

Chapter 2 In a Trinitarian Embrace: Reflections from a Local Eucharistic Community in a Global World

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Abstract The context of the chapter is an Anglican “liberal Catholic” congregation in the Church of England, within a multicultural northern UK city, where those who gather represent the diversity of the globalized, postcolonial world. The chapter highlights the relationship between Anglo-Catholic Eucharistic liturgy, with its Trinitarian form, and feminist commitment to justice-making. The exclusion of feminist reimagining from current rethinking of Trinitarian theology is challenged by affirming the place of a sparse Trinitarian rule, in order to expose heteropatriarchal contraventions of the rule and then to re-site feminist reimagining in relation to it. This enables female imagery for God to infuse, rather than displace, classical liturgical language of God as Father-Son-Spirit, and undermines deeply entrenched heteropatriarchal contraventions. The metaphor of a Trinitarian embrace reflects this opening of the received Trinitarian liturgical form. The impetus for the feminist struggle for justice is found in being swept up into Christ through the Trinitarian *missio Dei*, in anticipation of the abundant table spread by Divine Wisdom for all people.

Introduction

This chapter takes the reader to an imagined local place, which is a composite of a number of actual places while not identical with any one of them. The place is a local Anglican parish church within the Church of England, in a northern English city, located within easy reach of the city centre. Within the broad spectrum that makes up the Church of England, its tradition tends towards the (Anglo)Catholic, rather than to the (once Puritan) evangelical. Our imaginary Church was built or revived by nineteenth-century founders, who

valued the Anglo-Catholic strand in post-Reformation history of the English Church, in the decades when established northern dioceses were adapted in response to rapid growth in city populations; not far away are sister churches which stand within evangelical and “broad church”¹ traditions, with their parallel history within the Church of England. At its best, Anglo-Catholicism claims to be Reformed, while also receptive towards significant liturgical and doctrinal elements within the Catholic tradition.

The term “Anglo-Catholic” conjures up contrasting pictures, encapsulated in two active movements: on the one hand, a “Forward in Faith” form of “Anglican Orthodoxy” that is resistant to women’s ordination as priest and bishop – the first implemented within the Church of England since 1992, the second likely to be inaugurated by 2015– and resistant also to any challenge to marital heterosexuality as norm for priest and people;² on the other, “Anglo-Catholic” suggests the “Affirming Catholicism” movement, which shows an affinity with the tradition of Christian socialism:³ in recent decades, this has included support for “Changing Attitude” – a group that works for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Anglican Communion.⁴ In shorthand, this second tendency is referred to in Anglican circles as “liberal Catholic.”

Our imagined parish church is liberal Catholic in this sense. Two commitments go hand in hand: a Catholic style of Anglican liturgy; and the pursuit of justice and so peace at home and abroad. The focus of this chapter is to investigate how these two commitments are related. In the words of the chapter title, the reiterated Eucharistic liturgy holds in a Trinitarian embrace not only those who participate, but also those for whom the congregation prays and among, with, and for whom its members live and work and have their being. This study is an example of reimagining with doctrines – in this case with the Trinity, the doctrine which lends coherence to other received classical doctrines.

The chapter is in three parts. The first returns to the nineteenth century foundation or renewal and subsequent development of this local church, to rediscover the impetus towards the form of liturgy that lives on in its current practice, and to enquire also about the historical roots of the contemporary commitment to justice. The second part investigates the congregation gathered in our local church, in the context of the massive cultural, economic and political changes that have taken place since its nineteenth century foundation. The aim here is to bring into view the global links present in this single local place, with their implications for justice-making. The third part turns to the outworking of the shared liturgy in congregational commitments and projects within the wider world. Here Trinitarian doctrine is reimagined in the mutual reflection of the creating, redeeming and sustaining work of God and the lived practice of this human local church community. Contemporary rethinking of Trinitarian doctrine is impoverished when such feminist Trinitarian reimaginings are ignored.

The nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic revival and its legacy

A review of the literature on the nineteenth century Church of England reveals contrasting emphases on *controversy* over re-emergence of Catholic doctrine and ritual, and on its *continuity* with the received Reformed tradition of the English Church.⁵ Reading the wealth of specialist scholarship on this movement from a gender perspective, familiar patterns of an emphasis on male leadership emerge. Familiar also is the subtext of women's complementary engagement with the Anglo-Catholic movement, reflected in the revival of Anglican sisterhoods, and in women's literary writings which upheld Tractarian values in the face of virulent criticism.⁶

The revivalist high Church Oxford Movement of 1833-1845, otherwise known as the Tractarians, then in subsequent generations as "Puseyites" or "ritualists", began in Oriel College, Oxford, at a time when entrance to universities was restricted to male members of

the Church of England: dissenters, Catholics and women of all persuasions were thus excluded. Half of all graduates at this time were ordained within the Anglican Church. The men who founded the Oxford Movement met at Oriel and gathered a circle of followers; John Keble, John Newman, Edward Pusey and Richard Hurrell Froude were prominent founder members.⁷ Pusey played a leading role in the establishment of the sisterhoods in the 1840s and 1850s.

