PREACHING AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: POSTLIBERAL HOMILETICS AND FORMATION

IN A PNEUMATOLOGICALLY GROUNDED

ECCLESIOLOGY

By

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To my wife Kelly

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INTRODUCTION

Kay Northcutt begins her book *Kindling Desire for God* by noting that homiletics over the last several decades, and the New Homiletic in particular, has focused on questions related to method. The driving force behind this, she argues, "was *method* for the purpose of being *heard*."[1] As evidence for her claim, it is worth noting the proliferation of works on sermon preparation and method within the New Homiletic, from David Buttrick's *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* to Thomas G. Long's *The Witness of Preaching* (to name just two particularly popular works). Northcutt notes that in this rush to focus on method, questions about purpose were largely ignored. Certainly New Homiletic texts do address questions of purpose, such as Tom Long's admonition that the sermon should mimic the purpose or function of the biblical text on which it is based.[2] And David Buttrick is quick to point out what preaching does long before he addresses questions of method: "Preaching constructs in consciousness a 'faith-world' related to God."[3] But Northcutt's evaluation hints at the reality that the meta-question of the purpose of preaching has received far too little attention, and when it has been addressed it has not often been in a sustained and systematic manner. She goes on to propose a different approach beginning not with questions of method, but with questions related to purpose. The purpose of preaching would then play a more explicit role in shaping homiletic method.

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[1] Kay L. Northcutt, *Kindling Desire for God: Preaching as Spiritual Direction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 17.

[2] Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 109-112. See also Long's most sustained treatment of this question, Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989).

[3] David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 11.

Northcutt's work is just one example of a shift that is taking place in homiletics, a shift that is taking seriously again the question of what preaching is supposed to *do* in a large sense. Northcutt answers this question by turning to models of formation, and she is not alone. "Postliberal" homiletics is one major branch of the discipline that has focused attention on the purpose of preaching, making a sustained case for the formative goal of all preaching.

But even in these cases, there is a question that has not been sufficiently pondered: *How does our understanding of the work of the Triune God, and particularly the Person of the Holy Spirit, affect our understanding of the purpose of preaching?* This question frames the purpose of preaching within the largest possible scheme, namely the economy of salvation. It immediately implies a relationship between preaching and God's action, so that no strictly anthropological motive or goal will suffice.

In particular, the lack of attention to pneumatology in homiletics (and theology generally) has had a detrimental effect on our ability to articulate the purpose of preaching. In fact, it is possible that many of the disagreements between homileticians over the purpose of preaching can be clarified by the recognition that what is really at stake are questions of pneumatology and the relationship of pneumatology to Christology.

One manifestation of this disagreement can be seen in the debate between C. H. Dodd and Robert Worley over the purpose of preaching in the early church. In his book *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, Dodd applies a form-critical approach to the sermons of the New Testament. He focuses on the Gospel texts, particularly Luke-Acts, but also includes an evaluation of the Pauline and Johannine corpuses. Beginning

with the premise that *keryssein* and *evangelizesthai* are functional equivalents in the New

Testament, Dodd argues that preaching in the New Testament is primarily an act of

proclamation:

> …whenever "preaching" is spoken of, it always carries with it the implication of "good tidings" proclaimed. For the early Church, then, to preach the Gospel was by no means the same thing as to deliver moral instruction or exhortation.[4]

Preaching is the presentation of a kerygma whose content is Jesus Christ. In the Pauline

material, it consists of seven elements:

- The prophecies are fulfilled, and the new Age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ.
- He was born of the seed of David.
- He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age.
- He was buried.
- He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.
- He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead.
- He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men.[5]

It is worth noting that Dodd's construction of the kergyma, and hence his understanding

of the purpose of preaching, is entirely christocentric. Nowhere in this study does Dodd

make reference to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Father – the first

Person of the Trinity – is minimized, while that of the Spirit is neglected entirely.[6]

Dodd's understanding of preaching within the economy of salvation can be summarized

by his own choice word: proclamation. In relationship to Paul's preaching, he describes

the *kerygma* as "a proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an

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[4] C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 8.

[5] Ibid., 17.

[6] "The primitive church, while it enjoyed the fellowship of the holy Spirit, and appealed to the manifest work of the Spirit (somewhat naively conceived) as evidence of the dawn of the new Age, did not reflect upon it. Nor did it embody any clear doctrine of the fellowship in its preaching." Ibid., 59.

eschatological setting which gives signficance to the facts."[7] Dodd's analysis of the New Testament texts leads him to conclude that there was no single articulation of the *kergyma*; rather, preachers such as Peter and Paul varied its presentation according to context. Nevertheless, Dodd's sharp distinction between preaching and teaching underwrites his conviction that the primary activity of the New Testament apostles was kerygmatic proclamation of the events surrounding Christ, and that ethical instruction or exhortation dealing the particular context of congregational life was a secondary activity.

Robert Worley presented a counter-argument to Dodd's thesis in his work *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church*.[8] After offering a critique of Dodd's kergymatic view of New Testament preaching and evidence for the interplay between *kerygma* and *didache* in the early church, Worley suggests a model for preaching today that incorporates both dimensions.

> Teacher-preachers of the early church were not concerned primarily with educating a person in the facts of faith… Teaching-preaching was the way of communicating Christianity to believers and unbelievers in different contexts. The teaching-preaching of the church today is a continuation of the teaching-preaching of the early church. Our goal – to interpret the meaning of the One who has come from the Father for us – is the same.[9]

Worley appears to be searching for something different from the christocentric theology that grounds Dodd's model. While he does not make significant reference to the work of the Spirit in this project, he does situate preaching within "historical processes which call for faith living, responsible thinking, and history making in this new moment."[10] This connection between preaching and history, while not developed pneumatologically by

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[7] Ibid., 13.
[8] Robert C. Worley, *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967).
[9] Ibid., 144-145.
[10] Ibid., 149.

Worley himself, does open the door to consider preaching in relationship to God's *ongoing* work in the Spirit, as we shall see later. Worley's different view of the goal of preaching implies a different role for preaching within the economy of salvation from that of Dodd. Rather than referencing a singular event (even though that event has future, eschatological implications), preaching in Worley's view is an ongoing task of creation and formation.

In light of this, I propose that one can read the current foment over the question of preaching's *purpose* as the search for a more robust theological grounding for a broad understanding of the act such as that Worley describes. In large part through the efforts of the postliberal homiletic, *formation for praxis* is gaining recognition as an essential element of the preaching task. But this turn to formative preaching has not been grounded in a theology that could support it; instead, it has continued to be built on christocentric theologies that push it back toward the *kerygmatic* model. This project is based on the premise that when preaching's purpose is described in terms of pneumatology and spiritual formation, the kerygmatic and proclamatory elements are better integrated under the heading of formation than formation can be under a model that defines preaching primarily as proclamation.

I begin in chapter 1 by examining postliberal homiletics as a major contemporary school of preaching that has focused on questions of formation. Charles Campbell and other homileticians and preachers with broadly postliberal views use various labels to describe formative goals for preaching. Postliberal homiletics, however, is grounded in a theology that is, like Dodd's work, radically christocentric. The result is a unique blending of proclamation grounded in Frei's narrative Christology and formation derived

from Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic theory of religion, but a blending in which proclamation takes the weight of the formative task. When this homiletic is correlated to the work of the Trinitarian persons in the economy of salvation, the problematic position emerges that Christ bears the weight of both the tasks of justification and sanctification of believers, and the postliberal Christology is unable to support both of these tasks. Moreover, the postliberal view of formation suffers as a result, in that formation becomes defined as proficiency in a set of practices derived from the biblical narrative of Christ, a definition that is lacking in theological depth. After beginning with a description of the theological and ecclesiological underpinnings of Campbell's formulation of the postliberal homiletic, I turn to a description of postliberal preaching, discussing its stated purpose and method. I conclude the chapter with a critique of the postliberal homiletic's inattentiveness to pneumatology and its understanding of formation. I argue that there is a pneumatological deficit in postliberalism reflected in its ecclesiology, and that this deficit has deep implications for the postliberal homiletic and Christian formation.

Chapter 2 addresses this pneumatological deficit by exploring the role of the Holy Spirit in greater depth via the pneumatologically-grounded ecclesiology of Reinhard Hütter. Hütter is but one figure among a number of movements in contemporary theology that have helped to increase awareness of the qualities and unique agency of the Spirit in the economy of salvation. I situate this renewed attention to the Holy Spirit in the context of a general revival of Trinitarian theology, drawing on a range of resources to describe the ways in which the Holy Spirit is described in relationship to the other Trintiarian Persons. I then turn to Hütter's work itself, which I have selected in part because of his relationship to Lindbeck's postliberal ecclesiology, which is articulated in

terms of the church as a cultural-linguistic community. What makes Hütter's work most appealing, however, is that he develops this ecclesiology in pneumatological terms that he adapts from John Zizioulas' *communio* ecclesiology. While Hütter draws a number of elements from Zizoulas' work, I focus on the way in which pneumatology conditions Christology by situating it within an eschatological *telos* and provides a framework in which the church can be understood as constituted by the Holy Spirit. Hütter describes this constitution as the "enhypostatic" relationship of the church's binding doctrine and core practices to the Spirit, a relationship that is analogous to the hypostatic union of the Incarnation. This relationship is grounded in God's own promissory binding to the *koinonia*. Binding doctrine and the core practices become the concrete form and mediators of the Spirit's work and provide the horizon and *telos* for the practice of theology as the primary discourse of the church-as-public. It is the practice of theology within this context that most concerns Hütter, and he develops the *pathos* of theology in relationship to doctrine and practices along three lines: the discursive aspect, the perceptive aspect, and the presentative-communicative aspect.

