

Preface

My reflections on the Holy Spirit and Worship have been greatly helped by my lived experience of leading worship and my engagement with both lay and ordained people in reflecting on the meaning and nature of worship, as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In this book, I look at the significance of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and worship as seen in two theologians from different parts of the church, and from different centuries. I comment on the unexpected congruities within their thinking, and categorise these in terms of a quadrilateral, with the four sides being personhood, immediacy, truth and transformation.

These two theologians are John Owen, seventeenth-century English Puritan Divine, who wrote extensively on pneumatology and saw the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit as having a particular focus in worship; and John Zizioulas, contemporary Orthodox theologian, for whom the Holy Spirit embodies communion, particularly in worship as focussed in the Eucharist.

I argue that in worship there is an immediacy of encounter with the triune God through the particular mediation of the Holy Spirit; that this encounter draws the person into relationship with the God who is known within the Trinity as being in relationship, and who draws people into a relationship that brings about the fulfilment of personhood; that this encounter leads into a truth that is relational, thus expanding the nature and understanding of the role of doctrine; and that this encounter is transformational, in terms of the person and creation.

I build on perspectives from theologians from two different centuries and traditions of the church for whom pneumatology and worship are

significant areas of their thinking. I do this in order to argue that one part of the activity of the Holy Spirit is the flourishing of diversity, a diversity which is held relationally within the source of divine life within the Trinity. I conclude by looking at the ecumenical challenges offered in the coming together of these two perspectives.

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