substance' (the individual and the concrete), and the term 'substance' with the Aristotle's 'secondary substance' (the general and the common). See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 38, n. 30.

¹⁰⁸ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 152.

¹⁰⁹ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 153.

¹¹⁰ C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 153.

¹¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*. Ia, 28.2.

¹¹² C. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 153. Italics original. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*. Ia, 28.1.

is God the Father who is a divine person. Hence ‘divine person’ signifies relation as something subsisting.”¹¹³ This implies that each person is the totality of Godhead, because that which subsists “in the divine nature is nothing other than the divine nature.”¹¹⁴ In this way, the three divine Persons (*hypostases*) are the *subsistence of real relations* in the one divine substance (*ousia*).

So, we see that in Aquinas’ discourse on the Trinity, he considers the divine nature in God to be the most basic ontological category along with the ontological category of *relation* which he elevates to the ontological level of divine nature itself. With these twin ontological concepts, one can locate the divine nature to be subsisting in God *together* with the relations (of *hypostases*) that also subsist in God. Through the concept of subsistence of the divine and the relations in God, we have a more well-rounded image of the triune God who is the communion (relation) of three persons (in relations) in one Being (divine nature) of God. This I think is the best way to express the trinitarian God in terms of substance (*ousia*) and communion (*koinonia*) of persons (*hypostases*). It no longer matters in trinitarian theology whether we start with the one nature and proceed to the three persons, or whether we start with three persons and go on to the one nature. The problem of whether persons have priority over nature or the other way round simply vanishes. Either way, we arrive at the same triune God. I believe this is the power of expanding our philosophical and conceptual vocabulary to arrive at the Being of God *in several coherent ways*. The Trinity is an ultimate mystery. So is the Church of the trinitarian God also a mystery. In the pursuit of these mysteries of God, what matters is not so much the ‘final solution’ but the ways we arrive at the conclusion. This is not to say that there is no final answer. In this process of arriving, through several coherent ways, at an answer to the problem of the Trinity or the mystery of the Church, we wrestle with different conceptions and possibilities and weigh their advantages and disadvantages. In the end, can we not also employ the different methods in a complementary and mutually-dependent way? Could there be a *perichoresis* (a dance in and about each other) of different ideas and methods in the same way as the divine Persons exist as *perichoresis*?

7.5.3. The Trinity and Perichoresis

Besides widening our ontological and philosophical vocabulary, I would like to highlight one more important concept that could soften the emphasis on the *monarchia* of the Father. This involves the concept of *perichoresis*, which T. F. Torrance used to deepen his own

¹¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*. Ia, 29.4.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*. Ia, 29.4.

understanding of the *homoousion*. According to Nikolaos Asproulis, the term *perichoresis* was introduced by Pseudo-Cyril and John Damascene¹¹⁵ who, in the words of T. F. Torrance,

gave expression to the dynamic Union and Communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with one another in one Being in such a way that they have their Being in each other and reciprocally contain one another, without any coalescing or commingling with one another and yet without any separation from one another, for they are completely equal and identical in Deity and Power. Each Person contains the one God in virtue of his relation to the others as well as his relation to himself for they wholly coexist and inexist in one another. Human beings do not exist within one another, but this is precisely what the divine Persons of the Holy Trinity do.¹¹⁶

This is one of the most beautiful and precise definitions of the Godhead in the Trinity which has reference to Gregory of Nazianzen's description of the Godhead being undivided in divided Persons due to their identity of Being in the same way that three suns cleave to one another without any separation but giving out their light combined and conjoined into one.¹¹⁷ Zizioulas himself has quoted from John Damascus who summarized the Greek patristic vision of the divine Persons in the following:

In their mutual relations (*en allelais*) the hypostases exist not so that they might be confused, but as they carry each other or relate to each other (*echesthai*)... not composed (or added together: *suntithemenon*)... For they are united in a way not of confusion but of mutual relation (*echesthai allelon*); and they have their *perichoresis* in each other without coalescing (*sunaloiphen*) or admixture (*sumphyrsin*).¹¹⁸

When combined with the concept of *homoousion*, the notion of *perichoresis* opens our minds to the biblical witness of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son *in each other*,¹¹⁹ both having the same nature (*homoousios*) but having their being (or personhood) in each other (*perichoresis*). If Zizioulas combines his concept of communion with that of the *homoousion* and the *perichoresis* so that all these three concepts *together* become *the one ultimate ontological concept* to be used of God, we will then have the most beautiful picture of the Trinity – the communion of Persons of the same nature (*homoousios*) in and with each other (*perichoresis*). When this trinitarian vision is applied to the Church, we will have an ecclesiology of communion of Churches in which every local church is defined in relation to sister churches who remain in communion with each other and who derive their being in and from each other. This is essentially the trinitarian mystery of the “One” and the “many.” We

¹¹⁵ N. Asproulis, “T. F. Torrance, John Zizioulas, and the Cappadocian Theology of Divine Monarchia: A Neo-Athanasian or Neo-Cappadocian Solution?,” in *T. F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy. Theology in Reconciliation*, eds. M. Baker & T. Speidell (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 165-66.

¹¹⁶ T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 170-71.

¹¹⁷ Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes*, 31.14, cited in T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 171. This is also how the divine Persons differ ontologically from human persons.

¹¹⁸ John of Damascus, *De. fid. orth.* 1.14 (PG 94, 829A), cited in J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 174.

¹¹⁹ John 14.10-11; 17.21.

can now speak of the Church as subsisting in each other in Christ through the Spirit, a Body with a specific structure that has as its eschatological goal the Kingdom of God and which fully manifests itself in the Eucharist. What a beautiful vision of the Church of the Blessed Trinity! This is essentially the Church of Christ and of the Holy Spirit – the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

7.6. Further Reflections

I have tried to enrich Zizioulas' theological ideas using three theologians representing the three major periods in Church history: the age of the Church Fathers, the medieval age and modern times. Augustine, Aquinas and T. F. Torrance have all been key theologians of the Trinity. They have insights to offer us from the Latin West, a tradition that is foreign to Zizioulas, but nonetheless, a well-established and theologically rich tradition from which emerged many theologians. The purpose of introducing the best of the Western tradition into Zizioulas' theology is to try to synthesize the theology of the East and the West so that we may have a truly catholic Tradition of the Trinity and a catholic ecclesiology by bringing the two traditions closer to each other. This is part of the ecumenical work that Zizioulas has continued in the footsteps of those who want to see the churches in the East and the West come to a closer relationship based on a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is only one undivided Body of Christ, and this should include all the churches in the world. In the same way, there is only one Tradition although there may be many streams of tradition forming it. Hence, even though Zizioulas' trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology that stems from the Orthodox Tradition has great merit in helping us envision the Church, it would still be incomplete without the other traditions as represented by the three theologians chosen, one each from the undivided Church, the Roman Catholic Church and from the Protestant Church.

Now with the main streams of traditions coming together, we have the potential to create great theology relevant to our times, especially a sound trinitarian theology and a robust ecclesiology based on trinitarian theology. Here, Zizioulas' appropriation of the Cappadocian Fathers' trinitarian theology and Maximus' Christology and eschatological ontology have a big contribution to play in the future in helping us to shape a pneumatological conditioned ecclesiology. This is exciting because according to Zizioulas, such an ecclesiology takes into account both the history of the Church and the *eschata* which breaks into history through the Holy Spirit and transforms every being so that all entities draw their being from what they will be, the Church included. With Zizioulas as our guide and distilling the best of the

Christian Tradition, we can proceed with confidence to shape trinitarian theology, building upon firm foundations fresh understandings of the Holy Trinity that are relevant to our times and the future. I certainly do not agree with Stephen Holmes who writes in his book *The Quest for the Trinity* that statements about the Trinity have already been settled by the Church Fathers in the fourth century and maintained “with only very minor disagreement or development, by all strands of the Church.”¹²⁰ According to him, trinitarian understanding can be strictly reduced to a few key propositions that have not changed much through the ages since the Patristic age.¹²¹ If this were true, then we have little to work on in trinitarian theology. Granted we do well to take heed that we can well make mistakes and, as Holmes has so eloquently and creatively warned us, we can end up with theological ideas totally contrary to Orthodox doctrine.¹²² However, we must be bold but not reckless, as we research further on what Zizioulas has already started and built upon the Fathers, and perhaps fulfil his wish that younger and bolder theologians will step forward to serve God in the Church. It is in this spirit and hope that I have written the next chapter outlining my own theological vision and possible further research and broad applications based on what Zizioulas has taught us.

7.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have noted that Zizioulas’ theology is evangelical, catholic and orthodox at the same time. It offers humanity hope in the face of death and destruction. It has the potential to be universally applicable to all humanity. It is faithful to the liturgical and the dogmatic traditions of the Patristic Fathers. However, in order to be even more complete, Zizioulas still needs to take into fuller account the contribution of the Latin Fathers to ecclesiology and to trinitarian theology in general. This is because the Augustinian-Thomistic theology in the West is still widely shared by Roman Catholics and Protestants. This tradition still needs to be engaged vigorously by Zizioulas if he wants his theology to be more universally accepted. Zizioulas himself has very recently acknowledged that Orthodox theology must draw from the sources of both the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church.¹²³ In particular, Zizioulas can make further use of the concept of the *homoousion* if he is open to considering the equal importance of nature (*ousia*) and person (*hypostasis*) in the being of God and the being of humanity. I have therefore made some modest suggestions in this chapter how this could be started in the hope that true Christian dogma may serve in the

¹²⁰ S. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2012), xv.

¹²¹ S. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 146 and 199-200.

¹²² S. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 198-200.