In chapter 3, I develop Hütter's pneumatological ecclesiology as a context for preaching. I argue that Hütter's model of theology moves in the direction of practical theology as articulated by Edward Farley, Ray S. Anderson, and Don Browning. While Hütter locates preaching within the core practices, I argue for preaching as a type of practical theology, affirming the insights of postliberal homiletics that preaching has a further *telos* in the formation and maintenance of Christian communities while simultaneously allowing one to treat "topical" preaching as a valid form within the horizon of the economy of salvation. I suggest the category of *doxology* as a way of

combining the liturgical and ethical dimensions of Christian praxis within the eschatological vision of communion with God. Toward that *telos*, doctrine and the core practices of the church provide a pneumatological context for preaching. Doctrine establishes the horizon of the economy of salvation by mediating the promises of God that find their clearest expression in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doctrine is therefore not only Christological, but *paschal* in its orientation; but through its view of the paschal event, it finds its trajectory toward the eschaton by means of God's promises. Through the *anamnesis* of Scripture and doctrine, which together constitute the *regula fidei*, the Holy Spirit continues to speak God's promises to the church, orienting it toward its eschatological *telos* via the paschal event. The core practices, meanwhile, provide another means by which the promises of God are encountered, this time in the church's embodied participation in the object of doctrine, namely the paschal space of participation in the Triune life.

Chapter 4 develops a model of preaching as a practical theology for spiritual formation. I proceed by describing preaching in terms of the three aspects of theology defined by Hütter and necessitated by the pathic relationship that theology has toward binding doctrine and the core practices. As a discursive practice, preaching is an *interpretive* task, directed toward Scripture and doctrine to unfold the economy of salvation. Here the Holy Spirit appears as the agency of "tradition" that opens humanity to God along the lines described by Vladimir Lossky. As a perceptive practice, it is involved in two tasks: first, theological hermeneutics based on a phenomenology of the Holy Spirit that can name the world as the arena in which we participate in the life of the Triune God; and second, the act of naming the powers and principalities of the world that

interfere with the fulfillment of that *telos*. In this second aspect, the Holy Spirit appears as the object of preaching in the familiar way described by Northcutt and other proponents of "spiritual formation." Finally, as a practice of *ad hoc* catechesis, preaching is a rhetorical practice that brings together the world and the economy of salvation to enable Christian praxis. Here we turn to questions of homiletic method, particularly in terms of sermonic starting points and find that Hütter's robust pneumatology and his turn from the postliberal homiletics' use of Frei's narrative Christology opens up a wide range of options for preaching within a vein that is still decidedly postliberal. I draw on the work of Leonora Tubbs Tisdale to situate this homiletic within the realm of "local theology" and the turn to the listener in contemporary homiletic theory. I then describe a modified form of intratextuality based on the eschatological *telos* of the church which allows for a greater degree of reciprocity in the relationship between text and experience. In this aspect, the Holy Spirit gives the pattern of preaching, assuming cultural forms and transforming them into opportunities for doxological praxis. Finally, I draw on John McClure's "four codes" framework to describe one possible model of rhetorical coding for a pneumatologically-grounded homiletic.

CHAPTER I

FORMATION IN THE POSTLIBERAL HOMILETIC

Postliberal homiletics is one recent movement that has sought to take very seriously the formative goal of preaching. Based on a synthesis of the work of George Lindbeck and Hans Frei, postliberal homiletics is driven by an ecclesiology grounded in Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic" model of theology coupled with Frei's Christology grounded in narrative hermeneutics. These two pillars provide the framework within which postliberal preaching holds together the church, formation (or edification), and the person of Jesus Christ.

One of the first difficulties that one encounters, of course, in any attempt to talk about "postliberal homiletics" or "postliberal theology" is that no clear definition of either term exists. While it may have been possible at one time to locate a clearly defined postliberal school in a more polemical environment, much of the initial heat around the postliberal critique of "liberal" theology has dissipated.[1] With the lack of a strong polemical entrenchment, postliberalism has become much harder to define. George Hunsinger points to the difficulties of delimiting postliberal theology due to the lack of a georgraphical center, a disagreement over who should be included in a list of postliberal theologians, and the lack of a clearly common program – even between Lindbeck and

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[1] For an excellent analysis of the polemical development of postliberalism and its subsequent "decline" and succession by movements such as Radical Orthodoxy, see Paul J. DeHart, *The Trial of the Witnesses : The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 1-56.

Frei, though they are considered together as "founders" of the postliberal view.[2] While often described as "Yale School" theology, several important voices associated with postliberalism are not affiliated with Yale, nor did they study there; in fact, in recent years Duke University has emerged as a significant contributor to postliberal thinking through the collaboration of William Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas. Similarly, postliberal theology is no longer delimited to the students of Frei and Lindbeck, and even among that group there are varying degrees of adherence to their mentors' programs. Finally, Hunsinger points out that in some ways Frei is the figure most appropriately labled "postliberal," while Lindbeck adopts a more "neoliberal" position.[3]

Despite the loss of a clearly defined center, something like the postliberal model continues to enjoy success within homiletic circles. Within this field, postliberal models have had significant impact in two primary settings. The first of these is Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, where both Charles Campbell and Walter Brueggemann taught for some time. Campbell, who taught homiletics at Columbia before moving to Duke in 2009, has produced the theoretical manifesto for a self-avowedly "postliberal" homiletic with the publication of his book *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*.[4] Meanwhile, Brueggemann – who retired from Columbia in 2003 – is presented by Campbell as an example of postliberal preaching and has also written extensively in the area of homiletics.[5] A second important setting is the aforementioned Duke University, where

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[2] George Hunsinger, "Postliberal Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42-43.

[3] Ibid., 43.

[4] Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[5] Ibid., 197-201. Although known primarily as an Old Testament scholar, Brueggemann's work in homiletics spans across monographs and essays. See especially Walter Brueggemann, *Finally Comes the*

William Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas enjoyed an extended period of influence and where Campbell now teaches. While these may represent the centers of gravity within postliberal homiletics, there are numerous homileticians at a variety of institutions who are associated with postliberal preaching to various degrees.

How, then, will we define postliberal homiletics and theology for the purposes of this study? John McClure points to the linguistic construal of reality, a narrative worldview, and the goal of preaching "…to somehow translate, or convert, human experience into the categories provided by the biblical narrative."[6] Ron Allen similarly identifies three major purposes that inform postliberal sermons:

1. "In the postliberal community preaching is 'a practice of constituting a people.'"
2. "The preacher goes about this task by narrating the congregation into the biblical world."
3. "Preaching in the postliberal movement further guides the congregation in how to enact its identity through witness in the larger social world."[7]

These criteria provide us with a useful (though certainly not exhaustive) point of reference for identifying postliberal homiletics and preaching. While the category of "narrative" is central to postliberalism, not every "narrative homiletic" is postliberal – e.g., Eugene Lowery would not be counted as a postliberal homiletician because his homiletic does not necessarily aim to convert human experience into biblical categories.[8]

Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) and *Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997). See also Walter Brueggemann and Patrick D. Miller, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope : Contested Truth in a Post-Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Walter Brueggemann and Anna Carter Florence, *Inscribing the Text: Sermons and Prayers of Walter Brueggemann* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

[6] John S. McClure, *Preaching Words: 144 Key Terms in Homiletics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 111.

[7] Ronald J. Allen, *Thinking Theologically: The Preacher as Theologian*, ed. O. Wesley Allen Jr., Elements of Preaching (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 56.

[8] See Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

At the same time, homileticians such as Michael Pasquarello III and John Wright could legitimately be included within a postliberal grouping.[9]

As both McClure and Allen indicate, the goal of formation is a critical element of any definition of postliberal homiletics. Postliberal preaching, at its most basic level, aims to shape individuals and communities in the likeness of Jesus Christ. It is here, however, that postliberal homiletics takes an interesting turn.

In postliberal theology and homiletics, "Christ-like character" is defined primarily in terms of proficiency in a set of practices derived from the biblical narratives surrounding Jesus of Nazareth. What is significant about this definition is its radically christocentric character. With the exception of a few recent works such as William Placher's *The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology*, postliberal theology has not dealt extensively with the work and role of the Holy Spirit, and even Placher's work deals with the Spirit in relatively narrow terms of epistemology, investigating how the Spirit aids in the interpretation of Scripture.[10] While this 'neglect' of the Spirit is symptomatic of a broader trend in Western theology, it is particularly apparent in postliberalism as a result of its heritage from Frei and, through Frei, from Karl Barth.