This chapter investigates the scope for contemporary feminist reimagining in the trajectory that was revitalized by the Oxford Movement with its renewal of doctrine and ritual. The familiar predicament of feminist theology in relation to a received male-authored tradition with female subtext is thus reiterated here; effective feminist strategies are available for negotiating this scenario. In keeping such company, it will be helpful to clarify the emergence of a radical strand within wider Anglo-Catholic religious, political and cultural affiliations, which is compatible with feminist values. The Oxford Movement was initiated to defend the established English Church,⁸ which was threatened by an informal alliance between the Whigs, who had assumed political power, Dissenters, and recently emancipated Catholics.⁹ According to Brown and Nockles, these forces were “poised to subjugate or even abolish the established Church and appropriate its property and income.”¹⁰ While this political defence by the Oxford Movement was in part a reassertion of old Tory vested interests, the trajectory investigated here has given rise to a different politics.

Political and religious affiliations are more complex than the simple assumption that “conservative” and “radical” have an identical meaning in religion and in politics. Thus it is significant that a political defence was made through doctrinal and ritual renewal, so transforming the Church of England to a new self-conception as “a spiritual body ... a branch of the holy, Catholic and apostolic Church, and not merely a creation of the Tudor state at the Reformation.”¹¹ The Tractarians “glimpsed a vision of a great reunion of Canterbury,

Constantinople and Rome;”¹² hence their somewhat uncritical contribution to the revival of patristic scholarship within the Anglican Reformed tradition. Whereas “withdrawal”¹³ from the Anglican to the Roman Catholic Church of Newman and others – including clergy and members of the sisterhoods – stirred up scandalous controversy over the necessarily “Romanizing” tendency of the Tractarians, in subsequent decades a specifically *Anglican* Catholic position stabilized.¹⁴

There was an alternative unifying vision. Latitudinarian or “broad Church” liberal Anglicans favoured unity between the English Church and dissenting factions, so ignoring their underlying doctrinal and ecclesial differences, and embracing the rational spirit of the age. What is interesting for the present enquiry is the potential for combining a conservative doctrinal position that tends towards the Catholic, with a liberal or radical politics. Thus Tractarians were determined to uphold the importance of doctrinal differences underlying the split between the English Church and non-conformity. But their resistance to the broad Church project of unifying nineteenth century Christianity against secularizing forces need not lead to a conservative political stance.

Though not immediately visible in the early years of the movement, this potential was unlocked when Anglo-Catholics combined their commitment to doctrine and ritual with radical political currents. Those drawn to Anglo-Catholicism could also be subject to the liberalizing influence of the Cambridge theologians, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort.¹⁵ One prominent example is Bishop Charles Gore, onetime principle of Pusey House in Oxford and founder of the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield, Yorkshire. Gore edited the controversial 1889 collection, *Lux Mundi*, which engaged with Cambridge biblical scholarship and developed a theology of kenotic incarnation.¹⁶ Writing in 1925, Gore summarised “necessary modifications” of Tractarianism: in addition to accepting the principle of Biblical criticism, he upheld as central “the principle of social justice and human

brotherhood [*sic*].”¹⁷ It is this principle that informed the work of “slum priests” who established Anglo-Catholic congregations in some of the most economically deprived urban neighbourhoods of nineteenth century Britain.¹⁸

The colourful figure of Stewart Headlam shows that the theologian F.D. Maurice could create an opening within the renewed Anglo-Catholic tradition for a liberal or radical politics and social theology. On reading Pusey’s tract on Baptism, Maurice had reached a point of departure from the Oxford Movement.¹⁹ A Unitarian by family background who was ordained as Anglican priest, Maurice was a prominent advocate for building unity among the churches in England, as opposed to the Canterbury, Constantinople and Rome version.²⁰ As Orens puts it, “Maurice struggled to defend his vision of a Church at once both Catholic and Protestant, liberal and orthodox, established and free, socialist and monarchist.”²¹ Headlam was from an evangelical background, but he was drawn to Anglo-Catholicism, which he combined with an inclusiveness he learned from Maurice and practised in his life-long ministry. Ordained in 1869, in Orens’s view, Headlam “was the most bohemian priest in the history of the Church of England.”²² He was a progressive reformer who supported working class political interests, including women’s issues, in addition to defending “ritualism” against its critics. Orens attributes to Maurice Headlam’s ability to reconcile “life-affirming orthodoxy” with radicalism.²³

