



DOING GOD'S STORY IN WORSHIP: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM ON THE CHURCH'S SANCTUARY

Session 2a: Theological Touchstones for Worship:
Through Jesus Christ, Worship Incorporates Us
Into the Dance of the Triune God

TRINITARIAN

With a nod to James Torrance

4 BASIC IMAGES DRAWN FROM TRINITARIAN LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

- Relationality and community
- Christological-centered and pneumatologically-witnessed specific content
- Balanced integration of divine and human and of the 3 Persons
- Dependency for the human activity of worship

Note on language for God: For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I will continue to use traditional language for the Triune Persons in this lecture although I in no way want to intimate that gender is intrinsic to the Divine nature.

A NOD TO JAMES TORRANCE:
THE ECONOMY OF WORSHIP MIRRORS THE
ECONOMY OF SALVATION

SALVATION

From God the Father
through Jesus Christ
in the power of the Holy Spirit

WORSHIP

To God the Father
through Jesus Christ
in the power of the Holy Spirit

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES FROM TORRANCE
(WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND THE TRIUNE GOD OF GRACE)

“Whatever else our worship is, it is our liturgical amen to the worship of Christ (to God the Father).”

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES FROM TORRANCE
(WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND THE TRIUNE GOD OF GRACE)

“Christ takes what is ours (broken lives and unworthy prayers), sanctifies them, offers them without blemish to the Father, and gives them back to us so that we might benefit and feed on him. He takes our prayers and makes them his prayers, and he makes his prayers our prayers, and we know our prayers are heard ‘for Jesus’ sake’.”

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES FROM TORRANCE
(WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND THE TRIUNE GOD OF GRACE)

“Christian worship is, therefore, our participation through the Spirit in the Son’s communion with the Father, in his vicarious life of worship and intercession. It is our response to our Father for all that he has done for us in Christ. It is our self-offering in body, mind and spirit, in response to the one true offering made for us in Christ, our response of gratitude (eucharistia) to God’s grace (charis), our sharing by grace in the heavenly intercession of Christ.”



MALOS MOMENT

TORRANCE COMPLAINS ABOUT 2 KINDS OF “UNITARIAN WORSHIP”

INTENTIONALLY UNITARIAN

No mediation by Christ in worship is necessary; we have unmediated access to God the Father.

FUNCTIONALLY UNITARIAN IN PRACTICE AND PERSPECTIVE

“Although it stresses the God-humanward movement in Christ (with reference to salvation), the human-Godward movement (in worship) is still ours (and only ours).”

TRINITARIAN LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

STRENGTH

The point of reference: contemplating the relationship and interaction of the three Persons and seeing corporate Christian worship as part of that interaction

WEAKNESS

(Potential) loss of the narrative aspect for remembrance because the economy under closest consideration is the Trinitarian one, not the economy of salvation per se

QUESTIONS THAT COME TO MIND

1. What's the basis for person-to-person relationship within the worshipping assembly? What's the critical community that is conceived of being the worshipping community? Is the church defined in relationship to the internal dynamics of the Trinity?
2. How do the content, rhythms, and symbols of our worship disclose the God known and revealed in Jesus Christ?
3. What is the content about divine activity as told in worship? What are the collaborative roles of the Persons within this activity?
4. What can we imagine Christ and the Spirit prompting and leading within us? What kind of activity is fitting to what we know of Christ and the Spirit from Scripture? What can we imagine as Christ-originating and Christ-mediated content and actions toward God the Father?
5. Is the worship "functionally unitarian," i.e., Christ as its mediator is not needed or Christ could not be its mediator?

THE KEY IDEA/BASIC DEFINITION
OF EACH THEOLOGY

1. Dynamic worship narrative:
Worship is the *doing* of God's story.
2. Eschatological: Worship is the preliminary in-breaking of the future
3. Trinitarian: Worship is _____.
4. Christological/Incarnational

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1. Dynamic worship narrative: Worship is the *doing* of God's story.
2. Eschatological: Worship is the preliminary in-breaking of the future
3. Trinitarian: Worship is getting caught up in the dynamics between the three Persons of the Trinity.
4. Christological/Incarnational