Within homiletics, Charles Campbell has presented the most thorough exposition of the theological foundations of postliberal homiletics to date. Moreover, his work is self-admittedly identified with postliberal theology, particularly in *Preaching Jesus*. This chapter, therefore, will focus on Campbell's homiletic as a paradigmatic example of the postliberal approach. In the first section, I begin by examining the theological

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[9] See Michael Pasquarello, *Christian Preaching : A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) and John W. Wright, *Telling God's Story: Narrative Preaching for Christian Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007).

[10] William C. Placher, *The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

foundations of his homiletic as they are derived from the work of Hans Frei and George Lindbeck. Because postliberal homiletics has not dealt at length with the relationship between preaching and the Holy Spirit, the relationship between the two must be inferred from its ecclesiology; therefore, the postliberal understanding of the church will receive particular attention.

Section two shifts to the function of preaching within Campbell's postliberal model, as well as a description of postliberal preaching. Because Campbell has not published a number of sermons, I will also incorporate an analysis of the homiletics of Walter Brueggemann, who is closely associated with postliberal preaching. As noted, Brueggemann has published volumes of his sermons along with theoretical works in the field of homiletics and is cited by Campbell as an excellent example of the homiletic he is promoting.

In the third section, I will turn to a critique of the postliberal homiletic and its view of Christian formation. The postliberal emphasis on the preacher and sermon as an enactment of Jesus' story is certainly to be welcomed within homiletics. However, I will argue that postliberal homiletics is suscetpible to three critiques that are each related to issues in postliberalism's treatment of the Holy Spirit (or lack thereof) in relationship to Christology. First, postliberalism tends to treat faith as the equivalent of a *habitus* – faith is reduced to the proficient practice of the Christian cultural-linguistic community. Its attempt to strike a balance between the subjective and objective dimensions of salvation falls short. Second, postliberal homiletics' treatment of the biblical narrative as a set of practical schema does not do justice to the historic concreteness and specificity of Christ. At the same time, it cannot account for divine agency in and through the anamnesis of the

Christ event. Finally, the interpretive model of intratextuality posits too strong a dualism between the world and the text. Each of these critiques is ultimately pneumatological in origin, and can be traced to the lack of attention to the Holy Spirit's mediation and action in postliberal homiletics.

1. *The Theological and Ecclesiological Foundations of Postliberalism*

Campbell most explicitly references Hans Frei as the foundational thinker in his homiletic, but his work is actually based on a synthesis of the work of Frei and Lindbeck. While George Hunsinger sees significant differences between the two theologians' projects, Campbell sees a convergence in their thought that makes them far more compatible than Hunsinger might allow.[11] This tendency to combine their projects under the general label of postliberalism is not unique to Campbell. As DeHart argues, in the heated polemical environment that formed around Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*, one of the most common moves on both sides was to group Frei and Lindbeck together under a common banner.[12]

Campbell's project begins, however, with Frei's hermeneutical approach to Scripture. At the outset, it is important to note Campbell's account of the relationship between Frei and Karl Barth. Frei, Campbell argues, adopted an "Anselmian theology" from Barth, as well as a rejection of historical-critical methods for biblical interpretation.[13] These two emphases would significantly impact Frei's later writing, as

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[11] As we will see, Campbell sees convergences between Frei's hermeneutic which is governed by the creed and faith community with Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic view of doctrine. Both are, in the end, rule-based models for reading and speaking.
[12] DeHart, 34 n.70.
[13] Campbell, 8, 14.

we shall see. In particular, the Barthian/Anselmian approach to theology of *fides quaerens intellectum* gave rise to Frei's ecclesial hermeneutic.

A word here about the relationship between preaching and the church in Barth's homiletic will help to illuminate issues that arise in the postliberal homiletic. Theo Hobson argues that Barth's ecclesiology was originally based on the idea of revelation, and preaching in particular.[14] The church seems to be cast in a primarily *receptive* or passive role – it is created in the act of the reception of the Word of God.[15] Because of this, the church is best described as an *event*.[16]   Over time, however, Hobson notes a change in Barth's ecclesiology. By the time Barth wrote the *Church Dogmatics*, Hobson sees a speculative dimension emerge as Barth attempted "…to sketch out an entire account of human knowledge from a theological perspective."[17] As a result, Barth sought to give the church more permanence in his ecclesiology, with a resulting imbalance. Barth came to assume that the church constituted not only the event of the Word, but also the enduring context of the Word. The postliberal emphasis on the church, Hobson claims, is inconceivable apart from the "tragedy" of Barth's later ecclesiological speculation.[18] He writes, "It is ironic that this new space [for the church] was carved out by a Protestant, seeking a permanent home for his theology of the Word. For it is ideally suited to a form of theology that idealizes Church, a Platonic catholicism."[19] Hobson's argument is interesting, given William Willimon's feelings toward Barth's ecclesiology:

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[14] Theo Hobson, "Ecclesiological Fundamentalism," *Modern Believing* 45, no. 4 (2004): 49.
[15] Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 70.
[16] William H. Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 255.
[17] Hobson: 50.
[18] Ibid., 51.
[19] Ibid.

> [Barth] called his *magnus opus Church Dogmatics*, but then presents a rather disembodied theology. The Word of God comes to the church, shatters the church, disturbs the church from without, and in no sense arises from or resides in the church. This Barthian view of the detached Word is different from my own pastoral experience and also differs from the claims of an incarnational faith.[20]

> Barth does not show how the church exists in its embodied, incarnate form. Barth will not let the church be the binding or sole medium where proclamation is done or received.[21]

In light of Frei's appropriation of Barth, however, Hobson's argument makes some sense. One way of interpreting Barth's ecclesiological shift is that the Anselmian ideal of theological inquiry governed by faith (as opposed to an independently existing enterprise that might take place in any number of "secular" contexts, such as the academy) pushes Barth to locate the Word within the church.

From the very beginning, Frei adopted Barth's position that tied biblical interpretation to the particular community that is the church. The church's faith, he argues, functions as the interpretative key to understand the biblical text. "Anselmian theology, as Frei appropriated it through Barth, begins with the specific language of the Christian community – the *Credo*, in Barth's terms." [22] Thus Campbell credits Frei with coming to an insight parallel to that of Lindbeck, even though he articulated that insight less clearly.[23] It was when this confessional position was wedded to Frei's narrative approach to biblical interpretation, however, that he began to chart out a position that goes substantially beyond Barth's.

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[20] Willimon, 256.
[21] Ibid., 257-258.
[22] Campbell, 73.
[23] Ibid., 71.

Like Barth, Frei criticized liberal theology for its historical-critical hermeneutic which, he argued, did not take seriously the nature of the biblical narrative. Liberal theology had sought a referent outside of the text; it read the biblical text as descriptive and hence pointing beyond itself. In contrast, Frei argued that the biblical text itself should be the focus without concern for a further referent. The point of the biblical text, in Frei's theology, is not to describe some historical figure, but rather to depict a fully textual character – namely, Jesus. "According to Frei, the logic of the stories is 'ascriptive' rather than descriptive. That is, the focus of the stories is the person of Jesus, to whose unique, unsubstitutable person the various titles, characteristics, and actions are described."[24] The relationship between identity and narrative is most clearly seen, Frei argues in *Theological Reflections on the Accounts of Jesus' Death and Resurrection*, in the crucifixion-resurrection stories, where one can discern a unity between internal intention and external action or between individual subjectivity and outward self-manifestation.[25]

While Campbell adopts Frei's idea of the ascriptive logic of narrative, he draws on Frei's colleague George Lindbeck to complete Frei's ecclesiological hermeneutic. Lindbeck is now best known for his work *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, in which he argues for what he calls a "cultural-linguistic" understanding of doctrine.[26] In Lindbeck's view, "…a religion is first of all a

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[24] Ibid., 39.

[25] Hans W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology (with Theological Reflections on the Accounts of Jesus' Death and Resurrection)* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 1.

[26] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).

comprehensive interpretive medium or categorical framework within which one has certain kinds of experiences and makes certain kinds of affirmations."[27]

In Campbell's homiletic (and postliberal homiletics generally), Frei's ascriptive view of narrative and Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic view of religion merge in the understanding of the church. Lindbeck himself anticipates this by following Frei's lead in using narrative as the basis for ecclesiology.