As the introduction made clear, while liberal Catholics follow the tradition established by Gore and others, there is a tendency within Anglo-Catholicism that resists this direction. Thus Christopher Dawson, writing in 1933, saw co-existing within Anglo-Catholicism both “liberalism and modernism,” and an “objective view” of dogma and spiritual truth – a co-existence he considered to be unsustainable.²⁴ However, a commentator in the same year wrote that the Oxford Movement had achieved a new type of Catholicism where Church tradition was “thought of, not as an unchanging deposit, but as a creative spirit manifest

through the developing experiences of the worshipping community,” which interprets the sacramental idea “not in a legalistic manner but with the freedom of poetry.”²⁵ It is this aesthetic “new Catholicism” that forged a commitment to social justice. As the next part of this chapter shows, by the twenty-first century, a movement once led by members of a privileged male, elite drawn from the old aristocracy and new middle class in nineteenth century England, has expanded to embrace a vision of social justice through inclusiveness with regard to gender, sexuality,²⁶ and postcolonial²⁷ ethnic and cultural diversity that neither Gore nor Headlam could possibly have anticipated.

A final point to highlight here is the strength of connecting threads between the different tendencies present, not only among Anglo-Catholics, but across the spectrum of the Church of England and in ecumenical relations with Catholic and Free Church traditions. Some fluidity in religious affiliations is visible in the above account. Controversy between the Tractarians and their evangelical opponents can conceal the traffic between these positions; the “scandal” of withdrawals to Rome masked the traffic in the other direction;²⁸ nor was Maurice alone in transfer between Free Church and Anglican denominations. Unifying forces within the Church of England explain accounts of the development of the Diocese of Manchester which document the building and demolition of churches to match changes of population, without emphasizing their respective Anglo-Catholic, broad Church or evangelical ethos.²⁹ Gore emphasized the comprehensiveness of the Church of England, with its evangelical and broad Church as well as Anglo-Catholic “schools of thought and practice.”³⁰ What happens, then, in our imagined local Church may be significant within the wider Church of England, the global Anglican Communion, and in ecumenical circles.

Gathered in this place

Our imagined congregation is a single local place in a globalized and largely postcolonial world, where advanced capitalism shapes communal and individual lives in every local place. Colonial legacies of exploitation and “residuals of unjust power relations”³¹ continue to exert their influence, even as the power of the nation state built during European colonialism is decentralized by advanced capitalist forces of globalization; capitalism simultaneously lifts *some* people out of abject poverty, so raising aspirations, and condemns increasing numbers of others to struggle for the basic means of life and security. The grim reality is that this amounts to a globalization and feminization of poverty.

Both raised aspirations and desperate circumstances fuel accelerated migration: where white Europeans spread across the globe during the modern colonial era, now the direction of flow is reversed, with chosen destinations reflecting colony-metropole links forged during colonialism. This postcolonial “deterritorialization of cultural boundaries”³² results in cultural diversity in cities of the one-time colonial metropole, including the northern British city where our imagined church is found. In response to aggressive globalizing forces that advance some at the expense of the majority, feminist theology restates its vision of the flourishing of all people, and works to construct a transnational feminist practice of solidarity that works for this end. Feminist solidarity extends to embrace other justice-seekers, rather than focusing on women’s issues alone; this is significant for the life of our local church.

Situated in a city that was an engine of economic growth at the height of British Empire in the nineteenth century, the people who now gather for worship in this place represent a diversity its founders could never have anticipated. Descendants of those who built this nineteenth century city church now mingle with fellow-Christians who gather from different locations within the city – some richer, some poorer – including those drawn here from across the globalizing world.

This is not a feminist community, though feminists are among those gathered, and the argument of this chapter is that feminist commitments are nurtured and supported here. The long process of debate over the ordination of women has yielded a principled support in this place for female priests and bishops over against those within the wider Church of England who resist this move. Female and male priests who minister here are informed by feminist principles, and meetings of Affirming Catholicism and Changing Attitude have been held at this venue. Children brought up in heterosexual families are present, but “the family” does not dominate, and many who belong here come alone, rather than with a partner. Asylum seekers arrive here from many corners of the world: the church has a history of long campaigns supporting members whose asylum application is refused, sometimes with joyous results; others come for a brief time, then disappear, their fate unknown. Some are well-educated, better able to find voluntary work; others are illiterate but participate in a familiar Catholic form of the liturgy and find support in their welcome.

There is a strong commitment to the viability of the church from middle class white British members, and support also from local white working class families who want to see the church thrive, who sometimes attend services and who look to it for baptisms and funerals. Some black British members are longstanding, having received a rare welcome from previous members, now long gone, when they arrived at the church half a century ago as new immigrants from the Caribbean; others have found their way here in recent years. British and international students come to the church for the duration of their studies, along with those who have come to the city to work from countries outside the UK. In all this, the diversity of world Christianity is represented in this local place, and links are formed with Christian communities across twenty-first century world Christianity.

As Thomas Thangaraj puts it, “The processes of globalization have compressed our world in such a way that boundaries are crossed every second in today’s world.”³³ Meeting

within this richly diverse congregation involves boundary crossing with abundant opportunities for questioning and reformulating “one’s definitions of self and the other, one’s view of community, and one’s aesthetic imagination.”³⁴ The local congregation is thus a crucible for a boundary-crossing theological practice which Peter Phan describes as “transcending differences of all kinds...to build a ‘civilization of love,’” so forging a new common identity drawing on the best in each “to produce truly intercultural human beings in the image of the triune God.”³⁵ There is ample opportunity for stimulation of what Kwok Pui-Lan refers to as a “postcolonial imagination:”³⁶ this is embodied in those members of the congregation who are of colonized heritage, whereas white British members of colonizer heritage are gifted with a boundary-crossing potential through their presence.³⁷

Within this mixed community, some members are tireless activists on a range of issues – British government policy on trade and aid, immigration, and welfare benefits; support for asylum seekers; Changing Attitude campaigns at home and abroad; involvement with diocesan and national Church synods and ecumenical and interfaith ventures – others lend their prayers, give financial support, and develop their own praxis in their personal and community lives or workplace.

This place matters.³⁸ While not a specifically feminist community, it is a place where feminist insights are respected and feminist theology makes its mark in liturgical language, prayer and preaching. It is a site with potential for what Elizabeth Ursic calls “strategic emplacement” of feminist liturgical exploration and experiment.³⁹ It is a place where women with feminist commitments may integrate these with their participation in its cherished Anglo-Catholic liturgical tradition. The worshipping community gathered in this place catch a glimpse of Kathryn Tanner’s “unnatural community” where previously diverse persons are brought together by their sharing in Christ.⁴⁰ What is important here is that feminists – and women and men who resist heterosexuality as norm – are included within the diversity,

though women-oriented commitments do not define congregational identity as in Women-Church communities (Ruether), or the *ekklesia* of women (Fiorenza).⁴¹ The final part of the chapter considers the imperative towards feminist reimagining with the Trinitarian doctrine that permeates Eucharistic worship and infuses the creating, redeeming and sustaining work for justice and peace in this place.

In a Trinitarian embrace

The Anglo-Catholic style of liturgy values the aesthetic; silence; music and spoken liturgical and biblical word; procession and movement; incense and candles; icons and biblical images in stained glass; and reverence and sharing of God's peace. Music is drawn from the rich resources of received tradition, and from contemporary sources, including the Iona community, where powerful justice themes are sung in the cadence of Scottish folk music. These aesthetic riches are stimulation to "she who imagines"⁴² with doctrine. Feast days of the saints, and special liturgies such as Corpus Christi and All Souls and All Saints are celebrated, in addition to the cycle of Sunday worship through the Church's year. Preparation during Advent for Christmas, and during Lent for Easter, with its climax in the harrowing and hope-filled drama of Holy Week, is taken seriously here. Small numbers gather for prayer and Eucharist on week days. As Teresa Berger has shown, women and men who take part in this liturgical life stand in a long tradition of *lex orandi* (the law of prayer), which is living and expanding, always open to new readings and understandings.⁴³

Liturgical language used here is steeped in Trinitarian references, which enrich the classical statement made in speaking the creed.⁴⁴ Liturgy is the "work of the people" and of the celebrant priest who make this communal act of worship together. Trinitarian theology emphasizes the significance of liturgical doxology (praise to God) for Christian understanding of the doctrine. As Ralph Del Colle puts it:

...the Christian doctrine of God is constructed on the foundation and capstone of Christian existence enacted in praise and worship. It is in this doxological event and context as the source and summit of the Christian vision and understanding that the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit is known, proclaimed and adored.⁴⁵

Similarly, Karen Kilby insists that through participation in liturgy Christians “learn to worship the Father through the Son in the Spirit,”⁴⁶ and, for Nicholas Lash, it is in Eucharistic liturgy that Christians learn to believe three ways in one God.⁴⁷

My reflections in this chapter are grounded within contemporary Trinitarian debate, where I sit with those who see doctrine as irreducible but as necessarily open to pedagogical enlargement and theological creativity: Trinitarian doctrine as expressed in liturgy is not merely an inert deposit, and feminist reimagining *with* doctrine is therefore invited.⁴⁸ When a congregation gathers in doxology, the liturgy is also a pedagogical school. For Janet Martin Soskice, the function of this “grammar” of Trinitarian faith was to safeguard what the early church saw as the central Christian witness.⁴⁹ Thus the patristic axiom, *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief) is affirmed. When Lash argues that Trinitarian doctrine provides the grammar and structure of the Christian “school of discipleship”,⁵⁰ our attention moves beyond *credendi* to the Christian praxis of the disciples who receive the words of the dismissal: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”⁵¹

What is learned in this pedagogical school? What understanding of “central Christian witness” is shared and practiced in this diverse gathered congregation? How does contemporary Trinitarian theology inform our reflections? As I will show below, feminist Trinitarian reimagining is largely ignored in the wider revival in Trinitarian theology. Yet Church and theology have too much to lose if feminist theology and revitalized traditional

theologies are allowed to become two islands, drifting apart, so blocking transformation of the Christian praxis that is shaped within ecclesial liturgical communities. The following discussion challenges this dismissal of feminist insight, and then offers feminist Trinitarian reimaginings that illuminate Christian praxis as it is shaped by AngloCatholic liturgy.

The recent collection, *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, provides a good example of revitalized traditional theology that dismisses feminist Trinitarian theology without due consideration.⁵² Comprising twenty chapters and just short of five hundred pages, as attested in the endorsements, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant scholars capture “current transformations in Trinitarian theology” and their implications for church and society,⁵³ in “a major area of creative and controversial debate;”⁵⁴ the editors assert “The revival of Trinitarian theology has to be repeated constantly for each coming generation,”⁵⁵ and their book charts a renewal in Trinitarian speculative theology emerging from the twentieth century Trinitarian revival. Anglican theologians might well be impressed with the achievements of renewed patristic scholarship in the time elapsed since the nineteenth century Oxford Movement, and the current level of sophisticated exchange between scholars of different Christian traditions would surely delight the founders of the ecumenical movement. The book offers welcome clarification and invaluable analysis of both the multilayered received tradition and of current constructive re-workings. Read as a whole, the collection maps the Hegelian influence on twentieth century Trinitarian revival and its eventual decline, so enabling a new competence in speculative theology that is consequently more fully in tune with the received patristic and medieval heritage.

However, despite the stated aim of the book to include scholars of “different approaches, geographical origins, confessions and origins,”⁵⁶ it appears that – with the exception of Kathryn Tanner and Anne Hunt – contributors are drawn from the traditional

white, male, EuroAmerican constituency.⁵⁷ A reader seeking a serious evaluation of feminist Trinitarian theology will look in vain.⁵⁸ The reason becomes clear in the first chapter: feminist theology is compromised by its use of Hegelian-influenced and thus flawed social Trinitarianism, which comes under fire from the majority of contributors.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Johnson's *She Who Is*, with her "critique of Patriarchalism" and repudiation of the *monarchia* of the Father, is dismissed in seven lines in the context of this wider problematization of Hegel's legacy.⁶⁰ The result throughout the ensuing chapters is an unrelenting male language for God and the Trinitarian persons, which is nowhere subjected to scrutiny.⁶¹ To compound matters, it is disconcerting to find a number of chapter authors also use exclusive anthropological language when discussing the human divine relation.

Had a feminist contribution been invited, what case might be made for feminist Trinitarian reimaginings? Given limited available space, to address this question, I will engage Johnson's *She Who Is* as representative text;⁶² I begin by clarifying her aims and achievements. What is at stake is the effect of Father-Son language with its resolute maleness; taken from the biblical text this language is embedded in speculation concerning the immanent Trinity, and thus in the creeds. Feminist critique, from Mary Daly's pithy statement of the problem – "If God is male then the male is God" – to Luce Irigaray's argument that women need a female divine horizon for our becoming,⁶³ has set out in stark terms the resulting problematic for women – and thus for men and the wider Church also – in the founding of heteropatriarchy according to a male symbolic order. A wealth of feminist analysis has envisioned a differently ordered world where women are valued, the earth is respected, and resources are shared.

Johnson's reimagining works at two levels. In accordance with an assertion to which most male theologians would assent – that the immanent triune God transcends the human categories male and female – Johnson sets about framing female metaphors that are capable

of augmenting the gendered Christian imaginary by relieving its unrelenting maleness. Her systematic reimagining of the triune God as Spirit-Sophia, Jesus-Sophia and Mother-Sophia destabilizes unexamined links between Father-Son-Spirit language for the “persons” of the immanent Trinity and human gender relations and identities. Her female metaphors resonate with biblical female imagery for God that is overlooked as a result of Father-Son-Spirit language being inappropriately connected with heteropatriarchal power relations in theology and Church. Her metaphors augment and connect with a strand of female reimagining within bible and tradition, encouraging its recovery and inclusion within theology, liturgy and preaching.⁶⁴

Significantly, Johnson does not intend to replace male language for God. Rather, her female reimagining of the triune God can sit with the received Father-Son-Spirit terms of biblically-based Trinitarian speculation. The point is to transform heteropatriarchal power relations in favour of inclusive communities based on mutuality, empowerment and justice, where gendered relations between women and men are reordered. This transformation can take place within traditional liturgy that is infused with this revitalized female imaginary.

Johnson’s work also shares common themes with feminist Christ-Sophia christologies. Feminist use of the biblical Sophia figure not only challenges exclusive male language for God, opening a space for the diverse subjectivities of Christian women; it also invokes the vision of a just order that anticipates the kingdom of God already among us and yet to come. Johnson’s vision of the *basileia*, kingdom, as a banquet, where Sophia welcomes all people to an abundant table – a vision that infuses the struggle for justice – is widely shared in Sophia christologies.⁶⁵

When feminist Trinitarian thinking is excluded from broader debate, Johnson’s crucial concerns – relieving unnecessarily exclusive male language, and the *basileia* struggle for justice – are also denied, with consequent harm to women and impoverishment of the

Church's mission. With this in view, I return to the perceived problem with Johnson's Trinitarian strategy, from the perspective of *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology*.

I have argued elsewhere for a sparse Trinitarian "rule" that allows for feminist Trinitarian reimaginings, without seeking to displace received Trinitarian speculations.⁶⁶ (Renewed speculation, as reflected in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology*, re-presents this received tradition). This allows received Father-Son-Spirit liturgical and creedal language to be retained, while also bringing female imagery for God into use. It follows that problems with social Trinitarian claims that mutual human communities are capable of imitating Trinitarian perichoretic relations must be conceded: it is not possible for human communities to imitate the immanent Trinity. However, creative reimagining that disrupts unfounded and unnecessary connections between received language and the exercise of heteropatriarchal power is both necessary and justified. A sparse Trinitarian rule leaves space for this invaluable augmentation to the received tradition.

This is relevant to the challenge Ayres makes to Johnson's rejection of the *monarchia* of the Father. Johnson powerfully interrupts "monarchical" forms of heteropatriarchal power in human relations. It can be conceded she contravened the classical formulation concerning the modes of origin in the immanent Trinity;⁶⁷ however, her critique of heteropatriarchy does not require this contravention. This is a two way observation: it appears Trinitarian theologians who sever ties with feminist theology are alert to feminist contraventions of the Trinitarian rule, but blind to longstanding and equally unwarranted misconceptions between a sparse Trinitarian rule and the human exercise of heteropatriarchal and colonial "monarchical" power.

In sum, feminist reimagining of God as Spirit-Sophia, Christ-Sophia and Mother-Sophia could fruitfully be located in the expansive biblical tradition of imagery for God that has become neglected, due to heteropatriarchal contraventions of a sparse Trinitarian rule.

Feminist reimagining *with* this rule moves from attempted imitation of Trinitarian *perichoresis*, to locate the struggle for justice as a praxis of Christian discipleship where the impetus arises from our being swept up into Trinitarian relations through the work of Christ: it is a particular outworking of the imperative “to be with and for one another” just as “Jesus is with and for us.”⁶⁸ The coming kingdom of life-giving relations of mutual flourishing is like the already-given gift of the Son and the Spirit in the Trinitarian *missio Dei*.⁶⁹ As Soskice puts it, Trinitarian doctrine “endorses the fundamental goodness and beauty of the human being, first fruits of the created order, destined to share in the life of God through the Incarnation of the Word;”⁷⁰ my argument is that as we are drawn towards that destiny, we are drawn also to the struggle for justice that seeks a better reflection among us of the coming kingdom.

In my view, current transformations represented in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology* are in dire need of the rich vein of feminist reimaginings of anthropology and incarnation, to enable Trinitarian speculation to be disconnected from deeply entrenched heteropatriarchal contraventions, and reconnected with the gift of the kingdom that is already among us in all our human diversity. When female metaphors and imagery infuse the ancient language of creed and liturgy, we can envisage ourselves as caught in the Trinitarian embrace of a God who transcends the male and female that marks our human bodies.

Conclusion

The setting of the chapter is an imagined Church of England congregation in the liberal AngloCatholic tradition in a northern city in the UK. The Trinitarian doctrine that infuses Eucharistic creed and liturgy in this place is shown to be capable of feminist reimagining that leaves intact the classical Trinitarian rule while reopening and bringing into use a rich vein of biblical imagery for God. Feminist solidarity with justice-seeking

movements is detached from flawed notions of imitating Trinitarian perichoresis, instead finding its impetus in being swept up into Christ, through the Trinitarian *missio Dei*. The Trinitarian embrace of the liturgy infuses the work for justice of those who love and therefore serve the Lord, by coming to the abundant table set by Divine Wisdom.

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¹ "Broad Church" in the nineteenth century was a small constituency – mainly intellectuals – who embraced new currents of thought. It was successor to post-Reformation "latitudinarians", who showed a similar openness. The broad church took up the centre ground between the larger Anglo-Catholic and evangelical wings of the Church of England.

² See <http://www.forwardinfaith.com/>

³ See <http://www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk/>. In addition see <http://www.inclusive-church.org.uk/> for an Anglican grouping that is in tune with the Affirming Catholicism tendency. See Timothy Gorringe, "Anglican Political Thought." *Expository Times* 124 3 (2012): 105-111 for an unequivocal characterisation of Anglo-Catholic political thought as Christian Socialist.

⁴ <http://changingattitude.org.uk/> .

⁵ See, for example, S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, (London: Faith Press Reprints, 1963) for an account written during the second generation of the movement, where controversy about the Anglo-Catholic revival is documented in detail; and William Walsh, *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, 6th edition (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1899), for sensationalist criticism from a prominent evangelical opponent of this Catholic tendency. See Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994) for a strong argument for continuity with the prior Anglican High Church tradition; and Arthur Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c.1800-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) for an analysis emphasising unity between different tendencies within the Church.

⁶ Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain*. London: Leicester University Press, 1999; writings of Christina Rossetti and of the novelist, Charlotte Yonge, were prominent within a broader genre of women's writing celebrating Tractarian values.

⁷ Peter B. Nockles, "The Oxford Movement in an Oxford College," in *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World 1830-1930*, eds. Stewart J Brown, & Peter B. Nockles, (Cambridge: CUP, 2012); Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 1-53.

⁸ The Church of England is recognized in English law as the official church in England.

⁹ S.L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*. London: Faith Press Reprints, 1963, 21; Stewart J Brown & Peter B. Nockles, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Movement: Europe*

and the Wider World 1830-1930, eds. Stewart J Brown, & Peter B. Nockles (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 1.

¹⁰ Brown & Nockles, op.cit.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² A.M. Allchin, "Introduction," in *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, S. L. Ollard, (London: Faith Press Reprints, 1963), 12.

¹³ Chadwick's term for their change in affiliation (op. cit., p.50).

¹⁴ See W.H. Mackean, *The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Oxford Movement: a Critical Survey*, (London: Putnam, 1933), especially 176-197, for useful discussion of the continuing distinction between Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and Anglican Eucharistic doctrine of the real presence.

¹⁵ Though less controversial than the Oxford Movement, there was also sympathy for Anglo-Catholic revival in Cambridge, particularly in the work of the Cambridge Camden Society. So Anglo-Catholic values as well as liberal biblical criticism were influential on Cambridge undergraduates.

¹⁶ Allchin, op.cit., 12; James E. Kiefer, *Biographical Sketch, Charles Gore, Bishop and Theologian*, <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/84.html> Accessed 6 July 2013.

¹⁷ Charles Gore, *The Anglo-Catholic Movement Today*, (London: Mowbray, 1925), III Some Necessary Modifications, http://anglicanhistory.org/gore/movement_today.html Accessed 27 June 2013. Gore (ibid) states this principle "is sure to be unpopular".

¹⁸ J.E.B. Munson, "The Oxford Movement at the End of the Nineteenth Century: the Anglo-Catholic Clergy", *Church History* 44 4 (1975): 391-3 rightly points out that Anglo-Catholic churches in slum areas were in a minority, and that nonconformist churches also led in "championing the rights of the poor" (op.cit.,392); however, this dual ritualist and social engagement is significant.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles: a Character Study of the Oxford Movement*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1933), 368.

²⁰ However, Maurice refused to identify himself explicitly with the broad Church tendency (John Richard Orens, *Stewart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism: the Mass, the Masses and the Music Hall*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 10).

²¹ Ibid., 9.

²² Ibid., 1.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Christopher Dawson, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1933), 138, 141.

²⁵ Dr Matthewes, *The Green Quarterly*, 1933, 75, cited in Ibid., 139.

²⁶ What was once abhorred by critics as "sexual aberration" (Munson, op.cit., 387) is now celebrated and taken up as a justice issue.

²⁷ Writing from a British context, the term postcolonial has an almost literal meaning of post the demise of the British Empire, which reached its zenith in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. Developments in the nineteenth century Church of England thus took place against this colonial backdrop. My reference here anticipates discussion in the second part of the chapter.

²⁸ Munson, op.cit., 387.

²⁹ Church of England, *The Church in Manchester: Report of the Bishop of Manchester's Special Commission, 1905-1914* (Manchester: Church of England, 1914); Arthur J Dobb, &

Derek Ralphs, *Like a Mighty Tortoise: a History of the Diocese of Manchester* (Manchester: The Author, 1978).

³⁰ Ibid., IV The Spirit of the Anglo-Catholic as it Should Be.

³¹ Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs, "Introduction." in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, eds. Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 4.

³² Ibid.

³³ M. Thomas Thangaraj, "Let God Be God: Crossing Boundaries as a Theological Practice", in *Border Crossings: Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics*, ed D.N. Premnath (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 101.

³⁴ Ibid., 100.

³⁵ Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003), 137, cited in Ibid.

³⁶ Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (London: SCM, 2005).

³⁷ This need not be an entirely one way process. See Susannah Cornwall, "'From a Remote Rural Village in Limpopo': Colonised Bodies, Hybrid Sex and Postcolonial Theology," in *Gendering Christian Ethics*, ed. Jenny Daggars (Newcastle: CSP, 2012), 147-67, for a nuanced discussion of postcolonial conversations between those of colonized/colonizer heritage on issues of gender and sexuality; Cornwall's argument that "complex narratives and engagements" arising from the South African (colonized) location she discusses should not be considered by western scholars and theologians "too immaculate or too innocent to be critiqued and to be engaged with as a partner in dialogue," also applies to relationships within our imagined local congregation.

