

perspective

Trinity Takeaway:

Three (of course) Perspective Questions on the Worship of the Triune God

By Pastor Scotty Smith



It's

hard to imagine how anyone could read this entire edition of *Worship Leader* and remain neutral or blasé about the

topic of the Trinity. After all, we're talking about the very essence of the God we trust for our salvation, and the One we present to our congregations, and to the nations, as alone worthy to be worshiped.

Personally, I couldn't agree more with Scotsman, Thomas Torrance, when he said, "The doctrine of the Trinity is the central dogma of Christian theology, the fundamental grammar of the knowledge of God. Because the doctrine of the Trinity gives expression to the fact that God has opened himself to us in such a way that we may know him in the inner relations of his Divine Being, and have communion with him in his divine life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (*Trinitarian Perspectives*, Thomas F. Torrance). I find that stunning! If Dr. Torrance is right, then the implications are glorious, enormous and eternal.

So where do we go from here? The journey from professing a truth to possessing a truth is often a matter of perspective. Here's a "trinity" of questions for further reflection and connection, each one intended to fuel your heart for that sacred journey. Hopefully, you will take the time to ponder these questions slowly and prayerfully, and then reflect on them with the men and women with whom you steward God's worship wherever you are privileged to serve Him.

Does the worship we plan reveal the Trinity?

Are we Trinitarian by conviction? If we are convinced, by the voice of Scripture, that God is tri-personal then let us work hard to build services of worship which reflect this grand and gracious reality. Since worship is declaring God's worth, then to present Him

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as less than Trinitarian or other than Trinitarian would represent the greatest sabotaging and miscarriage of our calling as worship leaders. A.W. Tozer says, "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him." In our services of worship, are we intentional in addressing and worshipping each member of the Godhead? Would our congregations become Trinitarian based only on the songs we weave into our services week to week? Or would they become "modalists"—knowing and worshipping only one member of the Trinity, whether that's the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

If we remain unconvinced or are wavering in the conviction about God as Trinity, it behooves us to invest the time and energy to deal honestly with this matter. To fail to do so would constitute a failure in our calling, and a failure in loving God's people well.

Does the worship we offer require the Trinity?

Are we Trinitarian of necessity? Being convinced by the Scriptures that God is Triune is one thing. Being committed to this doctrine through relationship with one's denominational or theological tradition is another. But are you compelled to be Trinitarian through owning your own sinfulness and brokenness, and through an inventory of the systemic evil and brokenness in society and culture? Does your heart have to conclude, "Only by such a sovereign loving Father, only through a substitute and Savior, like Jesus, and only by the power and presence of God the Holy Spirit dare I hope for the redemption of my life,

and the restoration of the entire cosmos." When we find life in the person and work of each member of the Trinity is when our theology becomes God's doxology.

Does the worship we execute reveal in the Trinity?

Are we Trinitarian with rejoicing? This final question invites us to be honest about the "always challenge" of leading God's people in God's worship. Where do we presently find more passion and satisfaction, in being worship leaders or lead worshipers? The greatest gift any of us will ever give those under our care is a current experience of gospel astonishment—resting in the Father's love, relying on the Son's righteousness and repenting and worshipping through the Spirit's presence. How is it with our hearts in this season of life and ministry? Are we dancing the dance of perichoresis—enjoying the interpersonal love, fellowship, and joy which have been the eternal delight of the Trinity? Grace runs downhill. Let's humble ourselves before the Father, collapse afresh on Christ, and drink deeply of the Spirit's water! WW

Scotty served as Senior Pastor at Christ Community Church in Franklin, TN, for its first twenty years and has seen its membership grow to over three thousand. He invests much of his time now in world missions, speaking, writing, coaching church planters, and serving as adjunct professor at Covenant Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando.