

CHAPTER ONE

THE TRINITARIAN APPROACH TO ECCLESIOLOGY

I. Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology as a valuable means of ecclesiological development. In particular, we shall focus on the trinitarian ecclesiologies of John D. Zizioulas and Jürgen Moltmann as examples of this approach and make a comparative evaluation of their positions. We shall focus specifically on how they link the Trinity to ecclesiology and the implication of this for the ecclesiology that is thus developed. We shall then propose a way by which the biblical concept of covenant may be used to develop a trinitarian approach that combines positive features of their contributions in a new synthesis for the advancement of trinitarian ecclesiology. As a first step to this endeavour we seek to trace the use of the trinitarian approach against the broad context of the wide variety of denominational, historical and modern emphases and approaches to ecclesiology. We shall thereby survey the field of ecclesiological literature and set forth a case for the merits of the trinitarian approach and for the choice of Zizioulas and Moltmann as our focus.

II. Importance of the Theology of the Church Today

A. The Church in the World of Today

The Church today lives in a highly complex world. Such issues as apartheid, AIDS, homosexuality, women's liberation, the ordination of women, rich versus poor, terrorism, civil unrest, oppressive regimes and revolutions face churches at this or that place or everywhere. Myriad interest and pressure groups call for changes and reforms. Divergent views without and within resulting in conflict or indecision threaten to rend it apart. Many new movements or influences such as Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Renewal, the Liturgical Movement have brought new fervour and controversy. At the same time there is the growth of many different new theologies, such as feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology, Minjung theology, which are coming from the reflections of Christians from a far greater cultural diversity than ever before.

The Church has met these with mixed fortunes. There is unprecedented church growth in areas which have in the past been unresponsive to the Gospel or have fallen to ritualism, compromise with non-Christian influences and traditionalism. Latin America, Africa, South, East, and Southeast Asia in overt and covert ways have experienced such surges. Paradoxically there is decline in church attendance and an increase in secularism in Western Europe which has in the past been the bastion of Christianity, although there are signs of revival. Similar tendencies are found in other Western nations. There have been moves towards mutual recognition and reconciliation between churches but there are also schisms and quarrels.

B. The Need for a Sound Theology of the Church

As the Church faces this new social, political, economic, environmental and theological world climate, the demands and pressures for it to respond to the situations, to reassert or to redefine its identity and role, to be different or to conform increases. The necessity for an in-depth self-understanding of its nature and mission is eminently urgent lest she incurs serious damage with

the loss, confusion, or misconception of its own essence in responding to or in denying these challenges. Any proper theology of the Church would require serious theological reflection. A fundamental question is whether there is any distinctiveness that is its own such that it does not merely respond to issues but have an agenda of its own to accomplish and something unique to contribute to all that is around it. The way in which ecclesiology is approached is a key factor in how this will be answered. Implicit and basic to any ecclesiology is the perspective or the assumptions on which it is based. This affects not only the methodology for the construction of the ecclesiology and its content but also the manner and potentiality by which ecclesiology can be related to or integrated with theology as a whole and with the pastoral and ministerial situation the Church faces in the world. This is the area of ecclesiological construction with which we are concerned in this thesis. In particular, we seek to examine and propose a way to develop the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology as a fruitful perspective and basis for the development of ecclesiology. In this way this thesis seeks to make a useful contribution towards a fuller grasp of the nature and mission of the Church.

III. Perspectives in the Theology of the Church Today

A. Approaches to Ecclesiology

In the face of the need to understand its own essence and mission the Church has in its life approached it from many different perspectives. The particular perspective or approach with which this thesis is concerned is the trinitarian approach. We have noted it as a significant way of ecclesiological development and is one that has gained increasing attention in recent ecclesiology. It is our aim to offer a positive contribution towards the furthering of this perspective in the development of ecclesiology. It is useful to note here the difference in connotation between the phrase "theology of the Church" and the term "ecclesiology". The former phrase better expresses the important factor that the Church should be understood in the light of theology as a whole. The integratedness of theology means that the understanding of the Church is essentially intertwined in some way with other doctrines. The latter term has a tendency to imply a compartmentalised approach and runs the danger of isolating the Church from other doctrines and from seeing dogmatics as a whole. The importance of integrating ecclesiology with the broader context of theology as a whole is itself an important reason why the trinitarian approach is a good one as it facilitates this. However "ecclesiology" remains useful as a technical name and shortform for the subject although it is good to bear in mind the implication of the phrase in our usage of it. Yet the trinitarian approach is but one approach in the midst of many approaches to ecclesiology. It is therefore useful for us to see this approach in the light of other approaches that have been taken in ecclesiology. We can thereby better appreciate the distinctiveness of the trinitarian approach itself in the course of it. We shall begin by giving an initial sketch of the different emphases of the different Christian church traditions.

B. Eastern Orthodoxy

Eastern Orthodoxy has produced writers such as Lossky¹ and Florovsky², and most recently Zizioulas³, who in their theology give much space to the essence of the Church. The ecclesiology they present takes deep interest in the insights of the early Church fathers. It can be said that theirs is a modern development of patristic theology. They demonstrate that it still offers many very relevant insights for today. It is a trinitarian, incarnational and mystical theology of the Church. It ties the nature and mission of the Church to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Church is in some sense a mystical union of God and man. Similarly it is variously explained as in some form a continuation of the incarnation. It therefore has a strong ontological sense of the essence of the Church. We shall be paying particular attention to Zizioulas's development of the Church as a mode of being and of being as communion as a representative of this line of

1 Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, trans. The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co., 1957), 174-195.

2 Georges Florovsky, Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View (Belmont: Nordland Publishing Co., 1972), 37-72.

3 John Zizioulas, Being as Communion - Studies in Personhood and the Church (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985).

theologising. It is one that this thesis seeks to understand and draw upon for proposing a step forward.

C. Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism following Vatican II has poured forth a host of new thinking on the nature of the Church from its own perspective. It continues to assent to an institutional understanding of the Church but now sees this more as an essential feature rather than the very centre of what it is. It has given significant room for an ecclesiology that recognises the importance of theologically grasping more fully the ontological reality behind the institution. Karl Rahner⁴, himself a key figure in preparing the documents of Vatican II, Edward Schillebeeckx⁵ and John Thornhill⁶ are among the writers that seek to further develop the lead of Vatican II. We shall have occasion to note them as representatives of this route of theologising. We shall similarly take note of the more radical alternatives offered from within Roman Catholicism - such as Hans Küng and the liberation theologians, especially Leonardo Boff. The latter is radical not only to Roman Catholicism but to the other more traditional ecclesiologies as well.

D. Protestantism

Protestantism, which is essentially a broad categorisation of many different groups together, presents the greatest diversity of literature on how the Church is to be understood. It can however be said that these represent the diverse directions and emphases that the Reformation and what followed from it can take regarding the nature and mission of the Church. Major theologians like Barth⁷, Brunner⁸, Thielicke⁹, Mascal¹⁰ and Berkouwer¹¹ have written significantly on the Church. However, we find the work of Moltmann¹² to be of especial interest. In him we find a Reformed theologian who finds a definite place for the Church in the trinitarian history of God. It is also an approach that highlights the importance and immediacy of the eschatological and is aware of the multifaceted way by which the Church may be understood, such as missiologically, socially and politically.

IV. Ecclesiology from Perspectives in History

A. A Historical Perspective

It would help us to expand the above sketch by looking into the development of the theology of the Church in history from which the different emphases of the traditions emerged. The end of the historical survey shall bring us to the modern scene where recent developments in ecclesiology shall be noted. We can thereby more clearly compare and contrast between the different traditions and approaches and identify any notable trends that may be of use to us in appreciating the broad overview of ecclesiological development and the trinitarian approach in particular. We would especially highlight the historical instances of the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology with respect to other approaches. This would enable us to identify the distinctiveness of the trinitarian approach which we seek to focus on in terms of its contrast with other approaches. We shall also note instances where a covenantal perspective is detected. This

-
- 4 For example, Karl Rahner, The Church and the Sacrament, trans. W. J. O'Hara (Exeter: Burns & Oates, 1974; German original 1963).
 - 5 Edward Schillebeeckx, The Mission of the Church, trans. N. D. Smith, Theological Soundings 4 (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973).
 - 6 John Thornhill, Sign and Promise - A Theology of the Church for a Changing World (London: Collins Liturgical Pub., 1988).
 - 7 For example in Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God (Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics, being Vol. I, 2), trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 1, Second Half-Volume, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 457-884.
 - 8 Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, Vol. III, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, trans. David Cairns, Dogmatics III (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), 3-139.
 - 9 Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, Vol. Three, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 199-300.
 - 10 E. L. Mascal, Christ, the Christian, and the Church (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1946).
 - 11 G. C. Berkouwer, The Church, Studies in Dogmatics, trans. James E. Davison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).
 - 12 Jürgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit - A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1977).

latter point shall be useful to us when later on we come to the point of introducing a concept of covenant as a means of advancing the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology.

B. The Patristic Period

The Patristic Period forms the earliest period of Christian thought, following the time of the Apostles until the beginning of the Medieval Period. Significantly there is no systematic treatment of the Church as a subject of study in its own right.¹³ Therefore there is no particular constructed and articulated conception of it as an element of some theological system. On the whole the period was mainly concerned with the nature of the godhead, of Christ, and the Gospel and with those who perverted or attacked it.¹⁴ Much of what can be understood of the patristic writers' perspective on the Church has to be deduced from what were implicitly assumed in their writings on other issues. Nevertheless there are very important approaches to the nature of the Church that arose in that time.

Irenaeus, in the late 2nd Century, wrote that the Church is the treasure house of faith filled by the Apostles where truth and faith are taught and proclaimed. The unity of the Church is the unity of the same faith. The Body of Christ is where the Spirit indwells such that where the Spirit is there is the Church, where the Church is there is the Spirit.¹⁵ In this way he can be said to be implicitly trinitarian in his understanding of the Church in that his ecclesiology involves the relationship between the Christ and the Spirit, although he did not specifically mention the Father. It is certainly both a christological and pneumatological understanding of the Church. It is notable that he also wrote of the succession of bishops by appointment from the Apostles and even claimed that it was possible to enumerate all of them.¹⁶ Both these ways of approaching ecclesiology would find later amplification, although without direct reference to him. The former by the Cappadocian Fathers and the latter by Cyprian.

We see the first clear development of the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology in the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa who united the nature of the Church to the nature of the Holy Trinity such that the Church partakes of the interpersonal communion of the Persons of the Trinity that is at the heart of the godhead.¹⁷ This continued with Cyril of Alexandria who saw similarly that the unity of believers and of the believers with God is bound up with the unity of the triune godhead.¹⁸ This was his commentary on Jn 17:20ff. This method of developing theology from Scripture is similarly an aspiration of our approach. In analysing the theological development and position in the formulation of the Nicene Creed, T.F. Torrance elucidates that the implicit assumption behind the phrase "One Catholic and Apostolic Church" is in fact a trinitarian understanding. In particular, baptism which is done "in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and the fact that the Persons and actions of the Father and the Holy Spirit are similarly revealed and enacted through the revelation and mission of Jesus Christ our Lord implies that the Church is the result of triune action and is united in its nature to the communion with and within the godhead.¹⁹ Therefore the

13 T. F. Torrance, The Trinitarian Faith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 255; Florovsky, 57.

14 A survey of the following would bring this out: Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), on the relevant sections regarding the development of Christian thought in Periods I, II, and III; O. Bardenhewer, Patrology, trans. Thomas J. Shanahan, 2nd ed. (Freiburg and St. Louis: B. Herder, 1908), reading selectively on the writings of Clement of Rome to Augustine; Documents in Early Christian Thought, ed. Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer (Cambridge: CUP, 1975); The Early Christian Fathers, ed. and trans. Henry Betterson (London: OUP, 1956); The Later Christian Fathers, ed. and trans. Henry Betterson (London: OUP, 1970).

15 This quoted from Irenaeus in J. F. Bethune-Baker, An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, 3rd ed. (London: Methuen, 1903), 359-360.

16 Irenaeus Against Heresies 3.2, 3.3 in Early Christian Fathers, ed. and trans. Cyril C. Richardson, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 1, ed. by John Baillie, John T. McNeill and Henry P. Van Dusen (London: SCM, 1953), 370-372. This is also the view of G. H. W. Lampe, "The Church and the Sacraments," in A History of Christian Doctrine, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 172.

17 Torrance, 261-269.

18 Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John XI, 11(on Jn 17:20-1), ed., P.E. Pusey, 2(Oxford, 1872), 733-7, extracted in Wiles and Santer, 168-171.

19 Torrance, 252-301. This is an excellent analysis of Patristic thinking on the Church deduced from a close study of Patristic literature in relations to the formulation of the Nicene Creed.

trinitarian approach to ecclesiology finds early historical roots in the work of these fathers. This is the form of ecclesiology and these are the patristic fathers with which Eastern Orthodoxy firmly identifies. This is the chief position that we find in Zizioulas's contribution. He is therefore a modern continuation of this line of trinitarian ecclesiology.

The merit of the trinitarian approach as presented by the Cappadocian Fathers and Cyril of Alexandria is how immediately and intimately it roots the nature of the Church in the very triune God whom the Church worships. It points very directly to the cruciality of the bond the Church needs to have with its God and therefore the fundamental importance of this God for the Church for its very essence. It also entails an essentially relational and communal meaning in what the Church is. This implies a call to harmony and interpersonal unity in being the Church. Such a conception is very significant to the life of the Church as we experience it in our social interaction with one another as persons. It would also be an ecclesiology that is most consistent with the trinitarian content of the Nicene Creed as Torrance has pointed out. It is worthwhile to note on this point that the Cappadocian Fathers were also major participants in the development of the Nicene Creed at the Council of Constantinople.²⁰ Such a trinitarian and credal basis sets ecclesiology as an integral aspect of the faith and therefore of theology as a whole.

Another line of development came from the question of who are the members of the Church. This issue arose from the dispute over whether members who have lapsed because of persecution could be readmitted to the Church. It was a matter of acute urgency then because it had led to the schism of the Church.²¹ Furthermore the way in which the catholicity of the Church was understood meant that all who are to be saved are in the Church and that the Church is the New Testament Noah's ark.²² Cyprian took the view that the Church was concomitant with the existing institution that arose historically from the Apostles and was traceable through a clear line of bishops and it is the bishops of this line who could decide on whether to grant readmittance. In "The Unity of the Catholic Church" he asserts that "there is but one Church and one Chair" which is the primacy of Peter expressed in the unity and authority of the bishops.²³ In so doing he drew from Ignatius, who was from the early 2nd Century who upheld the concept that each local bishop is the centre of the local church, and expanded it to a universal concept encompassing all bishops as a single collegiate.²⁴ This, as we have suggested, reflects the second aspect of Irenaeus's ecclesiology although Cyprian made no reference to him. Yet Irenaeus's concern, as distinct from Cyprian's, was that these bishops were the faithful witnesses and bearers of the Apostolic Tradition which is the teachings of the Apostles.²⁵ The critical difference was that Irenaeus specified the faith itself as the core of the Church whereas Ignatius and Cyprian specified the bishops and their succession from the Apostles as the core. Cyprian's view meant that all that the Church is is identical with the socially identifiable group of bishops who succeed Peter through the ages and those who live under their authority.²⁶ This would in effect equate Christ's authority with the authority of the Church as an institution. This position was to be subsequently developed by the Medieval Church to the point where the pope as the head of the hierarchy has infallibility to pronounce doctrines such that what he says is what Christ says. It is noteworthy that Cyprian and the patristic writers wrote in an environment where the unity of the Church was threatened. His surely was an attempt to forge greater unity and clearer identity but it seems to me to seriously overstate the case for the identification of the Church as the divinely created

20 Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., The Christian Trinity in History, Studies in Historical Theology, Vol. 1, trans., Edmund J. Fortman, S.J. (Still River, Massachusetts: St. Bede's Publications, 1982), 102-106 and Edmund J. Fortman, The Triune God - A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity, The Twin Brook Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 75-85.

21 Walker, 82-83.

22 For example see Cyprian, Letter 69, 1-5 (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866-) 3, 749-54) and Augustine, On Baptism V, xxvii, 38 - xxviii, 39 (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum (Vienna, 1866-) 5, 293-7) in Wiles and Santer, 161 and 164-5 respectively.

23 Cyprian, "The Unity of the Catholic Church," in The Lapsed; The Unity of the Catholic Church, trans. and anno. Maurice Bevenot, Ancient Christian Writers XXV (London: Newman Press, 1957), 46-48.

24 Bethune-Baker, 357-359.

25 This is especially clear if we read Irenaeus, 370-372 in the context of 1.10, 360f of the same work.

26 How this succession is effected or traced is not explicated by Cyprian himself.

entity with the Church as a visible institution. It is too enormous a claim and too restricted a definition to sustain, being based solely on a much debated exegesis of Mt 16:18-19 by Cyprian that it constituted a conferring of a sole Chair of primacy to Peter and which makes no mention of succession.²⁷ This view is however largely the position of Roman Catholicism, especially before Vatican II. It is an essentially institutional and therefore, in effect, a sociological view of the Church. In so being, it thus does not have the theological scope and possibilities of the trinitarian approach.

Augustine's City of God is a major treatise that has much to say concerning the Church for the Patristic Period and the Medieval Period, and for the approach it takes to ecclesiology.²⁸ His concept of the "City of God" includes all who believe in God from Abel and Seth onwards to all Christians;²⁹ these are all members of the holy Church.³⁰ Even angels³¹ are included and, by the very term itself, it is implied that God is included. Therefore it is a concept that includes all the key inhabitants that would be in heaven - God, angels, and all redeemed humanity. Before heaven comes, the believers of all ages are on a pilgrimage through this world facing tribulation for testing and upbuilding for the "future exaltation".³² He contrasted the "City of God" with the "City of the earth" in that the latter is the enemy of the former and constantly attacks it but cannot prevail.³³ The "City of God" is created and acts by the love of God while the "City of the earth" is based on self-love.³⁴ Yet there are "hidden Christians" among unbelievers and there are some within who are "enemies".³⁵ He gives priority to the true Church which is the invisible Church. This Church consists of all that truly believes in the faith and remains faithful to it. In contrast, the visible institutional Church is a mixed entity in that there are those within who only appear to believe. This contrasts with Cyprian's identification of all that are saved as being in the visible institutional Church. The principal point of interest for us, however, is that Augustine's approach sets the Church in the overview of God's total soteriological purpose and design. It is a cosmic view. The Church is not isolated to the NT only. Instead, it is one factor in the outworking of divine intention through the ages for the salvation of mankind. It exists and lives in deep involvement and interaction with the rest and the whole of humanity as an integral aspect of its nature and mission. Such an ecclesiological approach also holds out the possibility of the vital integration of ecclesiology with theology as a whole. This is a factor it shares in common with the trinitarian approach. However, in the way that the Medieval Period was to develop it, this potential was not realised. It also points to the continuity of divine dealing with man through the Bible and through the ages and therefore makes the Church a vital entity in the entire divine design. It indirectly and implicitly points to the biblical covenantal dealings of God with man. This is of interest as this cosmic overview and continuity of divine dealing with man are features which our subsequent proposal on how covenant may be used to strengthen the trinitarian approach shall share.

C. The Medieval Period

In the Medieval Period there was a paucity of doctrinal development in ecclesiology.³⁶ Instead there was a massive institutional and hierarchical development. The principal factor for this was the rise of papal power. There was a corresponding focus on the development of the clergy as the basis of authority in the Church which brought about the rise of clericalism which was centred

27 Cyprian, Unity.

28 Augustine, City of God, ed. David Knowles, trans. Henry Betterson, with an Introduction by David Knowles, Pelican Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972).

29 Ibid., Bk. XV, Chp. 1, 595-6, 621.

30 Ibid., Bk. VIII, Chp. 24, 335; Bk. XIII, Chp. 16, 524; Bk. XX, Chp. 11, 920.

31 Ibid., Bk. X, Chp. 8, 381.

32 Ibid., Bk. XVIII, Chp. 49, 831-2; Bk. XX, Chp. 11, 920.

33 Ibid., Bk. XV, Chp. 1, 595.

34 Ibid., Bk. XIV, Chp. 28, 593-4.

35 Ibid., Bk. I, Chp. 35, 45-6.

36 Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), 559f. A reading of such works as Cunliffe-Jones; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Historical Theology: An Introduction (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978); Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955); F. C. Copleston, A History of Medieval Philosophy (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972) have scant reference to any concept of the Church in the Middle Ages.

around Rome and the papacy.³⁷ From as early as Pope Damascus(366-384) the papacy at Rome had begun to claim supremacy over all other churches. This grew through the Medieval Period with ups and downs but culminated with Innocent III(1198-1216). It deeply involved the Church as an institutional power, particularly the papacy itself, with political rulers and affairs resulting in frequent tussles for supremacy.³⁸ However, there were cracks to this goal of a single monolithic catholic institution because of the East-West divide with the eastern churches, the schism between Rome and Avignon, and the Hussite revolt.³⁹ Nevertheless the Roman Church generally understood itself as a singular institutional entity in the world. The trinitarian ecclesiology of the Eastern church did not take root in the Roman church. Therefore in this period there were in effect two main stream of ecclesiological understanding. One, in the East, largely maintained the trinitarian perspective. The other, in the West and centred on Rome, developed the institutional view. As the Eastern trinitarian view was largely and consistently held in the Patristic form, we shall here see the contrasting development of the Western view.

What doctrinal development there was came primarily along the lines of Augustine's concept of the "City of God" and the Cyprian idea of apostolic succession and the Chair of Peter discussed earlier.⁴⁰ These were understood primarily in an institutional sense so that they became the doctrinal basis of institutional growth. It is notable, in my assessment, that the theological possibilities of the Augustinian position were overshadowed by the Cyprianic institutional emphasis so that the pan-biblical and cosmic features were understood largely in terms of the institutional role and authority of the Church in the world, rather than the development and integration of ecclesiology with theology as a whole. A particularly noted and typical picture was that of Bernard of Clairvaux, who described the Church as one single ecclesiastical hierarchy corresponding to the angelic hosts in heaven. The spiritual nature of the Church was equated squarely with the institutional structure.⁴¹ The Church on earth was understood as the Kingdom of God and this was the basis for it to claim and assert authority and compliance from the rulers of the world and jurisdiction over political, social and mundane affairs.⁴² This became particularly clear in the bull of Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctum*, in 1302 when just such a claim was specifically made.⁴³ Even the unity of the Church is understood in the same structural sense and is deemed so important that breaking this fellowship means that one falls outside of the faith.⁴⁴ The papacy also grew in importance with this development of ecclesiology and reached its zenith in this period such that for Isidore he was the "chief priest" and the "highest priest", and for Hincmar the Roman church was the holy see that was the Mother who had "given birth to us in faith, fed us with catholic milk, nourished us with breasts full of heaven until we were ready for solid food, and led us by its orthodox discipline to perfect manhood."⁴⁵ It is highly notable that the Medieval exegetes of Mt 16: 18-19(used by Cyprian), such as Bede, never equated "petra" with "Peter". Yet this equation was made in most of the polemical and canonical literature of the time.⁴⁶ Many, like Ambrose Aupert, exalted Peter to be coregent with Christ in spite of claiming that his primacy was with the other apostles and not above them. Thus the Cyprianic concept of the institutional view of the Church reached its climax in the Medieval situation.

There was not, however, solid unanimity on this view of the Church. There were dissenters from this grand view of the institutional Church and the papacy in the Middle Ages. Some like

37 Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 3 (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 45.

38 Walker, 151-153, 238-242, 368-369.

39 Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Reformation of Church and Dogma(1300-1700)*, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 4 (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 74.

40 Pelikan, Vol. 3, 42; Berkhof, 559.

41 Pelikan, Vol. 3, 298-300.

42 Pelikan, Vol. 3, 42-43; Berkhof, 560.

43 Walker, 369-370; Pelikan, Vol. 3, 48-49.

44 Pelikan, Vol. 3, 44-46.

45 Ibid., 47-48.

46 The Venerable Bede *On the Gospel of Mark* 3, Corpus christianorum. Series latina. Turnhout, Belgium, 1953-, 120:551 and *Homilies* 1.20, Corpus christianorum. Series latina. Turnhout, Belgium, 1953-, 122:144-45 quoted in *ibid.*, 46-47.

Bernard of Clairvaux and Joachim of Fiore noted the corruption in the life of the Church.⁴⁷ Joachim of Fiore also taught that the Church of his time awaited an apocalyptic rebirth into purity.⁴⁸ More significantly, Dietrich of Nieheim distinguished between the "apostolic" Church, which was the Roman church, from the "catholic" Church, which was the universal Church, and claimed that salvation belonged to the latter not the former, and thereby implied a non-institutional nature of the Church.⁴⁹ This is also true of Wycliffe and Hus, who both led groups in revolt against Rome and are frequently recognised as forerunners of the Reformation, who believed that the one holy catholic and apostolic Church was not the institutional Roman church but the totality of all who have been predestined.⁵⁰

It has been said of the theologians of the Medieval Period that they are "systematic theologians of canon law rather than of dogma" with respect to their thoughts on the Church.⁵¹ This aptly typifies the general trend of theologising on the Church and indicated the gap between the lack of anything significant in such theologising and the great expansion of ecclesiastical institutional and hierarchical power. It would seem that the development of the theology of the Church and of the Church itself in this period was not an outcome of biblically based or conceptual theologising but essentially a reflection of the growing institutional and political power it exercised or expected to exert for which it sought theological justification. What ideas it worked on had all been foreshadowed in the Patristic Period but developed in a mainly institutional sense.

D. The Reformation Period

In coming to the Reformation Period we enter a time when the doctrine of the Church became a key issue of theology and church life. It is a priority which since then has not diminished. Many new approaches to ecclesiology came forth in this period. We shall note four principal strands of understanding the nature of the Church. These are the positions of Luther, Calvin, the Anglicans and the Anabaptists. These views correspond to the four streams of Protestantism that came into being at this time. Luther and Calvin were the main proponents while the other two have each their own distinctiveness but draw deeply from them.

Martin Luther was the key figure at the start of the Reformation. He reviewed the nature of the Church based on the biblical revelation and concluded that the papacy and the institutional concept and practices of the Medieval Church were grossly in error and needed reform. He wrote against the distinction between the sacred and the secular, the papal claim to sole right to interpret Scripture and call Councils, and the sacramental system.⁵² The Church is not essentially an institution but a communion of saints. It is the fellowship of all who believe, the "Christian holy people".⁵³ This is his principal approach to ecclesiology. It is not a papal and clerical hierarchy but a priesthood of all believers such that the clergy are officials serving on behalf of

47 Pelikan, Vol. 3, 300-303.

48 Ibid., 300-303.

49 Pelikan, Vol. 4, 70.

50 Ibid., 69, 75; Cunliffe-Jones, 292, 294.

51 Karl-Ulrich Betz, Hincmar van Reims, Nicholas I., Pseudo-Isidor: Frankisches Landes-kirchentum und romischer Machtanspruch im 9. Jahrhundert (Bonn: 1965), 229 quoted in Pelikan, Vol. 3, 45.

52 Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate, 1520," trans. Charles M. Jacobs, rev. James Atkinson in The Christian in Society I, ed. James Atkinson, Luther's Works, Vol. 44, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 115-217 by which Luther attacked the distinction between the sacred and the secular, the papal claims for sole right to interpret Scripture and the sole right to call a Council; "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520," trans. A. T. W. Steinhauser, rev. Frederick C. Ahrens and Abdel Ross Wentz in Word and Sacrament II, ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, Luther's Works, Vol. 36, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 3-126, where he attacked the sacramental system; "Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciples were Burned by Doctor Martin Luther, 1520," trans. Lewis W. Spitz in Career of the Reformer I, ed. Harold J. Grimm, Luther's Works, Vol. 31, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 379-395 where he justified his action to burn books that supported the pope and the bull of his excommunication in retaliation to similar papal actions against him.

53 Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church, 1539," trans. Charles M. Jacobs, rev. Eric W. Gritsch in Church and Ministry III, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, Luther's Works, Vol. 41, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 143ff.

all believers but have no monopoly on teaching, sacramental and clerical functions.⁵⁴ The true Church consists of all who truly have faith in Christ. It is invisible in that this faith is only visible to God, yet visible because there are visible marks that distinguish it, even if not all who visibly gather have genuine faith.⁵⁵ In this he developed on Augustine's position. The principal marks are the word and the sacraments. The Church as the community of saints is centred around the preaching of the word of Scripture and the proper administration of the sacraments by the word. The outward structural form it takes is of no essential importance. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit through the word that faith is formed so that hearers become believers and members of the Church.⁵⁶ Thus Scripture is the highest authority and guides the pope and the Church.⁵⁷ We may also note that the centrality of the preaching of the word to the Church means that Luther affirmed Irenaeus's position which we noted earlier.⁵⁸ This is not a trinitarian approach but certainly moves from the institutional one. It focuses on the Church as a community of the faithful and in so doing shares the relational and communal aspect of the trinitarian approach but does not relate the Church as immediately to the triune God as the trinitarian approach. However, the additional features, such as the preaching of the word and the work of the Holy Spirit through the word, also make it more akin to a trinitarian one. It is highly notable that, although there is emphasis in Luther of the Church as the community of the saints, his is a multifaceted approach to ecclesiology in contrast to the trinitarian or institutional approaches. Each of these has historically been used as a singular paradigm that guides or stands central to the other features of understanding the Church. We can say that in Luther we find the start of a historical development, corresponding to the spread of the Reformation, towards the use of multiple paradigms in ecclesiology, rather than the largely singular paradigms of the earlier Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic approaches.

John Calvin started his career when the Reformation had been well launched. His special genius was his systematic treatment of biblical studies and theology producing a set of commentaries and the Institutes of the Christian Religion.⁵⁹ He acknowledges his own debt to Luther's teachings but developed an understanding of Scripture and of theology with his own distinctiveness.⁶⁰ He accepts Luther's concept of the Church as a communion of saints and of the importance of the preaching of the word to the life of the Church but these two concepts do not have the same focal role in his understanding of the Church as they have for Luther. He was also in essential agreement with Luther on the invisible and visible Church and noted it specifically and compendiously in the Institutes.⁶¹ He is also pointedly anti-papal, anti-Roman and rejected apostolic succession as a basis of ministry legitimisation.⁶² In contrast, however, an important symbol he uses is that of the Church as the Mother of Christians because it is only by the faith of the Church and the teaching of the Church that Christians can be born and mature.⁶³ Here he echoes Hincmar's concept but with confessional and not institutional emphasis. This symbol

54 Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," 127-135.

55 Eric W. Gritsch, "Introduction to Church and Ministry," in Eric W. Gritsch, ed., Church and Ministry I, Luther's Works, Vol. 39, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), xiii-xiv; Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 291-2.

56 Luther, "On the Councils and the Church, 1539," 148-152.

57 Ibid., 25-30.

58 Two books present Luther's ecclesiology excellently: Althaus, 287-344 and Wilhelm Pauck, The Heritage of the Reformation, rev. and enlarged ed. (London: OUP, 1961), 29-50.

59 For general background to John Calvin's life and work see Walker, 471-480. A detailed and more personal account is William J. Bouwsma, John Calvin (NY and Oxford: OUP, 1988).

60 Bouwsma, 18.

61 John Calvin, "Book Fourth. Of the Holy Catholic Church," in Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. Two, trans. Henry Beveridge (London: James Clarke & Co., 1949), Chapter I, 283, 288; William Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), 191-2; Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), 232-248.

62 Ibid., Chapter II, 304-314.

63 Ibid., Chapter I, 283-4 and Niesel, 182-187.

switches his emphasis on the preaching of the word from the Lutheran stress on the word as the basis of the creation of the Church to the Church as the teacher of the word.⁶⁴

There are two aspects of Calvin's approach to ecclesiology, not in Luther's, that are of particular note to us. The first is that he deals systematically with the doctrine of the Church in Book IV of his Institutes after first covering the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the previous three books. There is therefore a trinitarian structure in the Institutes that followed that of the Nicene Creed.⁶⁵ This carries a trinitarian implication for ecclesiology which he did not quite develop. The second aspect of note for us involves his most prominent concept which is that of the Church as the predestinated elect of God in Christ, in which he agrees with Wycliffe and Huss. Predestination and election feature significantly in his theology as a whole. In this context, although his focus was on predestination and election, he notes the related concept of the biblical covenants and points out that these form a single unified concept and of the Church as a Covenant Community.⁶⁶ By these concepts the cruciality of salvation and its assurance purely by the grace of God and not the works of man is emphasised.⁶⁷ We very much agree with Calvin on the essential unity of all the covenants in the Bible and of the Church as the Covenant Community. These are features we shall pick up when we come to propose the use of covenant as a way to further the trinitarian approach. Therefore we find in Calvin someone who has both a trinitarian and covenantal sense of the Church, although he did not integrate these. Therefore what we shall be proposing can be seen as an integration of two notable lines of ecclesiological conception both of which are identified by Calvin but left unintegrated.

The Reformation in the Church of England started as a political breakaway from Rome in that King Henry VIII replaced the pope as the civil and ecclesiastical head of the Church in England. The pastoral ministry, however, such as the word and sacraments continued as a purely clerical responsibility. Yet doctrinal changes were already gathering momentum before this and continued during and after the break. Through gradual historical development with some ups and downs, Lutheran and Calvinistic theology became increasingly accepted as the doctrinal standards. These became formalised in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion which reflected Lutheran and Calvinistic teachings and rejected Roman Catholic and Anabaptist positions.⁶⁸ There was however no singularly significant exponent of the Anglican stance. The distinctiveness of the position arose primarily from the continuation of the apostolic succession within the Church of England and the conviction that the Church should have historical continuity with doctrinal, liturgical and practical reforms. Unlike Luther or Calvin, there was neither excommunication from Rome nor a restructuring of the episcopal form of ministry. The latter is upheld in that period on historical and practical but not theological grounds.⁶⁹ The Anglican tradition therefore sees itself as being both catholic and reformed and this can be noted as its distinctive ecclesiology. It is by definition an approach that notes the historical and theological shift of the Reformation. Its special feature is that it essentially combines Lutheran and Calvinistic ideas with the continuation of episcopacy. It is not otherwise a theologically distinct approach to ecclesiology and it draws very much from the other strands.

64 Calvin, "Book Fourth," Chapter I, 284, 288-9 and Wallace, 207, 215-231.

65 Calvin, "Book Fourth. Of the Holy Catholic Church," 277-676. Note the outline of the four Books of the Institutes in *ibid.*, 677-689.

66 John Calvin, "Book Second. Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer, in Christ, as First Manifested to the Fathers, Under the Law, and Thereafter to Us under the Gospel," in Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. One, trans. Henry Beveridge (London: James Clarke & Co., 1949), Chapter X, 368-386; "Book Fourth," Chapter XIV, 494-495.

67 *Ibid.*, 283 and Niesel, 159-181, 189-191.

68 The Thirty-Nine Articles can be found at the back of the 1662 Prayer Book. A very useful introduction is Peter Toon, "The English Protestant Creed," in James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, ed., Church, Word, and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 153-162.

69 For general background read Walker, 481-496. For the doctrinal understanding of the Church see H. F. Woodhouse, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology 1547-1603 (London: SPCK, 1954). Note especially pp. 1-28 on the historical and theological background and perspectives of the Church of England, pp. 29-74 on the nature of the Church where both Lutheran and Calvinistic ideas are found in abundance, and pp. 75-106 on the ministry, episcopacy and apostolic succession.

The Anabaptists represent the extreme wing of the Reformation. There was a stream of churches that broke out of the Medieval Church and formed into different groups such as the Mennonites, the Hutterites, and the Swiss Brethren. They shared certain common conceptions of what the Church is. The distinctiveness of this stream is that the Church is a voluntary body where membership involves the volitional act of the person. It is also therefore an organisation separate from the State and no State control in any form was legitimate within it. There was the related belief that after the early Church there followed a Fall of the Church that led into the Middle Ages. Therefore the reforms they sought were far more radical in that the ideal was to return to the Church as it is described in the NT. It allowed for no sound historical development of the Church beyond Constantine because only a hidden remnant existed thereafter. While like Luther they emphasised the cruciality of the confession of faith in Christ by the preaching of the word as the basis of becoming a Christian, they rejected infant baptism and required baptism only of those who could understand the faith explained to them. This corresponded to the concept of the Church as a voluntary organisation.⁷⁰ It is of interest that historically they echo much of Joachim of Fiore of the Medieval Period, in his idea of the epochs of history, in their thinking.⁷¹ Such a conception of the Church paradoxically shares a weakness with the institutional view which they reject, for it is also in effect an essentially sociological concept of the Church. It also unnecessarily confines the understanding of the Church to NT study and so fails to appreciate the wider biblical and dogmatical dimensions of it. It has value in focusing on the importance of the confession of faith and commitment, which may be seen as an implicit covenantal feature. In view of its limitations, it has much less theological scope and depth than the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology.

E. The Modern Period

In the Modern Period the amount of literature on the nature of the Church has become immense. This awareness and abiding attention of the importance of a correct understanding of the Church is a direct result of the emphasis of the Reformation when the long-held and little challenged Medieval conception suffered many divergent criticisms resulting in the breakaway from its institutional structure of the many groups we have mentioned. The very diversity of denominational positions ensure that the issue remains a lively debate. The philosophical, academic and scientific developments and social and environmental changes in the world since the Reformation and new movements and insights from the churches themselves only add to the urgency, importance and complexity of the task of the Church's self-understanding. As we have noted earlier, never has the Church existed and thrived in such a variety and range of national, cultural, political, social and economic groupings all over the world. This is itself a result of its own spread and evangelisation. Never before has the Church around the world faced at once such a diversity of theological, social, ethical, moral and political issues in varying degrees of localization and universality. Therefore it is not surprising that a host of conceptions of what the Church is has arisen. We can but hope here to give a brief, selective and limitedly representative sketch of the situation to give us a sense of the developments since the Reformation and of the situation today.

Roman Catholicism for a long time entrenched itself in the Medieval position in reaction against the challenges of the Reformation. Its view of the Church was expressed along with other doctrinal positions in the Council of Trent and characterised the Counter-Reformation of the Roman Church. It insistently rejected Protestant principles and reaffirmed the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church against the calls for reconceptualization and reform.

70 These basic ideals are noted in Franklin H. Littell, The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism: A Study of the Anabaptist View of the Church (NY: Macmillan & Co., 1964), 46, 55-57, 82-108 and John Howard Yoder, "The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision," in Radical Reformation Reader Concern No. 18, A Pamphlet Series for Questions of Christian Renewal (July 1974): 14-20; also Harold S. Bender, "The Mennonite Conception of the Church and its Relation to Community Building," in *ibid.*, 27-33. A primary source is Balthasar Hubmaier, "A Christian Catechism," trans. Denis Janz in Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran, Texts and Studies in Religion, Vol. Thirteen (New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 147-156 on baptism and the Church. General historical background can be found in Walker, 448-455 and in the books mentioned in this footnote.

71 Littell, 51-53.

Many abuses however were corrected and internal controls over clerical quality and practices were tightened.⁷² This was true of the official Roman Catholic position until Vatican II, which was held as recently as 1962 to 1965. In Vatican II Pope John XXIII specified that the nature of the Church and openness to ecumenical relations were the key concerns.⁷³ There followed the very momentous and historic declaration of a new understanding of the nature of the Church. It differentiated between the "Corpus Christi mysticum" and the "Visible Church" and identified the former along with the concept of "People of God" as the nature of the Church. It also recognised the laity as members of the universal priesthood and lightened the rigidity of a clerical-lay dichotomy.⁷⁴ These are very significant departures from a strict institutional conception that it held for many centuries. Similarly a definite move to ecumenical relations was made.⁷⁵ A new mood of optimism for church renewal and reconceptualization comes across, for example, in the writings of Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, and John Thornhill, who are respectively German, Dutch, and Australian, and also Jesuit, Dominican, and Marist. They worked with the concept of the Church as sacrament or as communion, which follows on the cue set in Vatican II.⁷⁶ It has been hailed by many Protestants as a major step to better relations and understanding with Rome.⁷⁷ Notably, in Thornhill, we can see a move towards a trinitarian ecclesiology.⁷⁸

Eastern Orthodoxy has in the meantime developed along the lines of the Greek fathers. It did not face the upheavals either of doctrines or of its structures as the Roman Catholic Church did in the West. Consequently the path of development of its theology is much more strongly marked by continuity with the Patristic Period. It did dialogue with the different streams of the Reformation and Counter Reformation following these events but continued to have a distinctiveness of its own.⁷⁹ There is therefore much consistency and unity in its conception of the Church. Lossky notes the double aspects of the Church as jointly created by the Christ and the Holy Spirit and the intimate communion of the Persons of the godhead in the mystery of the Church and the Church in union with God.⁸⁰ It is "an image of the Holy Trinity".⁸¹ It is also the "macro-anthropos" and the centre of the universe, even as man is a microcosm of the same universe.⁸² Florovsky stresses the church as the theanthropic union, the continuation and fulfilment of the incarnation of Christ where mankind becomes one. It is ontologically a whole and a communion.⁸³ Pentecost is the fiery Holy Spirit baptism of the whole Church such that the incarnation is being completed in the Church.⁸⁴ Zizioulas explains that the church is an ontological reality and is "a mode of existence" and "a way of being" bound in relationship and communion with the triune God.⁸⁵ Therefore the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology continues to be developed today by this stream.

72 Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik and Hubert Jedin, Reformation and Counter Reformation, trans. Anselm Biggs and Peter W. Becker, History of the Church, Vol. V, ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (London: Burns & Oates, 1980), 496.

73 Gabriel Adrianyi, et al., The Church in the Modern Age, trans. Anselm Biggs, History of the Church, Vol. X, ed. Hubert Jedin, Konrad Repgeb and John Dolan (London: Burns & Oates, 1981), 107, 116.

74 Ibid., 117-118, 126.

75 Ibid., 121-122.

76 See for example, Rahner, The Church and the Sacrament, 9-19; Schillebeeckx, The Mission of the Church, 46-49; Thornhill, Sign and Promise - A Theology of the Church for a Changing World, 70-85.

77 For example, James Atkinson, Martin Luther - Prophet to the Church Catholic (Exeter: Pasternoster Press, 1983), 197-211.

78 Thornhill, 87-89.

79 For the background of its theological development in history see Kallistos Ware, "Christian Theology in the East: 600 - 1453," also "A Note on Theology in the Christian East: The Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries," and "A Note on Theology in the Christian East: The Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries," all in Cunliffe-Jones, ed., 183-225, 307-309, 455-457 respectively.

