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Towards a Pastoral Care in a Trinitarian Perspective

Holger Eschmann

Anyone with an overview of the teaching of pastoral care in the 20th century in Europe will ascertain that, despite a boom in pastoral care in the past three decades, there is no successful integration of the various concepts and peculiarities of the teaching and practice of pastoral care. The parallel growth of competing approaches is a result, above all, of the still unclarified relationship between theology and the social sciences. The resulting tension accompanies, on the one hand, the education for ministry: In exegetical and dogmatic courses (and mostly in homiletics as well), theological themes such as faith, sin, justification, sanctification, and the like, are discussed. If, on the other hand, one attends classes on the theory of pastoral care or courses in counseling, such vocabulary is rarely heard. In these classes, terms from the social sciences dominate – terms such as “crisis,” “help for life,” “counseling,” “acceptance,” “self worth,” “identity”, etc.

This tension often continues after the theological training in pastoral practice and burdens pastoral caregivers with no small uncertainty in the exercise of their ministry. Many consider themselves incompetent counselors if they have not had any or only insufficient courses in this area. Others begin to wonder, when mediating biblical comfort and absolution in confession, whether they are addressing the real problems of the persons seeking pastoral care. Yet others have become used to the idea that their theological competence has no role to play in pastoral counseling.

It is the thesis of this article that the theory of pastoral care in Trinitarian perspective serves the theological integration of the various ways and methods of contemporary pastoral care and counseling and thus attains relevance for theological training and pastoral identity. I hope to accomplish this by providing a short overview of the development of pastoral care in the 20th century, followed by comments on the current discussion of the Doctrine of the Trinity and its possible significance for pastoral care. Thereafter I will attempt to present the three dimensions of a theology of pastoral care in a Trinitarian perspective and seek to make this description plausible. Finally, these three dimensions will be connected and the attempt will be made cautiously to present a holistic view of pastoral care with its chances for pastoral training and practice. Of course, as readers will soon notice, I will primarily speaking about the situation in Continental Europe and, especially, about the German-speaking part of it.

1. Pastoral Care in the 20th Century

1.1 Kerygmatic Pastoral Care¹

Following the First World War the theological landscape in Continental Europe was strongly shaped by the so-called Dialectical Theology. The best known teacher for pastoral care in this tradition, the Swiss theologian E. THURNEYSSEN, determined to a great degree the teaching and practice of pastoral care in German-speaking Europe into the sixties. In his book “A Theology of Pastoral Care”, the proclamation of the Gospel stands at the center. Pastoral care is “proclaiming the word of God to the individual” (§ 1). Psychology and psychotherapy are (only) helping sciences, which ought to help towards this actual goal of pastoral care. Because the deepest need of the human being, sin, cannot be addressed at a natural level, THURNEYSSEN talked of a “breach” in the dialogue of pastoral care. By this he meant that this dialogue must inevitably reach a point where it is no longer the human – person and situation alike – but the Divine which takes the initiative to speak. This Word of God is the judging and saving word of grace, which finds its focus in confession and absolution.

¹ Cf. Hans Asmussen, *Die Seelsorge. Ein praktisches Handbuch ueber Seelsorge und Seelenfuehrung*, 2. Aufl., Muenchen 1934; Eduard Thurneysen, *Die Lehre von der Seelsorge*, Muenchen 1948. Helmut Tacke, *Glaubenshilfe als Lebenshilfe. Probleme und Chancen heutiger Seelsorge*, 3. Aufl., Neukirchen-Vluyn 1993 and Manfred Seitz, *Praxis des Glaubens. Gottesdienst, Seelsorge und Spiritualitaet*, 3. Aufl., Goettingen 1985, are more recent concepts referring to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Alongside the assurance of forgiveness, which, for example, D. BONHOEFFER too has described as the “heart of pastoral care,”² the Reformed theologian THURNEYSSEN placed church discipline which has as its goal “leading individuals, upon whom God is not willing to give up, to receiving proclamation and sacrament and thus to the Word of God, incorporating them into the congregation and thereby maintaining them.”³ The most important dimension of kerygmatic pastoral care is the vertical element, the relationship of the human being to God.