¹²³ J. Zizioulas, “The Task of Orthodox Theology in Today’s Europe,” 12.

eschaton to unite the Church after having historically divided her. The concept of *communion in the Holy Spirit* may serve to bring all Christian traditions together under the Lordship of Christ who is represented by a universal primate *together with* the bishops of all eucharistic communities? This will require further dialogue between all eucharistic communities.

Applications and Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

I will now attempt to sketch out a theological vision of the Church that encompasses some broad applications of Zizioulas' theology so that Zizioulas' theological vision may be realized in this world. Zizioulas' theology of the person and his eucharistic ecclesiology that is conditioned by Pneumatology can be applied not only to the Church, but also to the world. Beginning with the concept of the person, we are better able to understand who we are in relation to God. Zizioulas' emphasis on relationship can lead us to identify ourselves not in terms of being an individual with certain qualities, but in terms of the *relations* we have with others who in turn define who we are.

This naturally leads to considering the nature of the Church because the Church consists of a *network* of relationships in the Body of Christ. God's people are gathered together representing the different *orders* of the Church and constituting the Church, especially in the Eucharist. This means that every member of the Church is important for the Church to be the Church. This is something not many people are aware of – the importance of *everyone* in the Church to be present, especially the bishop who is head of the community, and the deacons who are the link between the laics¹ and the bishop. The many members who have been baptized by the One Spirit indeed *constitute* the one Body of Christ.

Bearing in mind what we have learnt from Zizioulas, I will now reflect further on the relationship between the Church and the Trinity.

8.2. A Theological Vision of the Church

Using Zizioulas' concepts of person, communion and otherness, I propose the following definition of the Church in line with Zizioulas' own claim that the Church exists “fundamentally, as a *eucharistic way of being*”:²

The Church of God, in which the Spirit sent from the Father is pleased to dwell, is the community of baptized persons journeying towards the Kingdom of the Son. This community mirrors the communion in otherness of the Persons of the Trinity and the heavenly eschatological community. She is present wherever the Eucharist is celebrated

¹ I very prefer this term to 'lay person' because laics are considered ordained persons by virtue of their being baptised into the Church.

² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 79.

in love and truth by all members of the local church in communion with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, the fullest expression of the mystical Body of Christ in the Spirit now and in the eschaton.

This is my definition of the Church in relation to the Eucharist which we have learnt, from Zizioulas, is the only *event* and occasion whereby all things in heaven and on earth, including the Church and Christ are offered to the Father and received by Him. How is this possible?

8.2.1. Divine Personhood and the Church

Following Zizioulas, I began by examining the concept of personhood as the main ontological category that is needed to understand God and the human being. Unlike the concept of the individual that has been associated with individualism and the autonomous self, the concept of the person means that each divine Person is defined in relation to the ‘Other’ Person. God the Father begat the Son and breathed out the Holy Spirit *outside of time*. This is the trinitarian God who is three Persons (*hypostaseis*) in one nature (*ousia*). Taking this as a model, human persons are defined in relation to ‘others,’ especially in the context of the Church.

This relational personhood has been expounded using the idea of “*otherness in communion and communion in otherness*.”³ God the Father is a unique and free person other than God the Son, a *hypostasis* other than God the Holy Spirit, who in turn is *sent* by the Father in the Son to constitute the Church in the Body of the Son. In this intimate communion between the three Persons of the trinitarian God, God’s being is revealed to be highly personal and God’s being is discovered to be an outward giving of itself from and out of itself (*ekstasis*) to the other of creation which stands in a close but *distinct* relation to God by virtue of God’s personalization of the world through and in his Son Jesus Christ. It is through God the Son that the Church, His Body, is personalized (*hypostasised*), just as the Son of God, exists as a Person begotten of the Father, becoming the man Jesus Christ and entering our world through the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and who was born of the Virgin Mary, having a body in which the hypostatic union between the divine and human natures holds these two natures perfectly in one Person. The Incarnation therefore becomes central in the understanding of how God the Father, who by the power of God the Holy Spirit, changed his mode of being (*tropos hyparxeos*), existing in God the Son, the *Logos* incarnate, who united all things to Himself by means of His Body, the Church.

In the incarnation of the *Logos*, the divine and the human come together in the Person

³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 9.

(*hypostasis*) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, eternally begotten and not made, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, of one being with the Father. It is in this Person of the Christ that the many individual members of His Body become *in time*, Christ. In other words, the Church in Christ⁴ is becoming what I would call the ‘Person-dom’ of God much like the many kingdoms of this world are becoming the one Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, united in Christ, existing, moving and finding their being in Him.

The Church, as a community of many persons who have been united in the one Christ through His Body, *participates* in the very Being of God through the Spirit that was poured out on the disciples of Christ at the Pentecost. This is the same Spirit of God that, like a dove, descended to rest upon Jesus at his baptism, whereupon Jesus’ Sonship was affirmed by a voice from heaven which said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”⁵ In very much the same way as the constitution by the Spirit of God of Jesus as Christ, the Church becomes constituted as a ‘community of other persons’ *pneumatologically* when each member of the Church is gathered from all over the world to one place (e.g. Jerusalem) to be filled with the ‘new wine’ of the Holy Spirit in order to tell of the mighty works of God in diverse tongues as the unified Body of Christ.⁶ This “community of other persons” that was inaugurated at the Pentecost is what I have called the ushering of the “Person-dom”⁷ of God. This “Person-dom” is identical to what Zizioulas has called a *personal existence* that is experienced in the Trinity and the Church conceived as communion.⁸

8.2.2. Otherness, Communion and *Perichoresis* in the Trinity and the Church

This “Person-dom” of God needs to take into consideration the many ‘others’ that constitute the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. This is to say that the person in relation to the other is constitutive of the Church. Therefore, we need an ontology of otherness, so to speak, to better understand the nature of the Church, especially the way of being of the Church. This ontology does not have to be couched in substantialist terms, as Zizioulas suggests.⁹ In fact,

⁴ This idea risks collapsing the ontological distinction between the Creator and the creature because it implies that the Church in Christ is divine and uncreated. This can cause serious difficulties in ecclesiology unless we can maintain the dialectic between the created and the uncreated through a Christology that unites the two natures in a Person. The created and the uncreated natures are united in the Person of Christ indivisibly and inseparably, yet, remaining unconfused and not mingled. This is ultimately the mystery of Chalcedonian Christology. The Church as a human-divine Body of Christ shares in the divinity and humanity of Christ.

⁵ Matt. 3.17.

⁶ Acts 2.1-13.

⁷ Just as the Kingdom of God is first and foremost centred on Christ the King, so the Person-dom of God is centered on the Person of Christ. The Person-dom of God is basically the catholic fulfilment of personhood in the Church. The Person-dom of God is modelled after the personhood of God that is characterized by “communion in otherness” and “otherness in communion.” See J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*.

⁸ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 164-65.

⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 20.

Zizioulas points to the Greek Fathers as witnesses to such a possibility of envisioning an ontology of the Church in a *personal way*, in other words, in communion and otherness. This is only possible when the trinitarian God is perceived in personal terms, that is, as persons in communion in one God. The three Persons (*hypostaseis*) of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons in *perichoretic* communion.

The Church has been *hypostasized* in union with Christ who lends his mode of being (*tropos*) to each member of the Church. In so far as Christ became human, the members of his Church that comprise his Body also share in His divine nature through the *hypostatic union* in Christ whereby the human and divine natures *co-mingle* but remain *distinct* in their distinctiveness (*diakrisis*) and *separate, without confusion*. A believer in Jesus Christ, who becomes baptized into the Church, Christ's Body, becomes what Zizioulas calls, an "ecclesial being" baptized "'in the Spirit' and 'into Christ'", whose peculiarity is realized in relation to other persons rather than in its own nature or what we normally mean by substance (*ousia*), or even being.¹⁰ In short, contrary to the usual conception of the person as constituted by nature, the person is constituted in relationship to the other (*allos*) who gives uniqueness to the person by the sheer fact that the person is *not* what the other is, for there is difference (*diaphora*) between the person and the other. However, it must be emphasized that difference need not lead to division (*diarexis*) provided there is intimate communion in the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the Spirit among the other persons to overcome the distance or space (*diastema*) that tends to separate and divide the persons. It is to divine personhood that the Church must look and from which her members must draw inspiration to overcome individualism.

In the Trinity, however, this distance or separation between the persons of the triune God is overcome by the mutual dependence and interpenetration (*perichoresis*) of the persons who all share the one nature (*ousia*) of God. Yet each person (*hypostasis*) is distinct and they derive their being and *hypostasis* from each other. The otherness of each person is constitutive and essential in the Being of God. The Father cannot but be in relation to the other, namely, the Son, just as the Father cannot exist apart from the Son and the Son cannot but derive his being from the Father. The Father and the Son are one.¹¹ The Holy Spirit is not a free roaming spirit, He is a Person intimately linked to the Father and the Son because He is sent from and by the Father in the name of the Son.¹²

In the Church, the distance (*diastema*) that separates and divides the individual believer

¹⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 244.

¹¹ John 10.30.