> …the church is fundamentally identified and characterized by its story. Images such as "body of Christ," or the traditional marks of "unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity," cannot be first defined and then used to specify what is and what is not the church. The story is logically prior… A corollary of this priority is that "church" ordinarily refers to concrete groups of people and not to something transempirical.[28]

Similarly, Campbell notes that the church is directly incorporated into the story of Jesus through Frei's reading of the Gospel narratives, particularly Luke-Acts. The text immediately shifts from narrating the story of Jesus to narrating the story of the church with a seamless connection. "Frei thus moves in [*The Identity of Jesus Christ*] from the narratively rendered identity of Jesus to the church, which is the embodiment of and witness to Jesus' indirect presence in and for the world."[29]

The assimilation of the church into the narrative of Jesus Christ is the paradigm for one of the most controversial elements of postliberal theology and homiletics, namely an "intratextual" approach to theology.[30] While DeHart primarily treats intratextuality as

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[27] Ibid., 80.
[28] George A. Lindbeck, "The Story-Shaped Church: Critical Exegesis and Theological Interpretation," in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, ed. Garrett Green (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 165.
[29] Campbell, 227.
[30] The intratextual approach to theology has been a major source of contention in theological circles. For an analysis of the principal characters in the debate, see DeHart's account of the history of postliberalism's development, cited above. Because of the complexity involved in a thorough analysis, all that will be attempted in this space is an unfortunately cursory overview of the model.

Lindbeck's contribution to postliberalism, Campbell notes elements of an intratextual undercurrent in Frei's approach to biblical narrative.[31] As noted above, one of the tasks of postliberal homiletics is to narratively assimilate the congregation's story into the biblical story. Postliberal theology, however, goes further to argue that it is not only the congregation whose story must be assimilated into the biblical story, but the entire world's story must ultimately be reinterpreted in light of biblical categories.   This approach has come to be characterized as the "absorption" of the extrabiblical world by the biblical text, borrowing Frei's description.[32] The overarching pattern follows the logic of *typology*.[33] As Lindbeck describes it,

> Typology does not make scriptural contents into metaphors for extrascriptural realities, but the other way around. It does not suggest, as is often said in our day, that believers find their stories in the Bible, but rather that they make the story of the Bible their story… More generally stated, it is the religion instantiated in Scripture which defines being, truth, goodness, and beauty, and the nonscriptural exemplifications of these realities need to be transformed into figures (or types or antitypes) of the scriptural ones… It is the text, so to speak, which absorbs the world, rather than the world the text.[34]

One way in which this theological control can be maintained in the encounter between text and world is through the use of "*ad hoc* apologetics." In his typology of Christian theology, Hans Frei distinguishes between five approaches to the relationship

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[31] DeHart, 171-184. C.f. Campbell, 37. DeHart's assignment of intratextuality to Lindbeck's work allows him ultimately to treat Frei as a more mediating figure between liberal and postliberal theologies along the lines of H. Richard Niebuhr. See DeHart, 254ff, 268. Tracing the development of Frei's thought over his career would no doubt cast light on some of these issues; such a task, however, is far beyond the scope of this project. It is worth noting, however, that as late as 1986 Frei was still utilizing and commending a typological model for biblical interpretation in Hans W. Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of the Biblical Narrative: Does It Stretch or Will It Break?," in *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition*, ed. Frank McConnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[32] Frei, "Literal Reading," 72. C.f. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 118.

[33] For a more general account of the history and homiletic use of typological interpretation, see Paul Scott Wilson, *God Sense: Reading the Bible for Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 112ff.

[34] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 118.

between theology and other disciplines.[35] These are located along a continuum ranging from "theology as a philosophical discipline" (exemplified by Gordon Kaufmann)[36] to "Christian self-description with no holds barred" (represented by D. Z. Phillips).[37] Frei's preferred method of relating theology to other disciplines is found in the tension between the two types classified as *ad hoc* models and attritubed to Schleiermacher and Barth.[38] In these approaches mediation does occur, but without any overarching theory that would govern the encounter (and possibly tip the balance toward non-theological disciplines). A kind of "semantic overlap" is maintained, but these overlaps cannot be accounted for in any systematic way.[39] The overlaps are "real" but "always context-dependent and only fragmentarily specifiable."[40] They can be utilized for particular local concerns, but the two fields cannot be compared because the two types deny recourse to a third overarching term. Within the systematic unification of Frei's work with Lindbeck's under the heading of postliberal theology and homiletics, this *ad hoc* approach becomes a central element in the intratextual approach to theology.

The shift from Christ to the church that underlies the intratextual approach occurs through a particular theology of the Trinitarian Persons, particularly the Holy Spirit. In *Idenitity*, Frei describes the Holy Spirit as having four roles or functions in the Gospel narratives.[41] First, it relates to the character of Jesus as the "indissoluble unity" between Jesus Christ and the presence of God. Second, to speak of the Holy Spirit and its

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[35] Hans W. Frei, George Hunsinger, and William C. Placher, *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[36] Ibid., 28.

[37] Ibid., 46.

[38] Ibid., 5-6. These two, he argues, are compatible with the "literal sense" of Scripture in a way that the other three are not. DeHart notes that each of these types appears to work with the other in Frei's thought to form a mutually-stabilizing pair (DeHart, 217).

[39] DeHart, 213.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, 187-188.

relationship to the church, reference to the Spirit marks the presence of this unity in the church as an indirect presence through the church. Third, the Holy Spirit is the name given to the appropriate response to God-in-Christ, namely affirmation and love. Finally, to speak of the Holy Spirit as Christ's indirect presence in the world is to speak correlatively of the church. From these four facts, one can ascertain the contours of the church's nature. "The church is both the witness to that presence and the public and communal form the indirect presence of Christ now takes, in contrast to his direct presence in his earthly days."[42] The identity of Jesus Christ, as it is narrated, eventually culminates in the identity of an entire people, just as Israel's history and identity as a people culminated in the identity of Jesus Christ.

Like Lindbeck, Campbell describes Frei as making a cultural-linguistic move in that the church, as the continuing subject of the narrative, is constituted by core practices of Word and sacrament. Here we see expansion of Frei's view of Christ's identity as the things he does and undergoes as it is applied to the church, resulting in the church's identity becoming synonymous with a set of core practices that repeat the story of Jesus Christ. These practices and identity are bound up in the Holy Spirit, however, which qualifies the church as the continuing, indirect presence of Christ in the world. Therefore, it is not sufficient to *only* say, as Campbell does, that "[i]n Frei's thought there is an integral, narratively rendered relationship between Jesus and the church."[43] Instead, there is a *Trinitarian* and *pneumatologically-grounded* relationship between Christ and

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[42] Ibid., 188-189.
[43] Campbell, 225.

the church which functions as a kind of grand narrative that incorporates the historical events into the eternal purposes and work of God.[44]

The theological foundations of postliberal homiletics, therefore, can be summarized as follows. First, Jesus Christ is to be understood as a narrated character who is identical to the things that he does and undergoes in the biblical story; these things are not added to an historical figure's "essence," but are truly constitutive of that identity. Second, the narration of Jesus Christ continues into the narration of the church, which is presented as the continuing, indirect presence of Christ in the world. The assimilation of the church's story into the story of Christ is paradigmatic for the intratextual approach to theology in which non-biblical categories are reinterpreted in light of the biblical text. Third, this narrative linkage between the story of Jesus and the story of the church takes on a Trinitarian structure through the person of the Holy Spirit which is now identified with the church. Fourth, just as the identity of Jesus is constituted by what he does and undergoes in the text, so also the identity of the church is constituted by its repetition of those things (i.e., the story of Jesus) through its practices. Fifth and finally, the church is

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[44] I use the term "grand narrative" here with an awareness of its use in the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard. In Lyotard's philosophy, "grand narratives" and metanarratives are identical: they are metaphysical, self-justifying stories that function to regulate particular narratives. What I am attempting to convey through the term "grand narrative" is distinct from Lyotard's definition of metanarrative. "Grand narrative" here is meant to refer to a second narrative which is not metaphysically self-justifying through an appeal to 'universal reason' (though it may itself present metaphysical implications) and yet contextualizes other narratives. For Lyotard's definition of (and identification of) grand narratives and metanarratives, see Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition : A Report on Knowledge*, trans., Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxxiii-xxxiv. For one model of what I am calling grand narratives as distinct from metanarratives, see Merold Westphal, "Postmodern Theology and the Gospel: Onto-Theology, Metanarratives, and Perspectivism," *Perspectives*, April 2000, 6-10. Thus, in my opinion, John Milbank is mistaken to refer to the cosmic story of redemption as a metanarrative in his essay "The Name of Jesus." See John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 145.

therefore a cultural-linguistic entity which is constituted and bounded by those practices.[45]

In light of these elements, we can now turn to the postliberal homiletic to explore its understanding of Christian formation. In section three, I will analyze and critique its understanding of the relationship between Jesus Christ, the Church and Christian formation, and the Holy Spirit.

2. *Formation in the Postliberal Homiletic*

Postliberal homiletics places its emphasis on the formation of Christians into a specific form of cultural-linguistic community, drawing on Scripture (particularly narrative) to derive patterns of praxis that are then lived within contemporary contexts. Beyond this basic approach, however, there are a number of metaphors and specific approaches to this task developed by various homileticians and preachers.