Among the strengths of this concept of pastoral care is its theological differentiation. Additionally, the pastoral caregiver has not to carry the main burden, since God is given the more essential part to play. The human involvement is first of all as witness. God is the One who Acts. But precisely here is also one of the critical points. Kerygmatic pastoral care was and is in danger of leaving the person seeking help in the position of being “preached at” instead of “listened to.” Furthermore kerygmatic pastoral care is difficult to evaluate in practice and hardly teachable and learnable in theological seminaries or special courses.

1.2 Client-Centered Pastoral Care⁴

Roughly 30 years ago the theory and practice of pastoral care in Europe was gripped by a fundamentally new orientation which, however, had been in the making since the time of SCHLEIERMACHER. The new orientation was related, on the one hand, to the increasing uncertainty of many of the clergy in the light of the rapidly changing world in which they lived – the collapse of old orders and values and the increase in loneliness, existential fear, depressions, and the like. On the other hand, the insights and methods of the social sciences – most of all psychology – were gaining in importance, and they offered themselves for the new situation. In Germany the appearance in 1972 of the book, “Seelsorge als Gespräch” by J. SCHARFENBERG, presented a devastating judgment upon the understanding of pastoral care found in Dialectic Theology. For SCHARFENBERG, a turning point in his own life had come in his time as hospital chaplain when a woman came to him and ask him to speak absolution for her sins. After he had done so, the woman returned again on the next day, expressed her doubts about the effectiveness of this forgiveness of sins, and told him how she had sought the same results a total of fourteen times with different clergy and had never been able to get rid of her feelings of guilt.⁵ At this point SCHARFENBERG decided the time had come to use the methods of Freudian psychoanalysis instead of the directive methods of traditional pastoral care, which, in his opinion, no longer had any power. The determining factor in pastoral care was no longer the vertical dimension but the horizontal.

Parallel to SCHARFENBERG, it was the CPT-movement (German: KSA-Bewegung) from America which has shaped pastoral care since the end of the 1960s. Theologically, the modern pastoral care movement is inspired first of all by P. TILLICH. Psychologically, it is C. R. ROGERS who stands in the background alongside the classical representatives such as S. FREUD and C.-G. JUNG. ROGERS’ work has described variables for the therapist which became important for all modern pastoral care – congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding. With the method of reflective listening he developed a learnable and testable instrument for leading therapeutic and pastoral conversations.

And here we find the strength of therapeutic pastoral care. The practice of pastoral care becomes teachable and learnable and can be evaluated. However, the deficit in theory and theology of client-centered pastoral care has not been dealt with in a thorough way to this day. Additionally, the focus on the two-person relationship of therapist and client is increasingly viewed as problematic.

1.3 Pastoral Care at the End of the 20th Century

1.3.1 Pastoral Care in the Post-Modern Era

² *Ges. Schriften V*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge, Muenchen 1972, p. 363-413.

³ *Die Lehre von der Seelsorge*, p. 26.

⁴ Cf. Dietrich Stollberg, *Therapeutische Seelsorge. Die amerikanische Seelsorgebewegung. Darstellung und Kritik*, 3. Aufl., Muenchen 1972; Howard J. Clinebell, *Modelle beratender Seelsorge*, 5. Aufl., Muenchen 1985; Joachim Scharfenberg, *Seelsorge als Gespräch*, 5. Aufl., Goettingen 1991; Helga Lemke, *Theologie und Praxis annehmender Seelsorge*, Stuttgart e.a. 1978.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

At the beginning of the 1990s many efforts were made to take better account of the social framework and the sociological approach in the teaching of pastoral care.⁶ In the so called post-modern, multicultural society in which everything is changing at an increasing rate, it becomes more and more difficult for the individual to establish a constant identity. The talk of the “patchwork identity” arises which is assembled out of various possible norms and role models for life. Positively seen, this means that a person has a plenitude of possibilities for self-realization – that each person can make of him or herself an art work. On the other hand, it is as great strain to have permanent to construct and reconstruct one’s own self. Out of previous “normal biographies” have developed “biographies of choice” which are constantly being supervised by our fellow humans.⁷ Therefore the decisive challenge for pastoral care today is to help the individual to self-reassurance.⁸ This occurs above all in self-limitation. For this kind of pastoral care one needs no special training and no clerical role – but “only” the courage of faith. In our encounter with God we perceive ourselves as fragments, as waiting and suffering beings in a damaged world. Wherever pastoral care calls to mind the fragmentary and eschatological nature of human life, it can relieve in an effective way the pressure created by the process of individualization.

In connection with the sociological approach also the rituals of church and life and their stabilizing affect upon persons – formerly strongly criticized by psychoanalysis – receive increased attention in the newer theory of pastoral care.⁹

1.3.2 Pastoral Care and the Congregation¹⁰

Because of the narrowed focus on the one-to-one relationship in both kerygmatic and client-centered pastoral care and because of the progressive professionalization in counseling, the numbers of those who call for a stronger anchoring of pastoral care in the life of the congregation have increased in recent times. According to these voices, neither the category of *martyria* (witness) as emphasized by the pastoral care of the Dialectic Theology, nor the category of *diakonia* (service, ministry) that is at the center of therapeutic care, but rather the category of *koinonia* (community) is the proper dimension for Biblical pastoral care.¹¹ The possibilities and the resources of the congregation as a space for pastoral care must be realized and developed further. R. BOHREN offers this provocative formulation: “To the essence of the congregation belongs pastoral care. Congregation is, as much as it becomes, pastoral care.”¹² J.W. FOWLER moves in the same direction when he defines pastoral care as “sponsoring the individual through the community of faith in the sense of an ecology of care and of vocation.”¹³

2. The current discussion of the Doctrine of the Trinity and Pastoral Care

In his introduction to the volume of essays with the title “Trinitarian Theology Today“ Chr. SCHWOEBEL writes, “One of the most interesting developments in systematic theology in recent years has been a renewed interest in the Doctrine of the Trinity and its implications for various aspects of Christian theology.”¹⁴ Since it is not the task of this article to discuss the Doctrine of the

⁶ Cf. Rolf Schieder, *Seelsorge in der Postmoderne, Wege zum Menschen*, 1994, Vol. 46, p. 26-43; Albrecht Groezinger, *Differenz-Erfahrung. Seelsorge in der multikulturellen Gesellschaft*, Waltrop 1994.

⁷ Cf. Thomas Polednitschek, *Die Goetzen der Scham, Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, No. 21 from 27/05/1994.

⁸ Rolf Schieder, *Seelsorge in der Postmoderne*, p. 36.

⁹ Cf. Donald Capps, *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care*, Philadelphia 1983; Anselm Gruen, *Geborgenheit finden, Rituale feiern. Wege zu mehr Lebensfreude*, Stuttgart 1997.

¹⁰ Cf. Reinhold Gestrich, *Hirten fuereinander sein. Seelsorge in der Gemeinde*, Stuttgart 1990; Hermann Eberhardt, *Praktische Seel-Sorge-Theologie*, 2. Aufl., Bielefeld 1993; James W. Fowler, *Glaubensentwicklung. Perspektiven fuer Seelsorge und kirchliche Bildungsarbeit*, Muenchen 1989; Rudolf Bohren, *Gemeinde und Seelsorge*, in Rudolf Bohren, *Geist und Gericht. Arbeiten zur Praktischen Theologie*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979, p. 129-142.

¹¹ Cf. Hermann Eberhardt, *Praktische Seel-Sorge-Theologie*, p. 185f.

¹² *Gemeinde und Seelsorge*, p. 129.

¹³ *Glaubensentwicklung*, p. 32f.

¹⁴ Christoph Schwoebel, *The Renaissance of Trinitarian Theology: Reasons, Problems and Tasks in Christoph Schwoebel (Ed.), Trinitarian Theology Today. Essays on Divine Being and Act*, Edinburgh 1995, p. 1-30, p. 1; Bruno Forte, *Trinitaet als Geschichte. Der lebendige Gott*, Mainz 1989, p. 12f. lists a recent collection of publications concerning the Trinity. Of particular relevance for our context are: Albrecht Groezinger, *Erzaehlen und Handeln. Studien zu einer*

Trinity as such, but rather its relevance for the theory and practice of pastoral care, I will only present what the recent Trinitarian approaches formulate in common, despite all differences. In this regard three lines of thought should be noted:

(1) The point of departure for Trinitarian theological reflection today is the biblical tradition – more precisely, the proclamation of Jesus of the reign of God, his death and his resurrection. It is here that otherwise quite divergent concepts of the Trinity meet, e.g. those of the Catholic theologian B. FORTE and of the Protestants J. MOLTMANN, W. PANNENBERG and E. JUENGEL. The “scriptural proof” is at times very intensively followed,¹⁵ which can be well understood against the background of the rationalistic and dogma-critical polemics denying the scriptural foundations of the Doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁶ It is a common concern of the authors to show that, as E. JUENGEL formulates it, a “consistent interpretation of the New Testament tradition of Jesus as Christ . . . [leads] necessarily to the acknowledgment of the Triune God”¹⁷.