¹² John 14.28.

and Christ is overcome by the *hypostatic union* between the Person of the Son of God and His Body, the Church which is *hypostasized* by being completed in Christ's Person as her head. Zizioulas therefore argues that personhood is "the mode in which nature exists in its ecstatic movement of communion in which it is hypostasized in its catholicity."¹³ This personhood "is what has been realized in Christ as the man *par excellence* through the hypostatic union." Thus, the Pauline expression of "putting on Christ" comes into being in the Church whereby every one of her members thereby undergoes *theosis* in order that the many persons may become the one Christ (not in nature but in person). The liturgical proclamation, "Though we are many, we are one Body, because we all share in one Bread"¹⁴ thus becomes actualized in the Church at her eucharistic celebrations. This can be summarized in the words of Zizioulas as follows,

The restoration of personhood in Christ thus leads inevitably to the community of the Church which, in turn, offers impersonal nature the possibility of being 'referred' to God in its integrity through the personhood of man. This makes the Church *eucharistic* in its very nature, and man God by participation in God.¹⁵

Therefore, in the Eucharist, the Church as the mystical Body of Christ coincides with the Person-dom of God in which the *many* persons, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become the *one* Person of Christ in His Body, the Church in which the Spirit dwells and does His work of *constituting* and *re-constituting* her whenever there is a eucharistic gathering. Every celebration of the Eucharist in any local church of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is a manifestation of the one 'person-dom' of God in the world through Christ. This *synaxis* or gathering is also the icon of the Kingdom of God which breaks into our time in this world through the Holy Spirit who opens up God's time to us. In God's time, the Church can become united in communion, freedom and love which are the Trinity's very mode of being. This is something that can only be accomplished by God in His way. It is beyond the scope of my thesis to outline exactly how it will be done. I would just like to re-iterate two theological principles used by Zizioulas that can form the guiding principles for uniting the Church in the one Person-dom of God. The first is this: "*Ecclesiology must be situated within the context of Trinitarian theology.*"¹⁶ The second is this: "*Christology must be conditioned by Pneumatology in a constitutive way.*"¹⁷ Once we keep these two principles in constant view, our ecclesiology will take on an eschatological and a cosmic dimension. This means that the

¹³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 10.17.

¹⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 245. Italics original.

¹⁶ J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition," in *The One and the Many*, 137.

¹⁷ J. Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition," in *The One and the Many*, 138.

Church reflects the future and final state of things.¹⁸ The significance of the Church to the entire cosmos is expounded by Zizioulas as follows:

Just as Christology had very early to become “cosmic” (cf. the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians), so as to make the person of Christ not only the “firstborn among many brethren,” i.e., the last Adam in whom the many become one and the one becomes many, but also the One in whom “all things” (*ta panta*) are brought into existence (*ektistai*) and are constituted (*sunesteken*) (Col. 1:16-17). The mystery of Christ as the “head” of the new humanity is thus extended to include the entire cosmos, and the same is true of the Church as mystery (cf. Col. 1:18).¹⁹

With this theological vision of the Church which I have developed from the eucharistic ecclesiology and the ontology of communion and otherness as expounded by Zizioulas, I shall now elaborate on some broad applications.

8.3. Broad Applications

Zizioulas has himself made some suggestions on how to apply his theology of the person. In an article “On Being a Person,” Zizioulas highlights the importance of being a unique person who, in relationships with others, should not define the ‘other’ in terms of physical, social or moral qualities.²⁰ Instead, the person should relate in *genuine love with the other* which is the proper context for the actual ‘experience’ of an ontology of personhood. According to Zizioulas, “the more one loves ontologically and personally, the less one identifies someone as unique and irreplaceable for one’s existence on the basis of such classifiable qualities.”²¹ One will love the other regardless of the existence or the absence of such qualities. This is what Zizioulas has called an *ethical apophaticism* that is so badly needed in our culture today.²² We cannot give a positive qualitative content to a person without the loss of his absolute uniqueness. A person cannot be classified qualitatively because, as Zizioulas sums up what personhood is:

Personhood is not about qualities or capacities of any kind: biological, social or moral. Personhood is about hypostasis, that is, the claim to *uniqueness* in the absolute sense of the term, and this cannot be guaranteed by reference to sex or function or role, or even cultivated consciousness of the ‘self’ and its psychological experiences, since all of these can be *classified*, thus representing qualities shared by more than one being and not pointing to absolute uniqueness. Such qualities, important as they are for personal identity, become ontologically personal only through the hypostasis to which they belong: only by being *my* qualities are they personal, but the ingredient ‘me’ is a claim to

¹⁸ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition,” in *The One and the Many*, 139.

¹⁹ J. Zizioulas, “The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition,” in *The One and the Many*, 145.

²⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 99-112.

²¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 111-12.

²² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 112.

absolute uniqueness which is not granted by these classifiable qualities constituting my ‘what’, but by something else.²³

This points to the relational aspect of being, the ‘how’ of being. This ‘how’ of being is what makes a being absolutely unique. As Zizioulas explains further,

Absolute uniqueness is indicated only through an affirmation arising freely from a relationship which constitutes by its unbrokenness the ontological ground of being for each person. In such a situation what matters ontologically is not ‘what’ one is but the very fact that he or she *is* and is *not someone else*. The tendency of the Greek Fathers to avoid giving positive content to the *hypostases* of the Trinity, by insisting that the Father is simply not the Son or the Spirit, and the Son means simply not the Father and so on, points to the true ontology of *hypostasis*: that someone simply *is* and *is himself* or *herself* and not someone else, and this is sufficient to identify him or her as a being in the true sense.²⁴

This is the identity of true being. The identity of a person, whether God or man, “is recognized and posited clearly and unequivocally... in and through a *relationship*, and not through an objective ontology in which identity will be *isolated*, pointed at and described in itself.”²⁵ The conclusion of the matter is that we can only be true persons in relationship and never alone.²⁶

Zizioulas’ concept of personhood (as *hypostasis* and *ekstasis*) can also be extended to the way we relate to disabled persons.²⁷ Too often we have regarded the disabled as inferior, as not normal and not fully complete as a human being. Zizioulas reminds us that the disabled cannot be classified as such and dispensed with in our relations with them. This should influence the way in which we shape our attitudes towards the disabled. The disabled are persons as we are and they have an equal dignity with those who do not have disabilities. Those considered ‘normal’ also have shortcomings that can be overcome and needs that can be met by those who are disabled. To achieve true personhood means that there must be true *reciprocity* in our personal relations between persons.

Besides Zizioulas’ own proposal for an ethical apophaticism, I can think of the following broad applications of Zizioulas’ theology:

1. With respect to unity in the Church, a Church that visibly expresses her *unity* in the

²³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 111. Italics original.

²⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 111. Italics original.

²⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 112.

²⁶ This is precisely why people or groups of people who are isolated tend to become abnormal because their identity is not fully defined in relation to others. Such groups of people can become radicalised and commit atrocious deeds.

²⁷ Hans Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound Disability, Theological Anthropology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008).

Eucharist is a more credible witness to the non-Christian world. This is also the vision of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* – “that they may be one.”²⁸ A Church united in the Eucharist and in the person of the bishop gives hope that the Western and Eastern Church will no longer be divided by geographical boundaries and doctrinal boundaries but truly be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of God.²⁹ Eucharistic ecclesiology offers a theological basis upon which to discuss the issue of primacy in the Church. Using the concept of communion, we can work out practical ways in which different local churches can be in communion with each other through conciliar structures such as synods and bishops’ conferences.³⁰

2. With respect to creation and the world, a eucharistic world-view, in which the concept of personhood is extended even to creation, will give eschatological and existential meaning to humanity and the world as they are related to God in and through love. The aim of humanity is communion with God. In our world where there is a “crisis of meaning,”³¹ an *existential crisis* I would say, Zizioulas points us back to the *source* of life – communion in and with God and with each other. Even in our local communities, there are often divisions along ethnic and nationalistic lines. Can we unite humanity via a theology of communion in otherness based on a shared love for each other and for the one Creator of us all Who has made us all different, albeit *in His image and likeness*?

3. With respect to humanity and creation, the concept of humanity as priest of creation can give meaning to humanity as the only link between God and creation. This can hopefully lead to a culture and ethos of environmental conservation based on this idea.³² This can lead to a greater awareness of the organic link between humanity and his environment. Humanity does not exist apart from his environment and therefore he needs to ensure its existence because without the environment, humanity will *cease to exist*. If humanity sees himself as a part of nature, he will realize the importance of shaping an ethos of environmental conservation as the world contains his very being. This ethos is based on a deep sense of compassion and *metanoia* which should lead to holiness in the Church as “all the saints weep for the suffering

²⁸ John 17.22.

²⁹ Doctrinal boundaries still give each church its distinctive character.

³⁰ The Anglicans and the Presbyterians have their synods and general assemblies while the Baptists and the Methodists have their conferences. The key is now how to work out a true communion in these structures that reflect the structure of the local Church.

³¹ I have borrowed David Tracy’s phrase in his book *Blessed Rage for Order*.

³² J. Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation?,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, 137-41.

of innocent creation.”³³

Eucharistic ecclesiology is basically an ecclesiology that brings us back to the basics of our faith: Thanksgiving to God the Father for the gift of creation with a heart overflowing with love for God and joy in the Holy Spirit poured out on us through Jesus Christ. This promises many possibilities that open before us when we gather together as the Church in the eucharistic celebrations. The potential applications of Zizioulas’ trinitarian eucharistic ecclesiology based on ‘the one and the many’ are certainly not limited to what I have already written.

8.4. Final Reflections and Analysis

Before we come to the final section on possible future research, let us reflect briefly on Zizioulas’ ecclesiology as a whole to see what needs further work. I will begin with some questions: Has Zizioulas over-focussed on the structure of the Church in the Eucharist? By insisting on the presence of all orders (especially the bishop) of the church to be present for a Eucharist to be valid, does he make the church an impossibility in that it can never be constituted because not everybody (including the bishop) will make it to a particular church on a typical Sunday? Even if they did, the cathedral would be overflowing with too many parishioners making crowd control difficult.³⁴ Zizioulas’ concept of primacy and synods also makes the Church into a gigantic institution of bishops, priests, deacons and the laity which relies heavily on canon law and bishops for the Church to even function properly. The proper administration of the Church by patriarchs, metropolitans and bishops through the regional synods depends heavily on, for example, the bishops following canon 34 of the Apostolic Canons, so that Zizioulas’ ideal of bishops doing everything with each other’s consent can be fulfilled. Who is going to enforce these laws so that they will be followed faithfully by the bishops?³⁵ Perhaps in the past, there was an imperial court that could enforce these laws. All it takes today is a rogue bishop or a handful of rebellious bishops to ruin Zizioulas’ blueprint!³⁶ The reliance on a single bishop to represent the Church in synods is also

³³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 4.