While a number of homileticians such as Willimon and Brueggemann were drawing on postliberal themes to inform their homiletics prior to its publication, Campbell's *Preaching Jesus* was the first project to systematically develop an alternative to the dominant New Homiletic by drawing on the work of Frei and, in a somewhat less explicit way, Lindbeck. For this reason, Campbell's initial work remains a critical moment in the development of postliberal homiletics. His more recent work continues to pick up postliberal themes developed in *Preaching Jesus*, but adds to them an apocalyptic thread of Pauline interpretation developed by Kirster Stendahl that has resonances among

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[45] The exact nature of the relationship between the church and its practices is a question to which I shall return in the next chapter when I examine the theology of Reinhard Hütter.

postliberal thinkers.[46]   He articulates an approach to preaching that emphasizes the

narrative rendering of Jesus as a way of building up the church for the ethical work of

confronting the powers and principalities of this world.   Meanwhile, Walter

Brueggemann utilizes the idea of "rescripting" as his dominant metaphor for what

happens in preaching. Listeners are invited to exchange the bankrupt texts of modern

American liberalism for the biblical text and its description of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

His work draws on the metaphor of the church in exile in ways that parallel the work of

Hauerwas and Willimon: for the church in exile, confronted with the temptation to adopt

the sacred texts of the dominant culture (militarism, unbridled capitalism, etc.), it is

critical for preachers to keep alive the alternative texts that mark out Christian identity.

Preachers continually hold these texts out and invite the community to reappropriate

them. Taken together, an examination of Campbell and Brueggemann's work provides

an overview of dominant understandings of formation in postliberal homiletics.

A. Campbell, Edification, and Resisting the Powers

After describing the basis of a postliberal theology through the work of Frei and

Lindbeck in *Preaching Jesus*, Campbell moves on to critique the dominant New

Homiletic, which he describes as predominantly narrative in basis.   This narrative

approach, however, is not the same as the postliberal approach to narrative. Campbell is

particularly critical of the homiletics of Fred Craddock, Charles Rice, and Eugene Lowry,

whom he takes as the prime examples of the New Homiletic and its use of narrative

structure to form sermons. These three authors, as well as others in the school, exemplify

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[46] See Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). Douglas Harink traces the development of these apocalyptic themes in *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003).

a common ground: "All of them, in reaction against cognitive-propositional preaching, give central place to human experience in preaching; at the heart of narrative preaching in its various forms is the 'experiential event' evoked by the sermon."[47] These experiential events are framed somewhat differently by each author; Craddock, for example, describes the inductive movement of the sermon as building upon the inductive patterns of thinking that are intrinsic to humanity,[48] while Lowry proposes an "aha" moment in which the listener discerns the "plot twist" in his narrative.[49] From Campbell's perspective, these homileticians have grounded homiletics in narrative because they see narrative as the constitutive structure of human consciousness and experience.[50] According to narrative homileticians like Craddock and Lowry, narrative sermons and homiletics are able to produce the experiential event in listeners because human experience and consciousness are already structured in narrative terms. In other words, narrative is an *anthropological* fact. Such an argument runs counter to Frei's insight that there is no particular importance for Christian theology attached to narrative *other than* the fact that Jesus Christ is presented through the medium of biblical narratives.

This turn to the experiential effect of preaching has, in Campbell's view, had an additional undesirable effect on preaching. "…[T]he experiential orientation in narrative preaching leads not only to an overly individualistic understanding of preaching, but also to a tendency toward the very experiential-expressivist understanding of Christianity that Frei critiques."[51] There are two related concerns here. The first is the loss of a

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[47] Campbell, 120.
[48] Fred Craddock, *As One without Authority* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001).
[49] Lowry, 53ff.
[50] Campbell, 167, 172. See also David J. Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2003), 117. In this sense, Campbell claims, his critique (particularly of Craddock) parallels Lindbeck's critique of Gerhard Ebeling. Campbell, 131.
[51] Campbell, 122.

communal sense of the *church* in the New Homiletic. At the end of the sermon, what matters is the *individual's* experience. Neither Craddock's inductive moment nor Lowry's "aha" moment can join the church into a corporate body. Second, the experiential-expressivist tendency overlooks the regulative role that should be held by the church's common faith in the cultural-linguistic hermeneutic. Ultimately, Campbell is concerned that the church as a corporate body fails to appear or matter in the New Homiletic. "…[T]he emphasis on the individual, experiential event has limited the attention that contemporary narrative homiletics have given to the role of preaching in building up the community of faith."[52] These critiques already give hints of the direction that Campbell will propose for homiletics.

Campbell suggests that the goal of preaching should be reevaluated in light of Frei's postliberal theology.

> Guided by Frei's work, the preacher's task must not be seen as that of creating experiential events for individual hearers, but rather as that of building up the church. In "grammatical" terms, one might say that God in Jesus Christ is not primarily the predicate of individual human needs or experience, but rather the active subject who gathers and builds up the eschatological people of God in and for the world.[53]

Here the ecclesiological foundations laid by Frei and Lindbeck come to the fore. The church is the pre-existing context for preaching that provides the cultural-linguistic rules for discourse. Simultaneously, the church is the goal of preaching, in that preaching further develops competency in the linguistic practice of Christianity, where "linguistic practice" is to be broadly construed so as to include the entire range of Christian praxis.[54] While Campbell seeks to distance his work from the label of "formation" (citing the

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[52] Ibid., 142.
[53] Ibid., 221.
[54] Ibid., 237.

individualistic overtones that term has developed),[55] it is not an entirely unhelpful description of his project. "…[B]ecoming a Christian [according to Campbell and postliberals] is not anything as 'sublime' as an existential encounter or experience, or a revelatory or eschatological event. Rather, it is a mundane, everyday matter of internalizing or appropriating the language and practices of Zion."[56]

Preaching accomplishes this goal by appropriating, as directly as possible, the biblical language and grammar, as well as that of Christian doctrine; it does not attempt to translate these into contemporary concepts.[57] Instead, following the logic of intratextuality, preaching will assimilate the world into the story of Jesus. Faithful preaching, Campbell argues, interpretatively represents or re-enacts the story of Jesus for the church.[58] The narratives themselves function as formative tools, providing listeners with a typological framework of schema within which to live.

> By interpreting the Scripture not in terms of what it "means" but by how it "builds up" the church; by offering typology, rather than translation, as the means by which to incorporate the current world into the biblical narrative; and by stressing the role of the preacher as a teacher and model of the Christian language, Campbell encourages preachers to inculturate their hearers into the Christian story rendered by the biblical narrative.[59]

Campbell describes the community that preaching seeks to form as one that is *counter-cultural* and *eschatological* – radically aligned with the Kingdom of God.[60] As a

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[55] Ibid., 222.
[56] James F. Kay, *Preaching and Theology*, Preaching and Its Partners (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007), 117.
[57] Allen, 56. For William Willimon, this means avoiding any attempt at apologetics, with the result that the sermon may remain incomprehensible to those outside the church, or those who are not attuned to the meaning of the sermon through the Holy Spirit. "We preachers so want to be heard that we are willing to make the gospel more accessible than it really is, to remove the scandal, the offense of the cross, to deceive people into thinking that it is possible to hear without conversion." William H. Willimon, *The Intrusive Word: Preaching to the Unbaptized* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 19.
[58] Campbell, 216.
[59] Lose, 119.
[60] Campbell, 219. The exact shape of Christian praxis is left open-ended. Campbell describes a process of improvisation in which the pattern of Jesus' life is enacted in various ways that are nevertheless

result of its allegiance to this eschatological language and set of practices, the church will be opposed to many elements in society. In his book *The Word Before The Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*, as well as in *The Word on the Street* (co-authored with Stanley P. Saunders), Campbell builds on eschatological themes only briefly touched on in *Preaching Jesus* to describe the enacted life of the church through practices of resistance to the powers and principalities of the world.[61] Campbell's analysis of the Gospel narratives leads him to propose that Jesus Christ embodies a way of non-violent resistance to the fallen powers of the world.[62] The church mimics this practice of resistance through a communal set of practices such as worship and stewardship. Yet it is also involved in the task of exposing the principalities and powers which seek to remain hidden, as their invisibility is a major source of their power over humanity.[63] These acts are not passive, but are ways of engaging the powers without allowing them to dictate the rules of that engagement.[64]

Preaching does more than simply edify the church by providing models and methods for engaging the powers; it is itself an embodied act of engagement and thus becomes an act of representing the story of Jesus.

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true to the original. See ibid., 236. Gene Outka describes this open-endedness in terms of the intersection between Jesus being "for us" and our reciprocity. "…[C]hristological governance operates less straightforwardly here. 'Less straightforwardly' means that we are thrown back on our own resources to a greater degree as we try both to understand the internal dynamics of the condition and to judge what behavior is appropriate to it." Gene Outka, "Following at a Distance: Ethics and the Identity of Jesus," in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, ed. Garrett Green (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 157.

[61]Charles L. Campbell, *The Word before the Powers : An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) and Stanley P. Saunders and Charles L. Campbell, *The Word on the Street: Performing the Scriptures in the Urban Context* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 63ff.

[62] Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 45-46.

[63] This invisibility of the powers, which prevents human beings from recognizing their enslavement, picks up ancient ideas regarding more personal understandings of sin – namely that the sinner is not even aware of their sinfulness until is unmasked by the work of the Holy Spirit.