(2) Closely related to this re-coupling to the New Testament tradition is the narrative structure of today’s talk about the Trinitarian God. The God of the Bible cannot be captured in abstract concepts, but God is, as A. GROEZINGER formulates it, “always a God in motion, a God involved in various stories. To talk about this God means, therefore, to allow his stories to find expression.”¹⁸

(3) Finally, current Trinitarian reflections take as a point of reference Karl RAHNER’s assertion that “the ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity and vice versa.”¹⁹ – which should not surprise us in the light of what has already been said. This is understood as a sort of self-limitation upon theological speculation.²⁰

This contemporary Biblical and narrative shaped Doctrine of the Trinity with its orientation in the Revelation of God actually demands acknowledgment in issues of practical theology.²¹ For pastoral care it means that God can never be “spoken of without reference to his [creative] relationship to human beings, his participation in suffering . . . , his assumption of death and his gift of the Spirit.”²² The stories of the Bible tell – and urge us to retell – how God is looking for persons, taking on their concerns, and caring for them in manifold ways. God speaks to the human beings in His creation, He speaks to them in the love of His Son and through the fellowship of the Spirit. And just as the works of the Godhead *ad extra* (i.e. creation, redemption, sanctification) *indivisa sunt*, so the individual is addressed and called to respond by God’s caring attention as a whole person. Nevertheless, as we must introduce certain differentiations in our Doctrine of God, we have to do this too in an anthropology which corresponds to the Triune God. For this reason a Doctrine of Humankind which takes its orientation in the Doctrine of the Trinity must be a dynamic and differentiated anthropology, to which also has to correspond a multi-dimensional teaching on pastoral care and practice.

trinitarischen Grundlegung der Praktischen Theologie, Muenchen 1989; Wilfried Joest, *Dogmatik, Bd. I: Die Wirklichkeit Gottes*, 3. Aufl., Goettingen 1989; Eberhard Juengel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, 6. Aufl., Tuebingen 1992; Ernstpeter Maurer, *Tendenzen neuerer Trinitaetslehre, Verkuendigung und Forschung*, 1994, Vol. 39, p. 3-24; Juergen Moltmann, *Trinitaet und Reich Gottes. Zur Gotteslehre*, 2. Aufl., Muenchen 1986.

¹⁵ For example Bruno Forte, *Trinitaet als Geschichte*, and Eberhard Juengel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, in particular p. 409-543.

¹⁶ Cf. the importance of Adolf v. Harnack’s statement, the doctrine of the Trinity being “ein Werk des griechischen Geistes auf dem Boden des Evangeliums”, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte I*, 4. Aufl., 1909, p. 20.

¹⁷ Eberhard Juengel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, p. 479f.; also Wilfried Joest, *Dogmatik*, p. 333.

¹⁸ Albrecht Groezinger, *Erzaehlen und Handeln*, p. 11, following Wilhelm Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding*, Hamburg 1953.

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, *Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte*, in Johannes Feiner / Magnus Loehrer (Hg.), *Mysterium Salutis*, Bd. 2, Einsiedeln e.a. 1967, p. 328. This phrase is quoted among others by Eberhard Juengel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, p. 507; Bruno Forte, *Trinitaet als Geschichte*, p. 16; Wilfried Joest, *Dogmatik*, Bd. I, p. 332; Juergen Moltmann, *Trinitaet und Reich Gottes*, p. 165.

²⁰ There is a continuing debate on the “and vice versa” however, being aware of the problem that the concept of God’s freedom is not kept in adequate manner, cf. Bruno Forte, *Trinitaet als Geschichte*, p. 21.

²¹ Cf. Albrecht Groezinger, *Erzaehlen und Handeln*.