³⁴ Bathrellos has also insightfully added, “We know from big city cathedrals, where usually individualism reigns in the anonymity of the crowd, that massive congregations tend to undermine the communion which must characterize the relationship of the Christians with each other and with God, and which is at the centre of Zizioulas’ theology.” See his “The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas,” 143.

³⁵ Loudovikos has even noted that this canon is in practice almost always ignored by his bishops. See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 110.

³⁶ Bathrellos has also warned that “canonical but unholy or unwise bishops may well damage the well-being and even the

dangerous. It is true that a bishop is supposed to be an icon of Christ, but a bishop can also become demonic and turn the Church upside down if he is the sole member representing the Church in synods.³⁷ Has Zizioulas given too much importance to the bishop in the Church? What kinds of checks and balances need to be drawn up in order to safeguard the integrity of the Church and prevent bad bishops from ruining Christ's Body?³⁸ Zizioulas' ecclesiology based on communion provides a partial answer to this problem through its synodical system. If a particular bishop goes astray, he can still be ex-communicated, deposed, and a new one installed. But what if the synod is composed of bad bishops or led by a patriarch who is himself corrupt? As long as the Church is in the world, she is always in danger and needs structures and people to protect her integrity.

Zizioulas seems to suggest that the Eucharist is itself able to do this by being an icon of the Kingdom in which God is sovereign. This 'protection' is still *conditional upon the Eucharist being celebrated properly* according to the conditions Zizioulas has set so that it is really able to be an image of the Kingdom of God. But based on actual experience in the Church, the Eucharist is often not celebrated properly (e.g. the bishop, as the icon of Christ, is often absent in a typical parish communion) and thus the image of the Kingdom is distorted. It is therefore imperative that the Divine Liturgy be properly con-celebrated by all God's people living in a particular city. Zizioulas reminds us of the conditions of a valid Eucharist in each city, that only one bishop presides over the eucharistic celebrations in a particular city together with all the faithful in that city. This is the only guarantee that the Church is true to her nature – an assembly in one place with Christ as Head.

However, to achieve this would depend on how the bishop is able to ensure that the Eucharist is celebrated properly. First, the Divine Liturgy must be celebrated properly by the bishop together with all orders of the Church. Second, there can only be one Church in each city. This is a tall order to fulfil given the fragmentation in the Church. The problem becomes apparent when some bishops do not ensure these conditions are observed. We now have the less than ideal situation in many churches today – fragmentation and disunity in the Church

unity of the Church." See his "The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140. Bathrellos has given an example of this danger when he writes about a fellow high school mate who attempted murder in the name of Neo-Nazism and who was a member of a Greek Neo-Nazi political organization that even had the open support of a Greek bishop! See Bathrellos' article in <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-golden-dawn-nightmare-the-orthodox-church-and-greeces-war-ag/10099592> (last accessed 26 Mar 19).

³⁷ The recent scandal involving priests sexually abusing minors and the subsequent cover-up by bishops in the Roman Catholic is a stark case in point. See <https://www.msn.com/en-nz/news/world/the-sex-abuse-scandal-is-growing-faster-than-the-church-can-contain-it/ar-BBNqgmO?li=BBqdk7Q&ocid=mailsignout> (last accessed 17 Sept 18).

³⁸ A similar point has also been made by Bathrellos in his "The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas," 140.

as evidenced in multiple jurisdictions and denominations in a city where there are multiple bishops instead of only one.³⁹ Even within a province of a particular denomination, there are multiple heads, for example, in New Zealand, there are three primates in the Anglican Province of Aotearoa! This is a very special arrangement of dividing the Anglican Communion in New Zealand into three churches – ‘Tikanga Māori,’ ‘Tikanga Pākehā’ and ‘Tikanga Pasifika,’⁴⁰ each led by an archbishop of corresponding ethnicity. These three tikanga churches reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the Anglican Church in New Zealand and some of the Pacific Islands.⁴¹ Without a single primate or patriarch to represent all three tikangas and to preside over the three archbishops in the general synod,⁴² it is impossible to unite the Anglican province of New Zealand under one primate and thus this Communion will remain divided along cultural and ethnic lines. This highlights another problem in the Church, that of divisions due to ethnicity and sometimes age and social class. This is the primary problem in the Eastern Orthodox Church that is largely divided into different national churches each led by a patriarch of the nationality of that particular national church. This problem is further compounded by ethnic politics and nationalism in the Orthodox churches in countries whose churches are largely Orthodox. One cannot but agree with Meyendorff’s observation that “unless the eucharistic nature of the Church is freed from under the facade of anachronism, and ethnic politics, which hide it today, no ecumenical witness, no authentic mission to the world is possible.”⁴³ There have been in the last forty years, however, some promising signs in the Roman Catholic Church which have made the papacy less of an Italian institution by electing Popes from countries outside of Italy.⁴⁴ Perhaps this could be a reason to have a future international bishop of Rome as the primate of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church! This would be quite an unrealistic scenario given that the Orthodox and Protestants do not accept the primacy of the bishop of Rome. However, can we consider other candidates to be the primate instead? Afanasiev has argued for a eucharistic ecclesiology based on the priority of a certain local church which excels in witness, love and service. As he writes on “the unity of the faith in the bond of peace” that “the Church of God should be directed by a local church, one church among all the others.

³⁹ In Singapore, there is a Catholic archbishop, an Anglican bishop, a Methodist bishop and a Lutheran bishop. There is also a Greek Orthodox metropolitan under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This makes a total of five bishops in Singapore city! In Wellington city, there is a Catholic archbishop, an Anglican bishop and an archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church. In many other cities of the world, the phenomenon of multiple bishops in a particular city is very common.

⁴⁰ These represent the Church customs of the Maoris, non-Maori Europeans and the Pacific Islanders respectively.

⁴¹ Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa together form the Diocese of Polynesia in the Anglican Province of New Zealand.

⁴² Tikanga in Maori means custom or model.

⁴³ J. Meyendorff in his Foreword to Zizioulas’ *Being as Communion*, 12.

⁴⁴ The present Pope is Pope Francis from Argentina. Before him were Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI from Germany and St. John Paul II from Poland. Prior to these three bishops of Rome, the popes had mainly been Italian.

They all possess catholicity; but priority of authority, by giving witness on events in the Church's life, is something that belongs only to the church 'which presides in love.'"⁴⁵ Afanasiev may have had in mind that historically this church has been the church of Rome. I sincerely doubt this is necessarily the case any more or in the future. Perhaps *any* local church that is in communion with the other churches can be the church that presides in love, a church that truly witnesses to Christ and lives faithfully in truth and in the love of God.

Zizioulas' ecclesiology *challenges the Church to return to her original call of God to unity in the Eucharist and the bishop as it was so in the first three centuries.*⁴⁶ It is indeed a challenging task that must be approached holistically. One has to take into account also the national churches in countries which are either predominantly Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant. How will the churches in these nations react? Can the heads of each of these churches be able to unite under one primate of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church? Even with Zizioulas' blueprint of the Church as one Communion, in reality, I do not see this happening easily overnight. And what about the non-episcopal churches? Must they change their church structure to accommodate the office of bishops and modify their liturgies so that they conform to the Divine Liturgy? If they do not do so, what status will be accorded these churches, and how will they be related to the 'true' Church of communion? There are no easy answers to these questions in a world inhabited by fallen humanity with the Church so fragmented. However, these considerations do prompt us to make further allowances and modifications to Zizioulas' model of the Church to include the churches that do not have an episcopal structure. This should be the subject of another study. Yet I will try to outline an initial route to achieving this. First, it seems that the Orthodox Church, or indeed any church, should not view itself as the one and only, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, the "*una sancta*," so to speak. This is in line with Zizioulas' relational ontology where an identity is formed only in relation to others. What it means for the Church is simply this: Any church identity is defined in relation to other sister churches. A church does not subsist in itself but in other churches. This has also been Afanasiev's ecclesiological principle. Second, it seems there should be further dialogues involving multiple parties such as opening up the present bilateral dialogues to becoming trilateral or even quadrilateral dialogues (the more the

⁴⁵ N. Afanasiev, "The Church which Presides in Love," 110.

⁴⁶ See Zizioulas' *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*. However, it is clear from the evidence of Scripture that the earliest church communities did not even have bishops and the local churches were led by a council of elders (Acts 20.17; 1 Pet. 5.1). The first three centuries certainly saw the development of the episcopacy as I have described in chapter two on the evidence found in N. Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit* (2007). As Bathrellos has also pointed out citing scholars such as Sullivan (2001) and Stewart (2014), episcopacy was *not the only* form of governance in the early church.

merrier!) amongst the different Christian denominations. The key aim is to promote mutual understanding of each others' traditions and points of view. Here, V. Bolotov's idea of the *theologoumenon*, as highlighted by Zizioulas, can be a useful guide to any dialogue:

The *theologoumena* are the theological opinions of the holy Fathers of the one undivided Church: they are the opinions of those among whom are found persons we rightly call *hoi didaskaloi tes oikoumenes* (ecumenical teachers). The *dogma* contains the *necessaria*, the *theologoumenon* the *dubia*: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas!*⁴⁷

I would hasten to add, and in all things, *caritas*. Third, an ecumenical council can then be convened by the WCC at some point in time to gather together church representatives to discuss, debate and agree on key theological doctrines relevant to the existential concerns and challenges of the world and the Church today. These are the steps the present worldwide churches could take at the universal level.

At the local level, I propose that we could start with a *united church*⁴⁸ in a village. Mission agencies should not be planting denominational churches anymore. They should instead work together to plant *one church* in a small village headed by a bishop or head of the village who will preside over the eucharistic community and be assisted by presbyters and deacons in the celebration of the Eucharist. The laity can participate in the con-celebration of the Divine Liturgy through their gathering in the one place of worship on Sunday. In places where there are already many churches of different denominations, proselytism should be transcended in the context of a truly ecumenical movement by attracting members of one church to become members of another.⁴⁹ As the village grows into a city, the one local church that is being built up or being amalgamated into in the growing city should be sending out its own members to plant a church in each of the neighbouring villages. This 'mother' church in the city can also plant a local church in each of the suburbs of the new city. These local parishes may be headed by presbyters who will celebrate the Eucharist in the name of the diocesan bishop.⁵⁰ Bishops may be selected on the basis of the criteria laid out in 1 Tim. 3:1-7

⁴⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Uniformity, Diversity and the Unity of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 343.

⁴⁸ This is basically a non-denominational church or one that is a combination of many denominational churches. For example, the Presbyterians have already united with the Methodists in some places such as Upper Hutt Central where I have lived. This so-called "uniting church" in New Zealand may form the prototype of how churches of different denominations may indeed unite as one church in a locality. This may begin by uniting two denominational churches together and slowly extending the local church to include other denominational churches in that village or town. This will take time and if there are many denominational churches in that locality, then members of each congregation may visit each others' churches and try to build fraternities and communities that meet together regularly for friendship, fellowship and dialogue.

⁴⁹ J. Zizioulas, "Reflections of an Orthodox on Proselytism," in *The One and the Many*, 363.

⁵⁰ This is an acknowledgement that indeed from the fourth century onwards, the flourishing of the parishes necessitated the leadership of the Eucharist by the presbyters on a permanent basis. See J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church*, 216-17.

and ordained accordingly to serve in the dioceses.⁵¹ They will report to the archbishop who will preside over the archdiocese head-quartered in the largest city nearest these churches. As villages and cities continue to grow in size and number, a metropolis may eventually be formed. A metropolitan⁵² will administer all the dioceses and archdioceses in the metropolis. The metropolitan will also preside over a local provincial synod comprising the bishops and archbishops of the several villages and cities in a particular region.⁵³ This is my broad proposal for how a local church or provincial synod may be organized for administration and for growth.⁵⁴ Regional churches and synods can then be organized using ‘the one and the many’ approach favoured by Zizioulas, i.e. a regional synod is formed and headed by a patriarch or primate of that particular region.⁵⁵ The universal synod finally completes the united synods of the worldwide Church headed by a universal primate.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Bishops need not be ordained as full-time stipendiary pastors of their flocks. They could still work in their original professions and simultaneously oversee their dioceses with much assistance from the clergy and the laity. By delegating the administrative work of the diocese to his eucharistic community, this will give more responsibilities to the members of his community to shoulder, thus freeing up his time. The bishop can then concentrate on his chief role of presiding over the Eucharist.

⁵² In the Orthodox Church, the metropolitan is usually a senior bishop or archbishop who looks after several dioceses and who acts as the primate of the local provincial synod comprised of diocesan bishops presiding over their respective churches in that metropolis or in a particular region. In recent years, the metropolitan’s role has changed in some places, such as in Greece where the metropolitan system has been abolished. I am indebted to Nicholas Loudovikos for information regarding this development. See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 125-29.

⁵³ For example, the Wellington region in New Zealand comprises four cities (Wellington city, Lower Hutt city, Upper Hutt city and Porirua city) and a local district - Kapiti Coast (itself comprising four towns/villages).

⁵⁴ I pause here temporarily as I hesitate to propose how the next level of a national church should be structured and organized. The dangers of nationalizing a Church are always present and we have seen the negative effects played out over time. The recent schism that occurred late 2018 in the Orthodox Church is a good example of how nationalism divides the local church and the wider church community. For example, the Ukrainian Church has since been broadly divided into two camps, one loyal to the Orthodox Church in Russia and one that answers only to the newly autocephalous Church of the Ukraine. This has led directly to a schism between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Orthodox world has further divided itself in that many of the other Orthodox Churches of the various nationalities have taken sides either with the Patriarch of Russia or with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

⁵⁵ This is where I differ from Loudovikos who argues for a structure of the parish as “the basic cell of the small diocese of the local church” in which the presbyter reports to the bishop who in turn reports to the archbishop, who likewise reports to his metropolitan who stands as the president of the local provincial synod. Then, according to Loudovikos, the metropolitan reports to the primate of his *nation* “completing this ladder of fraternal perichoresis that makes the Church truly the Body of Christ and not an institution administered in an authoritarian way.” See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 126. I propose that a regional synod comprised of several metropolitans and headed by a primate *need not necessarily* be a national synod. Indeed, it could well be a regional synod that is comprised of all the local churches in a wider region within a nation, or it could even be one that is comprised of several local provincial synods in neighbouring countries. For example, there could be a regional synod comprised of churches in some of the Pacific island nations, say a regional synod of Polynesia and Melanesia?

⁵⁶ This is done by extending the application of canon 34 of the Apostolic Canons from the local to the regional and universal levels, as suggested by Zizioulas. Again I have relied on information regarding the canonical application of canon 34 which I have received in N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 125. Loudovikos has also pointed out that canon 34 of the Apostolic Canons does not apply universally as it “explicitly refers to the *protos* of the bishops of each *ethnos* (nation), and not to a universal *primus*.” This is because “if Canon 34 is valid on a universal level then a *universal primus* could precisely oppose a council or even refuse to convoke a council, he could cancel or postpone it, or overturn its ecumenical character, by directly disagreeing with its purpose, or manipulating it, or withdrawing etc.” See N. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*, 111-12. This is a very real and possible danger I am prepared to admit when speaking of a universal primate, a danger I have earlier alluded to in this section when discussing the possibility of rogue bishops.

Lastly, I just want to hereby propose the following areas for further theological research which I hope, will bring the churches in the world closer together in faith, hope and love.

8.5. Further Research

We have seen that Orthodox theology has a strong pneumatological dimension that is not usually found in the West. What Orthodox theology has not yet done, according to Zizioulas, is to find a creative synthesis between the Christological and pneumatological aspects of the Church.⁵⁷ This will help find a good balance between the institutional and charismatic aspects of the Church. I can think of the following three suggestions for further research.

1. To find a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in theology.⁵⁸
2. To find a post-patristic synthesis between Eastern and Western theologies of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity upon which ecclesiology is based.
3. To determine how the bishop of Rome can be the primate of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church while allowing every local Church under their respective bishop to be autonomous.

I will recommend the following approaches to these suggestions in the light of Zizioulas' writings.

8.5.1. To find a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in theology⁵⁹

This is a follow up to the ecclesiological debates between the representatives of the two sides: Nissiotis, Boris Bobrinskoy and Lossky on the side of Pneumatology and Florovsky on the side of Christology. The issue is still not closed and without a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology, Zizioulas has made it clear that it would be "impossible to understand the Orthodox tradition itself or to be of any real help in the ecumenical discussion of our time.

⁵⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 125-26. Zizioulas in his book *The One and the Many*, 75-90, had begun some preliminary work on this by discussing the problem in a paper here entitled "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church." See also his "Christ, the Spirit and the Church," in *Being as Communion*, 123-42. Here Zizioulas remarks that there is still a "lack of a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology in Orthodox ecclesiology." That is why Afanasiev and his followers have "often too easily assumed that eucharistic ecclesiology leads to the priority of the local Church over the universal." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 133.

⁵⁸ This is one lack in Orthodox theology as identified by Zizioulas. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139. Work on this had already been started by Zizioulas himself when in 1973, he published "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," *International Catholic Review*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1973). See also J. Zizioulas, "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 75-90.

⁵⁹ Some work has been done in this area by S. Yagazoglou as noted by Zizioulas. See his book *Communion of Theosis: The Synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology in the Work of St. Gregory Palamas*, 2001.

The important thing about this synthesis is that Pneumatology must be made *constitutive* of Christology and ecclesiology.”⁶⁰ In addition, we must also find a way to relate the institutional with the charismatic. This is linked to the Christological and pneumatological aspect of ecclesiology. Is the Church more an institution or is it more a charismatic entity? This issue has been affecting the way Eastern monasteries relate to the institutional Orthodox Church. According to Zizioulas, monasticism and the institutional Church have struggled to co-exist and “the struggle between the two ‘powers’ does not seem to have been resolved up to now.”⁶¹ Zizioulas has proposed an ecclesial mysticism that is Christologically, ecclesialogically and thus eucharistically understood. In this form of mysticism, the pneumatological (and charismatic) and the Christological aspects of mystical experience are brought together in the Church as the mystical Body of Christ.⁶²

8.5.2. To find a post-patristic synthesis between Eastern and Western theologies based on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity

This is a follow-up to Florovsky’s vision that the Church needs the East and the West. What unites them can be the doctrine of the Trinity because it is a universal Christian doctrine. The doctrine of the Trinity, as it was formulated by the Patristic Fathers, even if most of the foundational work has been done,⁶³ has tremendous development potential for understanding the being of humanity in the world. We need not pursue a social trinitarianism or a speculative approach to trinitarian being. What we could do is to take Zizioulas’ advice of taking “the vocabulary and conceptuality of our own age and use them to interpret the Father’s theology faithfully.”⁶⁴ This is not recycling some form of existential theology but developing a *contextual theology* that stays relevant to the present age. The post-patristic synthesis must include the theologies of the world, especially the theology born in places where the Church is growing exponentially. Theology is born of the Church and as such, the theologies of the local churches in every part of the world and in every culture should be brought in relation to the trinitarian theology of the Patristic Fathers. This promises many fruitful encounters with how God the Trinity (not merely the concept) is present in all cultures, uniting all in the Kingdom of Christ the Son.