[64] In this, Campbell is following Christine Smith's homiletic of resistance; see Christine M. Smith, *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

> The Word does not coerce or control its outcome. It is thus a very fragile agent for pursuing truth in the world; it "evaporates as soon as it has been said," and the speaker cannot control the results… Jesus, as the incarnation of the Word, embodies this way not merely in his life but most specifically in his choice of preaching as the means to the reign of God.[65]

Campbell's work takes a somewhat evangelistic tone that breaks from the focus on the church as the context of preaching in some of his more recent writings. In *The Word on the Street*, Campbell and Stanley Saunders examine the act of street preaching as an act of resistance to the powers. He also encourages students in homiletics to engage in what he calls "dislocated exegesis."[66] In this practice, students read and interpret the Bible in public places, again enacting the non-violent resistance to the powers through the proclaimed word. Most recently, Campbell's interest has expanded to even more "extreme homiletics" such as naked street preaching, proposing them as powerful examples of enacting the story of Jesus.[67]

Campbell's homiletic combines the postliberal theological approach pioneered by Frei and Lindbeck with a particular interest in preaching as the primary avenue through which the church is built up and empowered for ministry. Moreover, preaching is itself part of the praxis of Christianity, and not merely adjunct to it. Preaching is the public performance of Jesus' character, both in the sense of making Jesus present to the world in a way analogous to the church's existence as the body of Christ, and in the sense of continuing Jesus' ministry of non-violent resistance to the powers and principalities of the world.

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[65] Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 73.

[66] Charles L. Campbell, "Dislocated Exegesis," in *Papers of the Academy of Homiletics* (2006).

[67] See Charles L. Campbell, "The Preacher as Ridiculous Person: Naked Street Preaching and Homiletical Foolishness," in *Papers of the Academy of Homiletics* (2007).

B. Walter Brueggemann and Rescripting

Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar by training and profession, has written a number of books that touch on preaching and Christian formation. His homiletic falls within a postliberal grouping primarily because he is most concerned with the way in which the text as read and proclaimed assimilates the world into its worldview – a worldview which is given predominantly through narrative and narrative memory, but also through other rhetorical acts that are rooted in the narrative of Israel's life with Yahweh, such as the Psalms. In keeping with this focus, Brueggemann has proposed the metaphor of "reimagining" or, in more recent works, "rescripting" to describe how preaching accomplishes the postliberal goal. The end goal of preaching is the development of an alternative imagination that draws on the narrative memory of Israel.

> In a culture that has learned well how to imagine – how to make sense – of the world without reference to the God of the Bible, it is the preacher's primal responsibility to invite and empower and equip the community to reimagine the world as though Yahweh were a key and decisive player.[68]

This narrative memory is embodied, not only in the narratives of the Bible themselves, but in the writings such as the prophets and Psalms that draw from them.

Brueggemann adopts the "exilic" view of the church, which is closely associated with Hauerwas and Willimon.[69] This is most clearly seen in his book *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles*,[70] but this view is also implied in his other writings. The postmodern church finds itself in a situation not unlike that of the Israelite exiles in Babylon – Christians find themselves with a "…sense of (1) *loss of a structured, reliable*

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[68] Brueggemann and Miller, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, 2.
[69] See Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon press, 1989).
[70] Brueggemann, *Cadences*, 1, 41.

'world' where (2) *treasured symbols of meaning are mocked and dismissed…*"[71] The

church is surrounded by a foreign culture that is dominated by an imperial mindset much

like that of ancient Babylon – marked by colonialism, militarism, an associated military-

industrial economy, and (increasingly) a security-oriented domestic policy based on fear.

These developments are connected with the Enlightenment mindset or script that has until

recently been the accepted given in the Western world.[72] The purpose of preaching in

such a world is to sustain and enlarge the exilic community by proposing an alternative

script to that of the dominant imperial culture.

> …such people are at work seeking to maintain an *alternative identity*, an *alternative vision* of the world, and an *alternative vocation* in a societal context where the main forces of culture seek to deny, discredit, or disregard that odd identity.[73]

Rather than putting forth an apologetic for the Christian faith based on

foundational principles, Brueggemann suggests that preaching achieves transformation

by putting forth an alternative text into which listeners can imaginatively insert

themselves.

> *We now know (or think we know) that human transformation (the way people change) does not happen through didacticism or through excessive certitude, but through the playful entertainment of another scripting of reality that may subvert the old given text and its interpretation and lead to the embrace of an alternative text and its redescription of reality.*[74]

Despite the fact that one is dealing with entire worldviews, Brueggemann maintains that

preaching is able to accomplish this transformative goal because the pericopes that are

preached each subvert the dominant script in small ways, the cumulative effect of which

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[71] Ibid., 2.
[72] Ibid., 26-29.
[73] Ibid., 41.
[74] Ibid., 29 (emphasis original).

is the transformation of a larger worldview. Brueggemann describes the "alternative text" that is preached as a "*sub-version*."[75] This expression is a play on the fact that, within the larger imperial culture, the biblical narrative and worldview is never the dominant construal or accepted version of reality. It also expresses the subversive goal of preaching to undermine that worldview by proposing an alternative structure.

The postliberal emphasis on narrative finds its expression in the fact that narrative is not only the way in which Jesus achieves characterization in the Gospels, but it is also the way in which Israel's God Yahweh is depicted in the Hebrew Bible. The narrative continuity of Yahweh's action is the only way, in Brueggemann's thinking, to make sense of what he calls "darkened texts."[76] These texts are problematic because they imply Yahweh's unfaithfulness to the covenant community or absence in time of need (e.g., Psalm 22:1). Rather than subsuming these texts under a metaphysical scheme that would explain them away, Brueggemann suggests viewing them as real moments in the narrated history of Yahweh and hence as part of a dramatic script.[77] This narrative focus embodies Frei's "ascriptive logic," only it is here applied to the entire biblical text and not just to the Gospels. The God who emerges from this ascriptive approach is "irascible"[78] and can only be faithfully proclaimed through testimony that eschews the foundationalism of describing God through metaphysical categories such as the omni-predicates. God cannot be accessed through natural theology or philosophy; instead, God can only be accessed through these texts, or else one risks discovering some other god than the biblical character Yahweh. "Focus on the text rather than on a reference 'out

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[75] Brueggemann and Miller, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, 5.
[76] Ibid., 84.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 4.

there' gives us no character other than this one."[79] In fact, Brueggemann is wary of even

any reference to experience of an ongoing presence of God through the Holy Spirit.

Commenting on the work of Brevard Childs, he writes:

> Childs is interested in "the reality constitutive of these biblical
> witnesses." That 'reality' is not only "testified to in the Bible." It
> is "That living reality known and experienced as the exalted Christ
> through the Hoy Spirit within the present community of faith." In
> such a Christological formulation as Childs makes central to his
> perspective, the text as such is subordinated to other claims.[80]

Like Campbell, however, the narrative basis for theology and preaching does not

necessarily result in a narrative sermonic form. As in Campbell's homiletic, narrative

functions to provide schema within which to organize the world and describe Christian

life. "I suggest," writes Brueggemann, "that the Bible be understood as a set of models

(paradigms) of reality made up of images situated in and contextualized by narratives."[81]

Brueggemann here makes explicit an interpretative move that remained only implied in

Cambpell, namely the schematization of the biblical narrative into an atemporal category.

The homiletic process involves, in part, discovering the patterns of life or "paradigms of

reality" that are presented through the biblical text and transferring them into the present

(through the logic of typology) as an alternative way of life.

As noted above, Brueggemann does not situate preaching in an apologetic role –

the task of the preacher is not to out-argue the dominant script, but to subvert it by simply

offering an alternative to be imagined. However, preaching is certainly no less polemical

or confrontational for this approach. These are "contested truths" (to borrow from the

subtitle of *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*), and the very act of proposing an alternative

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[79] Ibid., 86.
[80] Ibid., 87.
[81] Brueggemann, *Cadences*, 12.

script is an act of passing judgment on the failures and shortcomings of the dominant narrative. Christian preaching is engaged with politics and culture, so that "[t]here is nothing in this faith model of 'sectarian withdrawal' of the kind of which Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon are often accused."[82]

At the same time, Brueggemann argues against a view of preaching as "speaking truth to power." Such an overt, dramatic confrontation is not the *standard* way in which preaching operates, and is a universalization of a very few moments in the prophetic tradition, such as Nathan's confrontation with David.[83] Brueggemann is aware that most preachers find themselves embedded in institutional churches, a very different position from the Old Testament prophets who were certainly local but not necessarily tied to the community they addressed for their continued employment. Moreover, the vast majority of preachers, Brueggemann suggests, will not find themselves in a position to "speak truth to power" in such a direct way. Instead, they address more "ordinary" people who are often not the powerful, and the nature of truth itself is uncertain. Brueggemann therefore suggests that the image of the "scribe" (after Baruch the scribe) is an appropriate description of the preacher: one who preserves memory and the subversive, alternative script so that it can be appropriated by the community. This image, he maintains, emphasizes the fact that preachers deal with *texts* that need to be preserved and nurtured.[84]

Brueggemann's overall approach to preaching can be discerned in his sermon "Waiting in Central Casting."[85] The sermon is based primarily on Luke 12:13-34, though

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[82] Ibid., 13.
[83] Brueggemann and Florence, *Inscribing the Text*, 5-11.
[84] Ibid., 11.
[85] Ibid., 21-24.

it also references Colossians 3:1-6. As he often does in his sermons, Brueggemann

adopts a central metaphor within which to situate the biblical story; in this case, he uses

the metaphor of casting for a drama to describe the characters as they are presented in the

text. After introducing each character, he briefly describes the role that character plays in

the drama. By doing this, he begins the process of divorcing the "paradigms of reality"

from their "narrative context" as he treats the text on the basis of characterization rather

than chronological sequencing. After describing many of the characters, Brueggemann

arrives finally at the disciples. Here we see explicit reference to the rescripting or

reimagining work that the sermon sets out to accomplish.