²² Dietrich Ritschl, *Zur Logik der Theologie. Kurze Darstellung der Zusammenhaenge theologischer Grundgedanken*, Muenchen 1984, p. 177.

3. The Three Dimensions of Pastoral Care²³

The following description of a pastoral care in Trinitarian perspective is orientated by the structure of the Apostles' Creed as an old expression of the economic Trinity.

3.1 Blessing and Healing – Pastoral Care in the Field of the Doctrine of Creation

The so-called therapeutic pastoral care with its methods taken from the social sciences can be primarily assigned to the Doctrine of Creation.²⁴ In this field counseling finds expression through specialized pastoral counselors. This pastoral care is above all help for living in times of crisis. It concentrates on how an individual acts to himself or herself and on the relationship between a person's self and the world. In a "helping relationship of true understanding"²⁵ healing tendencies of self-actualization – spoken in the language of human sciences – can become effective in the individual. The previously mentioned help for living through stabilizing rituals can also be partially placed in this area – likewise the various methods of body therapy and relaxation exercises which continue to gain importance for pastoral care.²⁶ In theological terms, we can speak of God's creative and sustaining activity.

Of course, none of this can be separated from the dimension of salvation. Because even in the horizon of the Creation itself a central concern is that of liberation from false commitments and overcoming guilt-ridden compulsions.²⁷

This form of pastoral care on the horizon of the First Article of the Creed can be learned methodologically in courses and can be evaluated by means of analyses of conversations (verbatim). Of course, there is the danger of a fixation on one's self and on the self-healing powers within each human being which overlooks the dimension of the *extra nos*. Against this it is important to assert that in theological anthropology and also in certain psychological concepts (e.g. those of V. E. FRANKL) being human is always being something above and beyond oneself. Human existence finds its realization not only in dealing with oneself in a loving and respectful manner, but also in the dedication of oneself to another human being or to a significant cause.

Pastoral care and not psychotherapy is a process in the field of the First Article of the Creed, because it consciously takes place in the context of the church; because it occurs through the mediacy of pastoral care-givers whose confession is the Christian faith; because the question of faith, if raised to consciousness in conversation, will thoroughly be dealt with; because the possibility for prayer is open; and, finally, because Christian faith in the Triune God is the foundation and motivation for such pastoral caregiving.

3.2 Reconciliation and Conversion – Pastoral Care and Salvation

Christology and Soteriology can be the appropriate location for pastoral care that is concentrated on the mediation of the loving care of God in Jesus Christ. It is concerned with illuminating the human situation under the judgment and the grace of God, with the proclamation of the Gospel, with human guilt and with the unconditional acceptance by God. Here, expressed in the classical terminology of pastoral care, is the "Office of the Keys" of the church, where binding and freeing takes place. That this dimension cannot be separated from that previously mentioned is evident as matters of guilt and forgiveness often manifest themselves in psychosomatic illness. Help with faith becomes help for living.

Just as there are correlations to pastoral care in the area of the First Article of the Creed, likewise in pastoral care in the fields of Christology and Soteriology the Third Article with its eschatological dimension of Christian faith comes into view. Drawing on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ consolation and comfort can be offered in the face of inevitable suffering and in the face of death.

²³ Cf. Albrecht Peters, Christliche Seelsorge im Horizont der drei Glaubensartikel, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1989, Vol. 114, p. 641-659.

²⁴ In my opinion a serious problem arises with an interpretation of therapeutic pastoral care in terms of Christology, i.e. incarnation. For further discussion see Helmut Tacke, *Glaubenshilfe als Lebenshilfe*, p. 47-62 and Manfred Seitz, *Erneuerung der Gemeinde*, Goettingen 1985, p. 135.

²⁵ Martin Jochheim, Carl R. Rogers und die Seelsorge, *Theologia Practica*, 1993, Vol. 28, p. 237.

²⁶ Cf. Michael Klessmann/Ingrid Liebau (Ed.), *Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der Werke Gottes*, Goettingen 1997.

²⁷ Albrecht Peters, Christliche Seelsorge im Horizont der drei Glaubensartikel, p. 653f.

This second dimension of pastoral care can be less well “methodized” and is thus less easily learned, taught, and evaluable. Competence in pastoral care in the area of the salvation of Christ grows above all out of faith, from one’s own spirituality.