⁶⁰ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 139. Italics original.

⁶¹ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 287.

⁶² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 286-307.

⁶³ S. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 146.

⁶⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 25.

8.5.3. The Issue of Primacy in the Church

The issue of primacy is, according to Zizioulas, “the most important ecumenical problem.”⁶⁵ Papal primacy has been a sticky issue for years since the total break in communion since 1054 between the Church in the East and in the West. The split in the Western Church into Protestant and Roman Catholic has further divided Christians and made it even harder for a universal primacy. I distinctly remember that as an Anglican, I heard a question raised some years ago, to the then Archbishop of Canterbury on the issue of Anglican reunification with Rome. The answer still rings in my ears. Archbishop Rowan Williams replied that it was possible to reunite with Rome, but he also hastened to ask, “On what terms?”⁶⁶ I believe the terms would be less onerous on the part of Anglicans (and on non-Roman Catholics) today if we work together with the Orthodox Church which still awaits “an ecclesiological appreciation of primacy on the universal level.”⁶⁷ In the years following Vatican II, eucharistic ecclesiology has also developed in Roman Catholic circles.⁶⁸ Zizioulas has suggested that it is possible to have a primacy of the See of Rome subject to certain conditions in which Pneumatology can play a decisive role in shaping Christology and ecclesiology. One of the conditions suggested by Zizioulas is to allow communion to condition the being of the Church. Vatican II has defined the Church as the people of God and had introduced the concept of communion into ecclesiology.⁶⁹ But it has not made the concept of communion constitutive of the being of the Church. Instead, the WCC has moved along the lines of conceiving the Church as communion.⁷⁰ Now it is time to push this notion of communion to an ontological conclusion, as suggested by Zizioulas.⁷¹ Can we prepare the way for another ecumenical council focussed on “The Church as Communion,” perhaps a Vatican III? Zizioulas has already proposed an Orthodox approach to the issue of primacy in the Church based on an ecclesiology of communion rooted deeply in a trinitarian theology

⁶⁵ J. Zizioulas, “Primacy in the Church: An Orthodox Approach,” in *The One and the Many*, 263 and “Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” in *The One and the Many*, 274. The issue of papal primacy has for some years been considered by Zizioulas to be the most difficult and the most important problem in current Roman Catholic-Orthodox relations.

⁶⁶ This was at a special question and answer session at St. Andrew’s Cathedral (Singapore) in April 2007. I would also hasten to add, “On whose terms?” Perhaps an answer to my own question could be: “On Orthodox terms.”

⁶⁷ This current situation of the Orthodox Church has been noted by A. Schmemmann in “The idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology,” in J. Meyendorff et al., *The Primacy of Peter in the Orthodox Church* (Bedfordshire: Faith Press, 1973), 164. See also J. Zizioulas, “Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology,” in *The One and the Many*, 283.

⁶⁸ P. McPartlan, *A Service of Love. Papal Primacy, the Eucharist and Church Unity* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 11.

⁶⁹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141.

⁷⁰ J. Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 49-60. The notion of *koinonia* had emerged as a key notion in the theological language of Faith and Order, WCC. See J. Zizioulas “The Church as Communion,” in *The One and the Many*, 49.

⁷¹ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141.

and ontology of communion.⁷² In Zizioulas' scheme, it is the structure of the Eucharist that we look to as a guide for an ecclesiology that allows for primacy in the Church in order "*to overcome every division in the body of the Church.*"⁷³ Perhaps Protestants and Roman Catholics can also propose a way forward along Zizioulas' lines?⁷⁴

8.6. Conclusion

The Church and the Eucharist

We have journeyed long and far with Zizioulas since his doctoral dissertation *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* was first published over fifty years ago. Here, we have encountered Zizioulas' engagement with Afanasiev's eucharistic ecclesiology and noted the potential dangers inherent in Afanasiev's emphasis on the parish that celebrates the Eucharist as having full ecclesiological status. Zizioulas' solution is to look to the *bishop* and his *eucharistic community* for the pre-conditions of catholicity. He contends that whenever the bishop is surrounded by the presbyters, deacons and laity in the Eucharist, there is the catholic Church *provided the bishop is himself in communion with the rest of the bishops of the Church*. This definition of the Church safeguards the catholicity of *every local* Church and guards against the over-localization of the Church through the implementation of a system of synods and councils in which only the bishop participates as the head of his eucharistic community, each bishop being equal in rank with each other and each not doing anything without the consent of the other. In the synod, there may also be a patriarch who will also not do anything without the consent of all the bishops in his synod while the bishops will not do anything without the consent of the patriarch. Each bishop presides over his eucharistic community doing everything with the consent of all members of his clergy and of the laity. This is a beautiful vision of the Church in unity through its bishops who are in communion with one another and

⁷² J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 262-73, esp. 273, and "Recent Discussions on Primacy," in *The One and the Many*, 274-87. However, not all Orthodox are comfortable with the idea of primacy. The Russian Orthodox Church is one Church that has opposed any primacy in the Church. See A. Papanikolaou, "Primacy in the Thought of John [Zizioulas], Metropolitan of Pergamon," in *Primacy in the Church. The Office of Primate and the Authority of Councils. Vol. 1. Historical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. J. Chrysavgis (New York: SVSP, 2016), 261-80. Perhaps there are also political and social factors that come into play on this issue. So, the objections to primacy in the Church in some quarters may not be entirely due to theological reasons. Yet Zizioulas has proposed reasonable grounds for a case of primacy in the Church based on theological principles. See J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 264-65 and "Recent Discussions on Primacy," in *The One and the Many*, 286-87.

⁷³ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy in the Church," in *The One and the Many*, 265. Here, Zizioulas states that the fundamental task of primacy is to overcome all divisions in the Church through conciliarity and the structure of the Eucharist. See J. Zizioulas, "Primacy and Nationalism," 453 and 456. This is especially important for the Orthodox Churches in the face of the rise of nationalism in territories that are multi-cultural. See also J. Zizioulas, "Primacy and Nationalism," 458-59.

⁷⁴ R. Bordeianu has pointed out that Zizioulas, who co-chairs the Joint International Orthodox-Catholic Commission, has considered that in recent years, the issue of Primacy is the most important issue to be resolved in ecumenism. See R. Bordeianu, "Primacies and Primacy according to John Zizioulas," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 58.1 (2014): 5.

with their eucharistic community. It offers a goal for the Church to strive for here and now as she journeys towards the eschatological Kingdom of God in which God is to be the centre of all worship surrounded by all the elders and the multitude in heaven. This eschatological Kingdom is modelled by the Church when it celebrates the Eucharist where the bishop as the *alter Christus* and *alter apostolus* offers to God the prayers of the people of God. When the bishop presides over the Eucharist together with the presbyters, deacons and the laity, we have in the Church a copy of what goes on in heaven around the throne of God. This is Zizioulas' vision of the Church in the Eucharist.

This Church is the Church of the trinitarian God that is three Persons in one nature. The being of God is a Trinity of Persons in communion as Zizioulas stresses that God can only exist as communion.⁷⁵ This is because God is a personal being in which the three divine persons exist in and as communion. In this way, the very being of God can be conceived of as communion. Thus, the concept of communion becomes for Zizioulas, the central concept in his theology and in his ontology – *being as communion*. This concept of being as communion is concurrently applied to triadology and ecclesiology. Drawing inspiration from the communion that exists in God, Zizioulas proceeds to define the Church in terms of the personhood in God. God the Father begets the Son and brings forth the Holy Spirit in the Immanent Trinity. This takes place *outside of time* and makes the Father the sole cause of the Trinity, according to Zizioulas' scheme of things. This has been shown to be highly controversial and alternatives have been suggested to lessen the "monotheism of the Father." Particularly important is T. F. Torrance's alternative that the monarchy is of all three Persons and not just the Father alone. This has an added advantage of allowing for the *perichoresis* of the three persons of the Trinity who co-inhere in each other and have always co-existed with each other.

Through and in Christ and the Holy Spirit we can approach God the Father and understand the Trinity in its economy. Because the Son became incarnate of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have a special revelation of God the Father through the Son because the Son is in the Father and vice versa.⁷⁶ The Son becomes a part of history in His incarnation but remains the eternal Son via the Holy Spirit who in-dwells the Son and makes Christ an *eschatological being*. As such, even when Christ, in whom the divine and human natures are united indivisibly and inseparably through the *hypostatic union* without confusion and without change, entered our world and made His dwelling place with us, He

⁷⁵ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

⁷⁶ John 14.10-11.

was still very much God from God and Light from Light, begotten, not made and, of one essence (*homoousios*) with the Father.⁷⁷ The Church is the *Body* of this Christ. It is also the Temple of the Spirit who dwells in the Body of Christ, thus vivifying it because the Holy Spirit is the Lord and the giver of life who proceeds from the Father *in* the Son⁷⁸ and who indwells the Eucharist through the *epiclesis* so that the Eucharist becomes not just a memorial but a communion in the Spirit. The Eucharist is where the *eschatological community* gathers in the Body of Christ and as the Body of Christ in whom the fullness of the Spirit dwells. This *pneumatologically conditioned* Christology and ecclesiology is what Zizioulas has been espousing, which he hopes will lead to an ecclesiology that makes communion its ultimate ontological basis. Hopefully, this can be done perhaps in Vatican III.⁷⁹

An ontology of *communion* along with the principles of *conciliarity* offers us the potential of a unified Church under one *universal primate* who is not only the head of the Church but the unity of the many churches. This will depend on how far the Christian communities adopt the communion-based eucharistic ecclesiology of Zizioulas in its thinking and abandon all denominational confessionalism currently present in their mentality. The Eastern and Western Churches have been totally divided since 1054. It certainly is wonderful if by 2054 they could be totally re-united with one common witness in the one Body of Christ.⁸⁰ Zizioulas has detailed the necessary structures of councils, synods and local churches. How much resolve do we as the Church have for unifying in the face of external threats such as *religious extremism* and *political unrest* which threaten the being of the world and of humanity?⁸¹

Personhood, Eucharist and Eschatology

Zizioulas' concept of the person as bequeathed to us by the Cappadocian Fathers has the unique advantage of specifying all creation in terms of *personhood* instead of the usual terms of naturehood and thinghood. Zizioulas describes all creation as transitioning from thinghood to personhood through *communion* with the Creator. This has cosmological implications as this allows for eucharistic communion between God and the world through humanity and the

⁷⁷ The Nicene-Constantinople Creed.