³⁸ My reflections on this point are deeply indebted to Elizabeth Ursic. See her forthcoming monograph, *Women, Ritual, Power and Place: Female Imagery of God in Christian Worship* (New York: SUNY, 2014).

³⁹ Elizabeth Ursic, "Feminist Theology Facing Tradition: Christians Worshipping God with Female Imagery and Language," unpublished keynote conference address, Liverpool Hope University, 4 July 2013.

⁴⁰ Kathryn Tanner, "Social Trinitarianism and its Critics," in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, eds. Robert J. Woźniak & Guilo Maspero (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 386.

⁴¹ See Wendy Farley, *Gathering Those Driven Away: a Theology of Incarnation* (Louisville: WJK, 2011) for a powerful theological challenge to exclusive logic which not only lays bare the suffering caused to those who know their inclusion in Christ only to find themselves excluded by institutional churches, but also transforms this suffering through her creative theological imagination. The composite church of this chapter offers different possibilities for feminist reimagining from a place of inclusion.

⁴² See the fascinating collection, *Feminist Theological Aesthetics: She Who Imagines*, eds. Laurie Cassidy & Maureen H. O'Connell (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

⁴³ Teresa Berger, *Gender Differences and the Making of Liturgical History: Lifting a Veil on Liturgy's Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 171-2; see especially 167-72.

⁴⁴ See "The Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion also called Eucharist and the Lord's Supper", <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/41130/mvcommunion154-335.pdf> Accessed 11 July 2013.

⁴⁵ Ralph Del Colle, "The Triune God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, Colin E. Gunton ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 138.

⁴⁶ Karen Kilby, “Is an Apophatic Trinitarianism Possible?”, keynote address at the Society for the Study of Theology conference (2009), p.7.

⁴⁷ Nicholas Lash, *Believing Three Ways in One God: A Reading of the Apostles’ Creed*, (London: SCM, 1992).

⁴⁸ See Jenny Daggars, *Postcolonial Theology of Religions: Particularity and Pluralism in World Christianity*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 185-95 for elaboration of this point.

⁴⁹ Janet Martin Soskice, “Trinity and Feminism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 136.

⁵⁰ Cited in Rowan Williams, “Trinity and Pluralism,” in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, ed. Gavin D’Costa (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990), 13.

⁵¹ “The Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion also called Eucharist and the Lord’s Supper”, <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/41130/mvcommunion154-335.pdf> , 227. Accessed 11 July 2013.

⁵² Robert J. Woźniak & Guilo Maspero eds, *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

⁵³ Sarah Coakley, in *Ibid*, back cover.

⁵⁴ Johannes Zachhuber, in *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ Woźniak & Maspero, *op.cit.*, p.xi.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

⁵⁷ As no contributor details are included, it is possible that I am overstating the case here.

⁵⁸ Coakley’s comment that “the editors are to be congratulated on their choice of materials,” while entirely appropriate to the quality of chapters included, is disappointing in this respect.

⁵⁹ Social Trinitarian approaches begin with the Father, Son and Spirit as “persons” of the Trinity. Feminist approaches, like other political theologies, emphasize the perichoretic (interpenetrating) relations between the “persons” as a model for reordered egalitarian and mutual human relations. Critics point out the unhelpful confusion of the modern human subject/person with this ancient term, leading to unwarranted human attempts to imitate the divine persons.

⁶⁰ Lewis Ayres, “Into a Cloud of Witnesses: Catholic Trinitarian Theology Beyond and Before its Modern Revivals,” in eds. Woźniak & Maspero *op.cit.*, 9. Samuel M. Powell gives a more sympathetic account of feminist Trinitarian theology, in the context of his overview that accepts social Trinitarianism uncritically as one interpretation among others: “Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Theology Since the Reformation,” in eds. Woźniak & Maspero *op.cit.*, 65-8.

Broadly, Hegel introduces an approach that envisages the Trinity as Subject realized in history, encouraging the turn to the economic Trinity, and, in social Trinitarianism, a flawed tendency to take triune perichoretic personhood as a model for human relations.

⁶¹ Tanner, *op.cit.* is the one exception.

⁶² Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who I: the Mystery of God in a Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

⁶³ Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, (Boston: Beacon, 1974); Luce Irigaray, “Divine Women” in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ Space does not allow a full development of this point. The wealth of recent feminist research in biblical scholarship and theology is recovering a usable female tradition: my point is this is now available for use in liturgical settings.

⁶⁵ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (London: SCM, 1995), 189. Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The Grace of Sophia: a Korean North American Women’s Christology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002), 161.

⁶⁶ See Dagers, op. cit., 194. As argued above with reference to Lash, this rule orders Christian discipleship.

⁶⁷ The Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten and the Spirit proceeds.

⁶⁸ This discussion is informed by Tanner, op.cit, 382-6, though explicit connection with the feminist struggle for justice is my own. Citations are from Tanner, op.cit., 385.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 385-6.

⁷⁰ Soskice, op.cit., 140-1.