3. Sanctification and Fellowship – Pastoral Care and Holy Spirit

Corresponding to the Third Article of the Creed is a “pastoral care of fellowship along the way under the leadership of the Holy Spirit”²⁸. In the “communion of the saints”, a mutual aid to one another takes place along the way of discipleship – a common growing and maturing in faith, a life in sanctification. That which was still to be heard in THURNEYSSEN’S concept of church discipline, but, so far as I know, played no important role in kerygmatic pastoral care, and which was almost entirely lost sight of in client-centered pastoral care – namely the notion that Christian pastoral care finds its place within the congregation – it is to this that the third dimension of a Trinitarian view of pastoral care points. In worship and other celebrations, in activities in various ministry groups, house groups, task forces, in groups for pastoral care and supervision, but also in religious communities and orders, and in charismatic renewal, pastoral care takes place in many different ways. In the Methodist tradition we would, of course, especially point to the WESLEYAN classes and bands, the concern of which has received renewed emphasis even in Europe within the past several years.²⁹

The eschatological perspective of the Third Article of the Creed reminds us that human existence retains a fragmentary character, that human persons, and with them the whole of creation, long for their perfection and completion; that it is not yet clear what we might once become (1 John 3:2). The believe in God who will accomplish us, helps against the overtaxing of our natures through postmodern compulsion to successful biographical self-construction.

4. Healing, Reconciliation and Fellowship: Pastoral Care in Trinitarian Perspective

This systematic view of pastoral care allows to integrate the oppositional points of view in the currently prevailing discussions of pastoral care. A perspective will be gained with the help of which one can order the various concepts without having to play them off one against another. This permits in the practice of pastoral care to use the technique of non-directive reflecting listening as well as to speak forgiveness of sins according to the situation and client before us – and both can be done in good theological conscience. With an anthropology which is corresponding to the Triune God a diagnostic tool is offered which teaches to differentiate between the various areas of human exigency.³⁰ And the pastoral counselor is no longer a lone ranger but take cognizance of the resources of the Christian congregation.

It is important that the various dimensions of Christian pastoral care sketched here are not seen as areas separate one from the other, but that by reference to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity of God the mutual connections become apparent in a dynamic fashion. The three dimensions of pastoral caregiving have need of one another to prevent unhealthy one-sidedness. This danger can be shown for example by reference to the problems of guilt and guilt feelings. Real guilt cannot be removed by therapy. Neurotic feelings of guilt cannot be helped by confession and absolution; and in order to deal with guilt and to prevent loading new guilt upon oneself, a person needs the helping community of fellow Christians.

The fundamental concern of the effort to establish a Trinitarian theory and practice of pastoral care can be compared to the way in which R. L. MADDUX interprets the strong emphasis upon the Doctrine of the Trinity by the WESLEYS. It is not a question of abstract speculation, but rather the concern that every form should be avoided of a deficient Unitarianism, which describes God and God’s activity in humans as one-dimensional. Against this “the Wesleys sought to form in their

²⁸ Ibid., p. 654.

²⁹ Cf. David L. Watson, *Wenn zwei oder drei... Verantwortliche Nachfolge in der Gemeinde* (Orig.: *Accountable Discipleship*) Stuttgart 1984, Dieter Sackmann, *Wesleys Klassen: ein Modell fuer verbindliche Gemeinschaft vom Evangelium her*, *Theologie fuer die Praxis*, 1990, Vol. 16, p. 10-25.

³⁰ Gert Hartmann, *Lebensdeutung. Theologie fuer die Seelsorge*, Goettingen 1993, does not refer to the doctrine of the Trinity but rather relies on the three requests of the Lord’s Prayer “Give us this day our daily bread”, “forgive us our debts” und “deliver us from evil”.

Methodist followers a truly Trinitarian balance of (1) reverence for the God of Holy Love and for God/Father's original design for human life, (2) gratitude for the unmerited Divine Initiative in Christ that frees us from the guilt and enslavement of our sins, and (3) responsiveness to the Presence of the Holy Spirit that empowers our recovery of the Divine Image in our lives. There can be no better expression of Wesley's theology of responsible grace than Christians who preserve such a Trinitarian balance as they proceed along the Way of Salvation."³¹

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³¹ 31 Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace. John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville 1994, p. 140.