⁷⁸ I have considered the Filioque and used T. F. Torrance suggestion here (The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father in the Son) to modify the Nicene-Constantinople Creed.

⁷⁹ Zizioulas postulates a possible Ecumenical Council called "Vatican III." See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 141.

⁸⁰ By 2054, it will be 1,000 years since the canonical disunity between the Church in the East and the West became final.

⁸¹ The terrorist attacks on 13 May 2018 in Indonesia's second largest city Surabaya show that terrorists do not distinguish between Catholics, Pentecostals or any other denomination, targeting *any* vulnerable church. See K. E. Schulze, "The Surabaya Bombings and the Evolution of the Jihadi Threat in Indonesia," *CTC Sentinel* 11.6 (June/July 2018): 1-6. The article can also be found in the following website: <https://ctc.usma.edu/surabaya-bombings-evolution-jihadi-threat-indonesia/> (last accessed 28 Mar 19).

Church. Zizioulas postulates humanity becoming the ‘priest of creation,’ as the mediator between God and his creation through being in Christ who unites all things and offers them to God. This is a vision of the recapitulation of all beings in Christ who will rule over all and is in all. It is not only an eschatological vision; it is a vision that is meant to be realized in the here and now through the creative work of human beings who have been called by God to be priests of creation, to work with their hands and to offer, in the Eucharist, the fruits of their labour on earth to the Creator.

Zizioulas’ theology would not have been possible had the Cappadocian Fathers not bequeathed to the Church an ontology of the person. The person is unique. What makes this particular personal being be itself is *communion, love and freedom*.⁸² These are ontological categories used to understand God and humanity in terms of personhood. True personhood is experienced in the Church. The early Church Fathers such as Ignatius and Irenaeus experienced what it meant to be an ecclesial community where they lived in love and communion with God and with others through personal relationships in the Church. Thus, these pastoral theologians approached the being of God not through pure academic knowledge of the theological schools but through the *lived experience of the Church*. This experience of the Church is found in the *Eucharist* which gathered together the members of the faith community on a journey into the Kingdom of God.

Guided by the eucharistic eschatology and ontology of St. Maximus, Zizioulas has worked out an ecclesiology that considers the truth of the world to come which the Holy Spirit has opened up to us. It is also through the Spirit that the world and all creation through the Church will be brought in Christ back to God. This eschatological vision is revealed in the Eucharist that allows us a *foretaste* of the *eschaton* through the images and symbols that help us to participate in the eschatological reality where the truth of things (and of being) is to be found. Therefore, Zizioulas is not so much an existentialist as he is an “eschatologist” being more concerned with how existence relates to *what will be*. This accounts for his eschatological approach to being in general and more specifically to ecclesial being and apostolic succession. When Zizioulas engages with existential philosophers such as Sartre, he does so to demonstrate the tragedy of human existence in this world but goes further in pointing out that existence is not merely historical, humanistic and of this world. Zizioulas constantly points to an existence that is not conditioned by history but is conditioned by the things to come.

⁸² J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 214.

While some have accused Zizioulas of being a personalist, Zizioulas himself has shown he is not a secular personalist. Instead, he follows closely the Cappadocian Fathers' definition of the person as a relational being with a definite hypostasis. Its being does not subsist merely in substance but in relation to a personal 'other.' This is possible if we *make communion an ultimate ontological category*. Being as communion is Zizioulas' primary contention in ontology. This is the basic pre-supposition of his ontology of the person. Like the divine Persons, every person has a unique identity that is his *hypostasis* which is not an adjunct to nature. Instead, persons are the primary entities that give existence to everything and uniquely define being. As Zizioulas reminds us, "Personhood is about hypostasis, that is, the claim to *uniqueness* in the absolute sense of the term."⁸³ The conditions for such an ontology of personhood exists only in God.⁸⁴ Thus, the Trinity is the starting point for such an ontology. Zizioulas follows closely the Cappadocian Fathers' concept of the person and gives them full credit for finding a way of escape from the ontological necessity of Greek cosmology that, according to Zizioulas, traced being to substance. This so-called "ontological revolution" in philosophy made it possible also for the concept of freedom to be brought to the fore by locating freedom in the person and juxtaposing freedom between being and willing. Only a person can be *ontologically free*, free to be oneself and to be free for others. To be free also means *to will to be free* and to be free to will. This is something that is found only in the person – the willing one. The willing One – God the Father grants existence to everything out of nothing because He (as a person) freely willed it to be so. In this sense, the Person of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the 'cause' and *arche* of all being.

A final point in Zizioulas' concept of the person is that because the person is ultimate in ontology, persons not only contain nature, persons can *overcome* nature and survive eternally and victoriously. According to Zizioulas, in the ascetical tradition, many have testified to the overcoming of self-love and the world.⁸⁵ This is the ascetical aspect of the ecclesial hypostasis at work in those who, by the grace of God, put to death the sinful nature by the Spirit through asceticism. Here, the passions of nature are stilled in prayer and communion with God. The biological *hypostasis* is denied by the ecclesial *hypostasis* which accepts the biological *nature* of humanity but "wishes to hypostasize it in a non-biological way, to endow it with real being, to give it a true ontology, that is, eternal life."⁸⁶

It is not merely the individual who overcomes nature. The Church as the community of

⁸³ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 111. Italics original.

⁸⁴ J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 108.

⁸⁵ The desert Fathers and the authors of the writings in the *Philokalia* testify to this.

⁸⁶ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 63.

persons united in one Body overcomes the world and the passions. She achieves this through repentance and through the holiness of Christ, by being set apart from the world in Christ and attaining unto Him, not loving the world. The more the Church attains unto Christ, the more the Church comes closer to the eschatological Kingdom of God. The Church, now divided, is certainly not yet fully attained unto Christ. However, the Spirit lives in the Church. The Church's mission is to unite all creation in the Body of Christ. This she can do if she is aware of her true nature in relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit, and that her mission is to be united *in Christ* in the one Spirit so that the Church in Christ can be offered to the Father as one whole, perfect and acceptable sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him.

The Church is also, as Zizioulas has repeatedly reminded us, "an icon of the Eschaton."⁸⁷ It is *in* this world, but *not of* this world.⁸⁸ Hence for her to survive, she must be in communion with Christ and she must allow the Holy Spirit to constitute her very being in the face of powerful forces such as *ethnic politics* that threaten to divide the Church. With the rising tide of *nationalism* in some countries where Orthodox Christians worship, it is imperative that there should be *primacy* in the Church to unite the Body of Christ in a multi-cultural milieu. This primacy can be worked out using Zizioulas' principles of *conciliarity* and *communion* in an ecclesiology of 'the one and the many.'

⁸⁷ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy and Nationalism," 455 and 458.

⁸⁸ J. Zizioulas, "Primacy and Nationalism," 459.

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Appendix

Supplementary List of Dissertations and Books On Zizioulas

- Joseph Areeplackal (1988) *The Pneumatological Dimensions of Ordained Ministries as Presented by Yves Congar and John Zizioulas*,¹ which compares Yves Congar's Pneumatology with that of Zizioulas'.
- Guan Chin Soh (1993) *A Trinitarian Covenant Theology of the Church*,² which compares Zizioulas' ecclesiology in *Being as Communion* to Jürgen Moltmann's.
- Paul McPartlan's (1993) *The Eucharist Makes the Church*,³ which compares Henri de Lubac's ecclesiology with that of Zizioulas'. Having been heavily reviewed by several academics,⁴ this is by far the best commentary on Zizioulas' ecclesiology⁵ compared with de Lubac who coined the phrase, "The Eucharist makes the Church."
- Marty Folsom's (1994) *Freedom in the Anthropologies of John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth*, which analyses the ontology of free persons and compares these three theologians' ideas of personhood in order to distinguish a superior methodology for properly understanding freedom in personhood and what constitutes personhood.
- Jaume Fontbona I. Misse's (1994) *Comunion y Sinodalidad. La ecclesiologia eucaristica después de N. Afanasiev en J. Zizioulas y J.M.R. Tillard*.⁶
- Barry Norris' (1995) *Pneumatology, Existentialism and Personal Encounter in*

¹ This is a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. It was later published as *Spirit and Ministries: Perspectives of East and West*. Bangalore: Dharmaram, 1990.

² This was published by Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniversity Press, 2000.

³ This began life as a doctoral dissertation entitled *The Eucharist Makes the Church: The Eucharistic Ecclesiologies of Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas Compared*, University of Oxford, 1989.

⁴ This book was reviewed by Mark Chapman in *The Ecumenical Review* 46.1 (Jan 1994): 118, by Bryan Spinks in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 47.3 (1994): 414, Nicholas Sagovsky in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45.4 (Oct 1994): 716, by Maroslaw Tataryn in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 32.1 (Jan 1995): 123, by Andrew Louth in *Journal of Theological Studies* 46.1 (Apr 1995): 423 and by Joseph Mangina in *Modern Theology* 11.4 (Oct 1995): 475.