80 Lossky, 174-195.

81 Ibid., 176.

82 Ibid., 178.

83 Florovsky, 37-72, especially 37-39, 60-61.

84 Ibid., 62-67.

85 Zizioulas, Being as Communion, 15-20.

Protestantism in its myriad expressions produced an equally varied variety of theologies and conceptions of the church. The main thrusts of Luther, Calvin and other Reformers, however, persist and have become the base from which many new perspectives, insights and developments have sprouted. There is therefore a notable proliferation of multi-paradigmatic approaches to ecclesiology. Thielicke's conception of the Church is a modern day version of Luther's emphasis on the Church as being created by the word and the Spirit and is vitally the Church of Christ.⁸⁶ This may also be significantly identified as a move towards a more trinitarian conception of the Church. Brunner aligns himself with Reformed theology and Calvin's ecclesiology and reformulates it as the entity where God's self-communication is ever active.⁸⁷ An Anglican position is presented by Mascall who develops on the concept of the Church as the ontological Mystical Body of Christ without equating it with the institutional structure as the Roman Catholic Church did until Vatican II.⁸⁸ Again, notably for us, he also takes account of the trinitarian nature of the Church although he does not use it as his principal paradigm.⁸⁹ The Anabaptist position has been diffused into different independent groups and into the other Protestant streams since it did not develop as a single distinctive denomination. It can be said that many of the Pentecostal and independent Charismatic churches hold to the idea of a Fall of the church and the ideal of organising the Church and living and ministering by NT principles and patterns.⁹⁰

More and more writers have produced theologies that do not deliberately align themselves with any particular denominational position. This is a result of ecumenical interest, which has been stirred by the Ecumenical Movement, and of the expanding diversity of issues and positions.⁹¹ There are writers such as Pannenberg, Moltmann and Torrance who affirm Reformation principles but have also ventured into new perspectives by combining existing positions or striking out in new directions. Pannenberg uses the concept of the Kingdom of God as the key to understanding the Church.⁹² Moltmann sees the Church through multiple concepts and perspectives but stresses the role of the Holy Spirit. His is also a specifically trinitarian approach which we will look at in detail.⁹³ Torrance draws from Eastern Orthodox and patristic sources and emphasizes the trinitarian nature of the Church.⁹⁴ Emilianos Timiadis also reflects the renewed emphasis today on the trinitarian nature of the Church as there was among the patristic writers in dialogue with the Reformed tradition.⁹⁵

There have been new denominations and new directions in theology since the Reformation such as Methodism, Liberalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. Methodism was a movement within Anglicanism led by John Wesley that became separated into a new denomination.⁹⁶ Liberalism led to a stream of writers that see the Church primarily in sociological, ethical and political terms. Two examples of this are Ernst Troeltsch and Walter Rauschenbusch.⁹⁷ Neo-Orthodoxy was a

86 Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, Vol. Three, 206-214. For a commentary on his theology see Bromiley, Historical Theology - An Introduction, 438-450.

87 Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, 4-5, 19-36.

88 Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church, 109-115.

89 E. L. Mascall, Corpus Christi - Essays on The Church and the Eucharist (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), 4-10.

90 So far not much scholarly literature has been produced by these churches but a reading of a book for the general reader by an Elim Pentecostal pastor John Lancaster, The Spirit-filled Church - A Complete Handbook for the Charismatic Church (Chicester: Sovereign World Ltd., 1987) especially 4, 28-77 would bear out these tendencies.

91 See Walker, 684-694 for a historical sketch of the Ecumenical Movement.

92 Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, ed., Richard John Neuhaus (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 72-101, especially 77-78.

93 Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit. A look at the "Contents" would help bear it out. His trinitarian approach can be noted from 50-65.

94 Torrance, "The Trinitarian Foundation and Character of Faith and Authority in the Church," in T. F. Torrance ed., Theological Dialogues between Orthodox and Reformed Churches (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 79-120.

95 Emilianos Timiadis, "The Trinitarian Structure of the Church and its Authority," in *ibid.*, 121-158.

96 John H. S. Kent, "Christian Theology in the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries - The Doctrine of the Church for the whole period," in Cunliffe-Jones, ed., 520-522.

97 *Ibid.*, 534 and Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Vol. 2, trans. Olive Wyon, the Cloister Library (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1960), 477-494, 1000 and Walter Rauschenbusch,

reassertion of a more conservative position against Liberalism. It was led by Karl Barth with a host of writers after him. Barth's doctrine of the Church is close to Luther and Calvin in asserting that it is created and sustained by the Word and is called to preach this Word. Yet while he regards the Word of God as revelation, Scripture is not the Word but the witness to it. Still in being a faithful witness it is in a secondary sense the Word of God to the Church and for the Church.⁹⁸ Brunner, whom we noted as an example of the Reformed position, is also Neo-orthodox in his theology and therefore is an example of how lines have criss-crossed in the modern age. Bonhoeffer combines sociological insights with Barthian theology to explain the nature of the Church.⁹⁹ Newer writers have emerged, such as David Ford, Dan Hardy, Werner Jeanrond, Richard Roberts, Christoph Schwöbel and Colin Gunton.¹⁰⁰ The latter being one who has taken to emphasize the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology. Hans Küng, a Roman Catholic who disagreed with the official Roman Catholic conception of the Church, has set out an ecclesiology that notes the Trinity as a key factor to it.¹⁰¹ An extreme example is Harvey Cox who proposed a secular theology that sees the Church as the leader of modern society in the process of secularization.¹⁰² Christians from non-European society have contributed new perspectives. Leonardo Boff, a Roman Catholic priest and a proponent of Liberation Theology from Latin America, calls for the formation of Christian base communities as a new form of Church.¹⁰³ It is highly notable, however, that the direction he takes it is a decisively trinitarian one.¹⁰⁴ Takenaka Masao stresses the Church as the first fruits of the new humanity and as the key to creating a Christian life-style in Asia.¹⁰⁵ Samuel Amirtham points to the Church as the prophetic community to society for salvation.¹⁰⁶ Non-European Christian theology is a definite growing new development as churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America grow and become theologically articulate.¹⁰⁷

F. Review of Position

In tracing broadly the historical development of ecclesiology we have noted that the trinitarian approach and the institutional approach were the earliest approaches to ecclesiology. The Cappadocian Fathers developed the first conception of the trinitarian approach and Cyprian developed the basis for the institutional approach. While the former has been maintained within Eastern Orthodoxy, the latter had developed to its climax in the Medieval Period in the Roman West and has subsequently continued to be the official view of the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformation brought in a phase of an upsurge of many new ecclesiological approaches such as Luther's communion of the saints and Calvin's predestined elect. It marked a shift in ecclesiology

Walter Rauschenbusch - *Selected Writings*, ed. Winthrop S. Hudson (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 3-4, 71-94.

98 Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics, being Vol. I, 2), 457-472, 473-476, 743-758.

99 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio - A Dogmatic Inquiry into the Sociology of the Church*, trans. R. Gregor Smith (London: William Collins, Son & Co., 1963). 15-21.

100 Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, ed. *On Being the Church - Essays on the Christian Community* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989). The emphasis of each writer is described in pp 3-19.

