

Foreword

I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR THIS EXCELLENT BOOK BASED ON BROCK Bingaman's dissertation. It is a model for logic in thinking and clarity in style. But what impressed me most was what I learned not only about Maximus the Confessor but also about my own theology. This type of comparative theology between premodern and postmodern theologies is most fruitful.

There is a *communio theologorum*, not always a *communio sanctorum*, for an understanding across time and space. The contexts are different, but the text is the same. The cultures and ages are separated, but what matters in the theological community is always and everywhere the same: the Logos of God.

With regard to the theologians of the ancient church we have to take into account that they lived in premodern times. The theology of modern times was different. Today we are attempting to develop a postmodern, ecological theology because our world needs an ecological future if we want to survive. We therefore return to premodern concepts to translate them into the postmodern mind. The new trinitarian thinking in western theology, replacing the simple monotheism or Unitarianism of modern theology, shows this clearly. This can also be observed in the new doctrines of creation: Modern theology had taken up only the fundamental distinction between God and world from the biblical creation narratives. Transcendence and immanence were separated so that at the end there is a worldless God and a godless world. With this distinction, theology wanted to serve the modern disenchantment and the secularization of the world. The "world" is humanity's world. From the biblical creation stories, only Genesis 1 and 2 were relevant. The new ecological theology, as demonstrated in this book, understands creation as a trinitarian process and therefore a cosmos filled with the energies of the divine Spirit. A Christian interpretation of creation must begin with the reconciliation of the cosmos in Christ according to the letters of Ephesians and Colossians, as orthodox theologians always did.

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With this worldview, the position of humans also changes. We are no longer “lords and owners of nature,” as Descartes stated, but co-creatures among all living things and members of the greater creation-community. Instead of the “arrogance of power” of modern human beings, we learn a kind of cosmic humility. Anthropology in the work of Maximus is important in this respect, because it is part of his “Christocentrism.” At the center of his christology are the two movements of God: incarnation and resurrection. God became human, as Athanasius asserted, so that human beings might become God. This is the theology and eschatology of *theosis*. From the Reformation in modern times we may add another perspective: The humanization of inhuman beings. God became man to make human beings from “proud and unhappy gods,” as Luther maintained. This is not directed against the *theosis*-expectation, but is the necessary presupposition. Without dismantling the “God complex” of modern men and women, there can be no reconciliation between human culture and the nature of the earth. Ancient church incarnation-theology and the theology of the cross of the Reformers complement one another and form a common theology of resurrection for the salvation of humans and the salvation of nature.

I want to show with these few remarks on pre- and postmodern theology and on trinitarian and ecological thinking how promising the comparisons are that Brock Bingaman has started with this remarkable study.

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