⁵ McPartlan's book *The Eucharist Makes the Church* was referred to by Zizioulas himself who said that it was the best work about his theology that he had read so far. See Nathan Wilson's review of McPartlan's *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* in *The Ecumenical Review* 48.3 (Jul 1996): 422-23.

⁶ *Communion and Synodality: Eucharistic Ecclesiology after N. Afanasiev in J. Zizioulas and J.M.R. Tillard* (Sant pacia, 52), (Barcelona: Edicions de la Facultat de Theologia de Catalunya-Herder, 1994).

*Contemporary Theologies of Church and Ministry with Particular Reference to John Zizioulas and Martin Buber.*⁷

- Alan Torrance's (1996) *Persons in Communion*, which is primarily a study of Karl Barth's theology of the Person with Karl Rahner and Zizioulas pitted together to illustrate two contrasting expositions of God's Trinity.
- Athanasios Melissaris' (1997) *Orthodox Anthropology and Archetypal Psychology: comparing John Zizioulas and James Hillman on Personhood*,⁸ which tries to integrate postmodern psychology with Greek patristic thought.
- Eleni Pavlidou's (1997) *Cristologia e pneumatologia tra Occidente cattolica e Oriente ortodosso neo-greco; per una lettura integrate di W. Kaspar e J. Zizioulas in prospettiva ecumenical*.⁹
- Jaroslav Skira's (1998) *Christ, the Spirit and the Church in Modern Orthodox Theology: A Comparison of Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Nikos Nissiotis and John Zizioulas*¹⁰ which compares how far Christology and Pneumatology have been shaping their ecclesiology.
- Miroslav Volf's (1998) *The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, which compares Joseph Ratzinger's ecclesiology with that of Zizioulas'.
- Andrew Shepherd's (1999) *The Gift of the Other*, which is primarily a study of Emmanuel Levinas' and Jacques Derrida's concept of "The Other" with Zizioulas' ideas of communion and otherness summarized.
- Paul Collins' (2001) *Trinitarian Theology West and East – Karl Barth, the Cappadocian Fathers and John Zizioulas*.¹¹
- Stanley Pulprayil's (2001) *The Theology of Baptism and Confirmation in the Writings of*

⁷ This is a doctoral thesis submitted to King's College London.

⁸ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9780591574746, ISBN: 0591574748. This was published as *Personhood Re-examined: Current Perspectives from Orthodox Anthropology and Archetypal Psychology: A Comparison of John Zizioulas and James Hillman* (Katerini, Greece: Epektasis Publications, 2002).

⁹ Christology and Pneumatology between Occidental and Catholic Neo-Greek-Orthodox through an integrated reading in Ecumenical Perspective of Walter Kaspar and John Zizioulas (Rome: Dehoniane, 1997).

¹⁰ This was a doctoral thesis submitted to the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto.

¹¹ This was reviewed by David Coffey in *Theological Studies* 63.3 (Sep 2002): 646.

Yves Congar and John Zizioulas.¹²

- Patricia Fox's (2001) study on *God as Communion*, which brings Zizioulas together with Elizabeth Johnson in order to retrieve the concept of communion as the Christian symbol of the Triune God.¹³
- Scott Frederickson's (2001) *The ecclesiology of God: The role of the divine congregation on the human congregation*,¹⁴ which looks at the works of Eberhard Jüngel, Zizioulas and Douglas John Hall in developing a Trinitarian doctrine concerned with the suffering of Jesus the Christ as it relates with Christian congregations.
- Steve Bachmann's (2001) *Enigma variations: The Imago Dei as the Basis for Personhood with special reference to C. E. Gunton, M. Volf and J. D. Zizioulas*,¹⁵ which compares the three theologians' use of the biblical concept of man as the *Imago Dei*.
- Jan Jackisch's (2003) *Spirit, Christ and the Church: John Zizioulas, George Florovsky, Martin Luther and John Calvin in Dialogue*,¹⁶ which is a German dissertation contrasting the Eastern tradition with the Protestant views of Pneumatology, Christology and ecclesiology.
- Radica Stoiciu's (2004) *The Sacrament of Order in its Relationship to Eucharist, Church and Trinity in the Theological Writings of Edward Kilmartin and John Zizioulas*.
- Christopher Fisher's (2004) *Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences: An Ecumenical Perspective with reference of Pannenberg, Rahner and Zizioulas*.
- Michael Chiavone's (2005) *The Unity of God as Understood by Four Twentieth Century Trinitarian Theologians: Karl Rahner, Millard Erickson, John Zizioulas and Wolfhart Pannenberg*.¹⁷

¹² (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2001).

¹³ This has been reviewed by Barbara Finan in *Theological Studies* 63.2 (Jun 2002): 428.

¹⁴ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9780493238401; ISBN: 0493238409.

¹⁵ This is a doctoral dissertation submitted to Brunel University, London.

¹⁶ This is originally a doctoral thesis "Der Geist, Christus und die Kirche: John Zizioulas, Georges Florovsky, Martin Luther und Johannes Calvin im Dialog" submitted to the University of Heidelberg.

¹⁷ This is a doctoral thesis submitted to the South-eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest.

- Aristotle Papanikolaou's (2006) *Being with God*,¹⁸ which compares Vladimir Lossky's Trinitarian theology to Zizioulas' with reference to their shared concepts of personhood and divine-human communion.

- Eve Tibbs' (2006) *East meets west: Trinity, truth and communion in John Zizioulas and Colin Gunton*,¹⁹ which is a comparison of the trinitarian theologies of Gunton and Zizioulas and suggests an onto-relational in both their trinitarian theologies.

- Richard Declue's (2008) *The Petrine Ministry within a Eucharistic Ecclesiology according to John Zizioulas and Joseph Ratzinger*.²⁰

- Dong-ha, Kim's (2008) *The Significance of the Trinitarian Koinonia for a Contemporary Ecclesiology: The Contributions of Miroslav Volf and John Zizioulas*.

- Graham Hill's (2009) *An Examination of Emerging Missional Ecclesiological Conceptions: Missional Ecclesiology and the Ecclesiologies of Miroslav Volf, Joseph Ratzinger and John Zizioulas*.

- Philip Marshall's (2010) *The Local Church: Identity, Relationships and Purpose: An Exploration of the Communion Theologies of John Zizioulas and Jean-Marie Tillard*.

- Jeremy Kidwell's (2010) *Elucidating the Image of God: An Analysis of the Imago Dei in the Theology of Colin E. Gunton and John (Jean) D. Zizioulas*

- Elizabeth Lee's (2010) *Made in the images of God: Towards a trinitarian virtue ethics*,²¹ which examines the images of the Trinity found in the theologies of Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson and Catherine Keller in order to form an understanding of the person.

- Thomas Puthukulangara's (2011) *The Catholicity of the Church: A. Dulles, J.-M.R Tillard and J. Zizioulas in Dialogue*.

¹⁸ This began life as a doctoral thesis entitled "Apophaticism v. Ontology: A Study of Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas", University of Chicago, 1998.

¹⁹ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 0542562987; ISBN: 9780542562983.

²⁰ This was a dissertation submitted to the Catholic University of America.

²¹ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9781124428680.

- Luke Ben Tallon's (2011) *Our Being is in Becoming: The Nature of Human Transformation in the Theology of Karl Barth, Joseph Ratzinger, and John Zizioulas*, which offers an ecumenical exploration of human transformation comparing the three theologians' viewpoints on being and becoming a Christian.

- Man-yiu, Lee's (2013) *The Church as Person in the Theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John D. Zizioulas and Jürgen Moltmann*.

- Jason DelVitto's (2013) *Encountering Eucharistic Presence Within a Post-Modern Context: A Dialogue among Chauvet, Schmemann and Zizioulas* which is a comparative study on the eucharistic experience of these three thinkers in order to formulate a renewed vision of the Eucharist in the context of this post-modern world.

- Yik Pui, Au's (2014) *The Eucharist as a Countercultural Liturgy: An Examination of the Theology of Henri de Lubac, John Zizioulas, and Miroslav Volf*,²² which looks at the Eucharist as a counter-cultural liturgy with the help of the Eucharistic interpretations of Zizioulas, Volf and De Lubac.

- Scott Macdougall's (2014) *More than Communion: Towards an Eschatological Ecclesiology*,²³ which criticizes Zizioulas' and John Milbank's communion ecclesiologies on the basis of their over-realized eschatologies.

- Nicholas Zientarsky's (2015) *The Eschatological Role of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Eucharist: The Epiclesis in Modern Liturgical Reform in Light of the Pneumatology of Yves Congar, John Zizioulas, and Robert Jensen*,²⁴ which is a study of the pneumatologies of these three theologians and the roles they play in the Eucharist.

- Dorothea Gnau's (2015) *Person werden: Zu Wesen und Bestimmung des Menschen in der Theologie von Panagiotis Nellas, Christos Yannaras und Ioannis Zizioulas*.²⁵

²² ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9781321820980. This was published by Pickwick Publications, in 2017.

²³ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9781303730245. This has been published in Scott MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*. *Ecclesiological Investigations*, vol. 20. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. Reviewed by Wondera, E. K. "The Shape of an Eschatological Ecclesiology: *More than Communion* by Scott MacDougall," *Anglican Theological Review* 99.1 (Winter 2017): 111-16.

²⁴ ProQuest Dissertations and Theses ISBN: 9781321791068.

²⁵ *Person: The Essence and Destiny of Man in the Theology of Panagiotis Nellas, Christos Yannaras and Ioannis Zizioulas* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2015). This was reviewed by Sergii Bortnyk in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 141, no. 12 (Dec 2016): 1409-11.