101 Hans Küng, *The Church*, trans., Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 107-260

102 Harold B. Kuhn, "Secular Theology," in *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Alan F. Johnson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), 180-184.

103 Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesio-Genesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, trans. Robert R. Barr (London: Collins Liturgical Pub., 1986), 10-33; also Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology - Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia, 1987), 63-79.

104 Boff, *Ecclesio-Genesis*, 19-20, 23-30 is evidence of this, with a new stress on the importance of the Spirit. His most recent work, Leonard Boff, *Trinity and Society*, Liberation and Theology 2, ed. Leonardo Boff, et al, trans., Paul Burns (Turnbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1988), 20-22, 123-154 he specifically proposes that the Trinity is the key to social integration and liberation, which is also what the Church should be.

105 Takenaka Masao, "First Fruits of the New Humanity," in *Living Theology in Asia*, ed. John C. England (London: SCM, 1981), 37-43.

106 Samuel Amirtham, "The Church: The Bearer of Salvation," in *ibid.*, 203-211.

107 See Walker, 695-709 for an overview of modern historical developments. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in All its Aspects* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976) gives a useful simple summary of the variety of approaches to ecclesiology.

from the singular paradigmatic approach of Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism to the use of multiple paradigms. This multiplication of paradigms has continued into modern times where the spread of the Church and the complex environment of the world today in which it lives has encouraged such growth and concern.

There is today an increasing interest in the trinitarian approach in the midst of the multivarious approaches to ecclesiology. More and more ecclesiologists seem to have found in it a particularly fruitful way of ecclesiological development. We have noted, for example, that Mascall, Thielicke, Küng, Moltmann, Boff and Gunton, who are from quite different traditions or social context, have noted or moved in varying degrees to the trinitarian position. Eastern Orthodoxy as represented by such as Lossky, Florovsky and Zizioulas have meanwhile continued to maintain and develop this approach. Roman Catholicism, in contrast, after Vatican II have softened its official insistence of the institutional view and Thornhill is an example of a Roman Catholic who also seeks to move in this direction. Therefore we detect a certain degree of convergence towards and a definite increase of interest in all traditions of the Church for the trinitarian approach.

V. The Trinitarian Approach to Ecclesiology

A. A Case for the Trinitarian Approach

We shall here draw together the points that we have noted with respect to the trinitarian approach in contrast to the other approaches in the above survey of ecclesiology. We shall restate and amplify it as a rationale for why we want to focus on this approach in this thesis:

Firstly the trinitarian approach has proved to be the most historically enduring approach to ecclesiology. While the institutional view, which is the other equally early position on the Church, is facing decline in interest, the trinitarian view is being accorded greater emphasis today.

Secondly this approach in effect immediately puts ecclesiology in touch with other doctrines by integrating it as an aspect of theology as a whole. At least potentially, all theological concepts can be related to the triune God as its source. Therefore ecclesiology, along with any other doctrine, would at least implicitly, if not explicitly, find the Trinity to be the key to theological integration. This is the case for the Eastern Orthodox treatment of ecclesiology.

Thirdly the second point also shows the enormous potential of this position for acting as the central paradigm by which all other paradigms of the Church can find a place. It does seem to me that the multiple paradigmatic situation of today would need some such factor to give it focus without necessarily dissipating or discounting the contribution of the diverse paradigms. It is in fact likely to benefit from a paradigm that can give to each its appropriate place in the understanding of the Church. The trinitarian approach appears to be the best candidate for such a role.

Fourthly the trinitarian approach is the credal position as set forth in the Nicene Creed as it stands today. This is the affirmation of virtually all traditions of the Church. Therefore it has the potential of becoming a universally acceptable conception of the Church among all Christians.

Fifthly this is an essentially relational and communal approach to ecclesiology that emphasizes the unity and harmony of the body of believers universally, not only among ourselves but also between the Church and the Trinity and even within the Trinity itself. The eternal bond of the Persons of the One God becomes the very basis and source for the bonding of all together in Him and with Him. The growth of this unity in the life of the Church on earth today is an ever important and urgent priority.

Sixthly the Church is set in a position of dependence and communion with the Trinity who is the God it worships. This demonstrates directly the cruciality of this God for its life and mission. It is a doxologically, devotionally and theologically satisfying position for those who are of the faith to understand themselves.

Lastly, in view of all the above, it is likely to be the approach that would yield the fullest understanding of the Church at the deepest level.

B. Zizioulas and Moltmann

In the context of this thesis it is obviously necessary to delimit our task. For this purpose we have chosen to compare and contrast the trinitarian ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and Moltmann. In

particular we are focusing precisely on how the trinitarian approach is used by them to construct their respective ecclesiologies. There are a number factors that have guided this choice:

Firstly we find that among the recent ecclesiologies that we have surveyed Zizioulas's and Moltmann's are the two fullest treatment of ecclesiology on a trinitarian basis. While a significant amount of ecclesiological works do treat the Trinity, there is still a wide variation in the degree of emphasis on it. Any ecclesiological paradigm may in some way touch on or relate itself to the Trinity. Therefore not all amount to a trinitarian approach to ecclesiology. In the strict sense, a trinitarian ecclesiology is not simply one that deals in some way with the Trinity but one that sets the ecclesiology itself on a trinitarian basis. Therefore, for example, as we have noted, while Mascal, Thornhill and Küng all treat the Trinity as a significant factor for ecclesiology, theirs are not ecclesiologies that are set on the trinitarian paradigm. This is true, however, of the Eastern Orthodox writers like Lossky, Florovsky and Zizioulas and also of Moltmann, who is from the German Reformed tradition. Therefore Zizioulas and Moltmann are chosen because their ecclesiologies are developed examples of those that are specifically set on the trinitarian paradigm.

Secondly Zizioulas and Moltmann are chosen in contrast to each other because they stem from different traditions of the Church. Zizioulas stands in the long line of Eastern Orthodoxy which is the tradition that has always taken the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology. It has accepted it from the Cappadocians and maintained it until today. His treatment therefore would help us to appreciate this very significant historical trinitarian position on the Church as it is expressed today. Moltmann, in contrast, represents the Reformed or, more broadly, the Protestant tradition as someone who has come to take a trinitarian approach to ecclesiology from the multitude of approaches that Protestantism has to offer. His trinitarian approach therefore comes from quite a different milieu from Zizioulas's and would be a modern trinitarian approach in contrast to the traditional one that Zizioulas's is. There would therefore be points of significant contrast and similarity that should be instructive in examining the content and possibilities of the trinitarian approach.

Thirdly I see certain possibilities of combining positive features of their contributions that could further advance the trinitarian approach to ecclesiology. The way to do this lies in using a concept of covenant that we shall define. We have already noted, in this context, that there has been evidence in history of the direct or indirect use of covenant as a paradigm for ecclesiology, although this has not been integrated with the trinitarian approach. Therefore this thesis can be considered as an attempt in this direction.

VI. The Way Ahead

We shall now proceed in Chapter Two to analyse the trinitarian approach of Zizioulas and in Chapter Three we shall similarly examine that of Moltmann. In Chapter Four we shall make a comparative evaluation of both and identify the key features where we believe a synthesis is possible and fruitful. The final task is to introduce how covenant may be used as a way of positively synthesizing these features towards forming a new augmented trinitarian approach to ecclesiology.