> The disciples are lucky because they are invited to an alternative.
> The disciples are the ones invited and empowered by Jesus for a
> different way in the world, outside the aggression, outside the fear,
> outside the death trap, invited to be rich toward God, having put
> the treasure where it belongs, not called fool, called "little flock,"
> little beloved flock, invited differently, not to death.[86]

These are the characters that the congregation is told they want to be.[87] This sermon,

perhaps more than any other, illustrates Brueggemann's homiletic style and aim. In some

ways, his choice of a casting call as the over-arching metaphor makes the "rescripting"

goal of the sermon quite obvious.

As a biblical scholar, Brueggemannis most concerned in his homiletic with the

relationship between the text and the listener; very seldom does his work make an explicit

move to concrete practice. Here again we find a similarity with Campbell's work, in that

the paradigms given through the biblical narrative allow for a wide range of possible

incarnations in Christian life and praxis. For example, in the sermon above, what it

means to live as "rich toward God" and to "put the treasure where it belongs" is left

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[86] Ibid., 23-24.
[87] Ibid., 23.

open-ended. Brueggemann therefore allows for the same kind of improvisational application that Campbell encourages. Formation primarily happens at the level of worldview which is then applied to the concrete situations in which believers find themselves, and it is at that more abstract level of worldview that preaching operates.

3. An Analysis and Critique of the Postliberal Approach to Formation

Postliberal homiletics is a very sophisticated attempt to achieve Christian formation through the act of public proclamation of the Gospel, and yet do so in a fairly direct way. As we have seen, it achieves its goal by focusing on biblical narrative as the means by which the character Jesus (or Yahweh, in the case of Brueggemann) is presented – Jesus is the sum of what he does and undergoes in the narrative. The church is the continuing indirect presence of Jesus in the world by its repetition of the pattern of Jesus. The narrative itself, in other words, becomes a set of practical schema or set of paradigms in which people and communities are invited to participate. Postliberal homiletics holds together proclamation and formation by grounding proclamation in narrative which is actually a guiding set of practices for the church; in short, it collapses the distinction between proclamation and formation by absorbing formation into proclamation. Formation happens when listeners exchange one worldview or set of paradigms for another to guide their practice and life.

A number of concerns have been raised about the postliberal approach to theology in general and preaching in particular. They may be grouped into three general headings based on particular dimensions of emphasis for the purposes of examination, but in truth they are very tightly connected and overlap in many respects. The first is that postliberal theology radically undercuts traditional notions of faith as personal trust in God,

replacing trust with proficiency in a set of practices. A second critique focuses on the way in which postliberal homiletics utilizes the biblical text, arguing that postliberalism's approach to the text as a set of practical schema for governing praxis is a categorical error and makes it difficult (if not impossible) to describe the Bible as "the Word of God." Third, there are a number of issues that revolve around the intratextual approach to theology, such as the stability (or lack thereof) in linguistic systems, the comparability of said systems, and (a particular concern for homiletics) the relationship between experience and the text in terms of starting points for sermons. I will treat each of these in order, showing how these all relate back to a central issue in the postliberal theology, namely a severe pneumatolgocial deficit.

A. Faith versus *Habitus*

David Lose raises concerns regarding Campbell's view of faith as a "set of skills and practices within a distinctive, cultural-linguistic community."[88] This amounts to a critique of Campbell's reliance on Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic construal of ecclesiology through Frei. Lose remarks that, "whatever the sociological or postmodern strengths of this move, it undercuts the biblical understanding of *pistis* as both personal assent *and* trust... Faith, in this sense, is closer to the Aristotelian notion of virtue or *habitus* than it is to the biblical sense of trusting confidence."[89]

Lose's critique parallels that of Nicholas Healy, who argues that postliberal theology generally has attributed too much concreteness to the notion of "Christian

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[88] Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 145.
[89] Lose, 120-121. That postliberal theology would construe faith along an Aristotelian line is not surprising, given the significant influence of Alasdair MacIntyre on the movement. MacIntyre's model of tradition-based reasoning is eminently compatible with the cultural-linguistic ecclesiology. MacIntyre, however, uses this framework to argue for a reclaiming of Aristotelian virtues. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

practices."[90] Healy labels the recent ecclesiologies that have developed along the lines of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model as the "new ecclesiology," since this ecclesiology is based on a turn toward Christian practice as a speech environment. He notes several problems with this turn, one of the foremost being that there is, as yet, no settled definition of "practice," let alone "Christian practice." These terms are so loosely defined that, as Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra note, virtually anything can be construed as a "practice."[91] Healy argues that these and other definitions of "practice" at work in postliberalism ignore the role of intention in human agency. An agent's intention defines the action, making it one thing rather than another.[92] Only the most superficial analysis along formal lines would conclude that two people doing an outwardly similar thing for radically different reasons have, in fact, performed the same act. Moreover, such intentionality is difficult to infer even when the practice under investigation is an "ecclesial" practice performed by a professed Christian, since even such an individual will no doubt inhabit multiple language games that provide possible motives.[93] It is questionable whether any agent's motive is ever sufficiently "pure" to support the highly idealized vision of practices on which the postliberal model of the church depends. This critique is in turn taken up by Theo Hobson, who accuses the postliberals (as well as the ecclesiology of Radical Orthodoxy) of a kind of "ecclesiological fundamentalism" that

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[90] Nicholas M. Healy, "Practices and the New Ecclesiology: Misplaced Concreteness?," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5, no. 3 (2003): 287-308.

[91] Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Theology : Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), 22. They do, however, maintain that the definition of an "ecclesial practice" must be "sustained, cooperative" and "big enough, right enough, and complex enough to address some fundamental feature of human existence." Ibid.

[92] Healy: 292.

[93] Ibid., 293. See also Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 107-119. Lose picks up Tanner's concern that postliberals have overstated the integrity of linguistic networks, ignoring the ways in which languages and cultures overlap and change over time in light of negotiations with adjacent or overlapping fields. Lose, 47-48.

idealizes the church and (in his view) reduces theology to a social science directed at the "unique" polis of the church.[94] What these thinkers argue for is a model in which faith provides a context for practices and in which practices act as the embodiment of faith.[95]

We may characterize these critiques as the result of an implicit Christology. The Christological focus in Campbell's work is primarily character-driven, as opposed to plot-driven.   While Campbell's hermeneutic focuses on what Jesus "does and undergoes," this is in service to character development as opposed to an interest in the events themselves as moments of changing context. In other words, the emphasis is on how Jesus acts and reacts in various situations, instead of on the movement from one state of affairs to another through event and agency. One could characterize this Christology as a 'moral exemplar' approach. Campbell's homiletic has difficulty in accounting for an *objective* dimension of faith in which something has changed in the world, focusing instead on how people undergo *subjective* change by appropriating Jesus' pattern for themselves.

There is also a pneumatological issue that is closely related to the Christological component. Without the 'third term' of a robust pneumatology to connect Christ and the church, Campbell's postliberal homiletic must treat the work of Jesus Christ as able to be *immediately* appropriated.   The emphasis on the subjective element of atonement becomes exaggerated because there is no available path to transition from the objective to the subjective. Christ's work must already be 'universalized,' not simply objectively

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[94] Hobson: 56.

[95] As I will argue following the lead of Reinhard Hütter, this means that both binding doctrines and core practices are needed and must be maintained as distinct entities. Binding doctrine is what mediates the economy of salvation in such a way that it can be appropriated as an object of faith by the church, while core practices provide normative guidelines for the way in which faith is embodied in the world.

available for universal appropriation. Thus David Lose criticizes postliberal homiletics for failing to allow "critical distance" that is necessary for the new identity offered in Christ to be appropriated.[96] This lack of critical distance has the effect of de-historicizing Jesus Christ, abstracting him from history as a collection of practices and rendering him an hypostasized universal – ironically in the name of the uniqueness of the textual character! As James Kay notes, Frei equates the knowledge of the textual Christ with the presence of the risen Lord, but this assumes that a mental construct is the same as an actual existent. This is a repetition of Anselm's ontological proof for the existence of God, and is accompanied by all the problems that challenge Anselm's project.[97]

B. The Category and Use of Narrative

The relationship between faith and *habitus* touches on a number of themes that are also related to the critique of postliberalism's understanding of the way in which narrative functions in relationship to formation. This critique takes two primary forms. The first is the based on the direct movement from narrative patterns to schema that organize the world and Christian behavior. This is expressed in slightly different ways by John Milbank and David Lose. A second form is the criticism that postliberalism has made a category error in its understanding of narrative.   James Kay argues that postliberalism should not look to narrative for schema, but to locate therein the "promises of God."

Both John Milbank and David Lose criticize the postliberal model for supposing that narrative functions *schematically*. Lose writes,

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[96] Lose, 125-126.
[97] Kay, 118.

> Not only do I believe that Campbell's understanding of narrative is faulty – that is, I don't think language or narratives *work* the way he describes, even if his understanding of narrative were accurate, I do not think it would realize his goal of training in Christian faith [because of the lack of critical distance referenced above].[98]

Lose argues that Campbell and other postliberals have overestimated the ability of narrative to "engender participation in the community of faith."[99] Within his interpretation of Frei, "Campbell trusts that the biblical narrative unfailingly renders a stable semiotic 'universe of discourse' into which hearers are invited."[100] In theory, then, any reader at any time should be able to abstract the same practices or schema from the text; however, postmodern understandings on which Lose draws heavily view language as polyvalent and connotative, rendering Campbell's more denotative view of language and textual stability much less tenable. Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, and others have argued that texts lack the full presence of authorial intent and reference to support a denotative view of language.[101] Even those who maintain some degree of authorial presence in the text, such as Kevin Vanhoozer, recognize that authorial intent can only be discerned to such an extent that it limits the possible range of connotation; it cannot fix a single denotative reference in the vast majority of situations.[102]

Lose's concerns are related to those raised by John Milbank, who points out that the cultural-linguistic approach to Christian faith runs the risk of becoming irreparably divorced from actual lived history and hence overly constraining. "These 'hypostasized' narratives are not seen as belonging to the sequence of history itself, but instead are

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[98] Lose, 125.

[99] Ibid., 120.

[100] Ibid., 122.

[101] See esp. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

[102] See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text: The Reader, the Bible, and the Morality of Literary Knoweldge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

atemporal categories for Christian understanding."[103] Not only is it difficult to see how a stable set of practical schema could be derived from a polyvalent biblical text (whether that polyvalence is limited or not), but this process results in a thoroughly idealized, "textual" faith with little connection to an extra-textual world. Once the biblical narrative is idealized in this way and given the task of completely regulating Christian praxis without any further mediation, the result is *more* constraining than when there is a controlling mediator such as doctrine. Milbank suggests that, although it represents a single speculative moment in the interpretation of the biblical text, doctrine is more ambiguous and therefore more flexible as a *regula* for praxis than narrative, which is "more rigid, and less open to revision."[104]

Again, what is suggested here is that the lack of distance between narrative and contemporary context is problematic, but in a slightly different way from what was specified above. In the relationship between faith and *habitus*, the challenge was the loss of Jesus Christ as an *object* of faith – a loss that is necessitated by the lack of distance between Christ and the individual and results in the immediate universalizing of Christ's significance. Here, the distance needed is between the biblical narratives and the contemporary context in a more general sense. Without any intermediary, postliberalism seems to assume that the biblical narrative schema can be directly overlaid onto the contemporary context with a straightforward one-to-one correspondence. But such an approach would be, as Milbank points out, incredibly constraining and rigid.

James Kay's concerns are quite different from Milbank's or Lose's, but also focus on the way in which narrative functions in postliberalism. He criticizes the postliberal

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[103] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 386.
[104] Ibid.

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model for its failure to recognize God's active voice in Scripture. His concerns are paralleled by Paul Scott Wilson, who claims that "…Campbell represents a postliberal stance that tends to mute God's voice in the preaching event…"[105] While Wilson's concern is grounded in what he perceives as an unhealthy emphasis on ethics in postmodern homiletics, Kay identifies an alternative approach that synthesizes elements of the New Homiletic and postliberal preaching. Rather than treating the biblical narrative as schema, he follows the work of Frei's student Ronald F. Thiemann and suggests that the narratives be understood as implying a promise from God.[106] This approach is deeply indebted to the notion of "speech acts" developed by J. L. Austin and John Searl, which describes language as having not only a locutionary (or propositional) aspect, but also an *illocutionary* (or performative) dimension.[107] Every statement has both locutionary and illocutionary dimensions, even statements that appear purely informative. Kay applies this model to biblical narrative to discern a further illocution that underlies the surface narrative structure; the biblical text does not simply describe events, but does so in a way that implies a promise embedded in them. Kay argues that the model of preaching based on "the Gospel as promissory narration" is a corrective to postliberalism that reintroduces the idea of God speaking to listeners through Scripture and, hence, through the sermon.[108] Kay does not address *how* preaching would move from the promises of God implied in the narratives of Scriptures to God (as opposed to

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[105] Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, ed. Paul Scott Wilson, Preaching and Its Partners (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 114.

[106] Kay, 120ff. See Ronald F. Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1985).

[107] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2d ed., The William James Lectures 1955 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975). John R. Searle, *Speech Acts : An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969). A third aspect of language is its *perlocutionary* dimension, which is the effect that it has on the hearer.

[108] Kay, 125.

the speaker) addressing the congregation in the present, though Nicholas Wolterstorff's model of "divine discourse" as the divine appropriation of human discourse would be one natural affinity.[109]

Kay's concerns regarding narrative in postliberalism address a very different aspect of that element than Milbank's. While the latter is concerned with the way in which typological application of narrative can be too constraining, the former is asking how preaching can be said to function as a 'means of grace' through which *God* acts on human beings. But both deal most fundamentally with the question, "What exactly does the forming in preaching?" Campbell and other postliberal homileticians answer this question by pointing to the act of preaching as the enactment of narrative patterns of behavior discerned in Scripture. Milbank critiques this on the basis that this application of narrative cannot account for the variety of Christian praxis because it never adequately intersects with actual history. Kay, meanwhile, critiques the lack of divine agency or performativity in the postliberal use of narrative as schema.[110]

C. Intratextuality

As noted above, the intratextual model of theology espoused by postliberalism is one of the most controversial elements of the program. One aspect of this criticism is directed toward the use of intratextuality as a boundary to be policed between liberal and

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[109] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[110] Because of this lack of divine agency in preaching, conversion takes on a highly voluntaristic tone. One simply chooses whether to imaginatively accept the offered schema and narrative identity proffered by preaching. Postliberal formation carries with it a somewhat bourgeois, middle-class flavor. As Cheryl Bridges-Johns has pointed out, "Middle class persons prefer an evangelical infrastructure with transformation being a slow, steady process of inviting each other into a counterstory about God." Cheryl Bridges-Johns, "Epiphanies of Fire: Paramodernist Preaching in a Postmodern World," in *Papers of the Academy of Homiletics* (1996), 17, quoted in John S. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 130.

postliberal theology. Frei's typology of theology based on models of correlation is a fundamental piece of the intratextual approach, since *ad* hoc correlation is considered intrinsic to intratextual interpretation. But as DeHart points out, one can call into question Frei's interpretation of key figures whom he locates just on the other side of the *ad hoc* approach, notably David Tracy.[111] My intention in this section is not to address the way in which intratextuality and *ad hoc* correlation have been used by postliberal theology and homiletics in relationship to their interlocutors' projects; often these criteria have been used to judge (unfairly) particular scholars' faithfulness to the Christian message's judgment of the world by criticizing a perceived cultural accommodation. Instead, I want to focus on the way in which the intratextual approach itself has been critiqued as a model of the relationship between text and experience.

As noted above, Lose critiques Campbell on the basis of the latter's assumption that languages and cultures are stable and incomparable with one another. At this point we should note that Lose seems to have something different in mind by his use of "incomparability" than is indicated in the use of the term in this project thus far. For Lose, "incomparability" means the inability to relate theological language analogically to the language of other fields.[112] This is a misunderstanding of the meaning of *ad hoc* correlation, at least as Frei presents it. As I argued above, in Frei's work the meaning of *ad hoc* correlation is simply that no systematic account is given of the relationship between two linguistic fields, not that they may not be related or overlap.

Setting aside the question of whether Lose adequately understands the nature of *ad hoc* correlation, he and other homileticians have raised concerns about the intratextual

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[111] DeHart, 230ff.
[112] Lose, 123-124.

approach's claim that the biblical text "absorbs the world."[113]   John McClure asks whether Campbell may have overstated "the polarity between the biblical text and experience."[114]   He suggests that the Christian faith (and preaching) are based on the twin aspects of "textualized experience" and "experienced text."[115]   What is particularly noteworthy is that McClure grounds this criticism of intratextuality in *pneumatological* terms.

> When the interrelatedness of text and experience is denied, aspects of the illuminative work of the Holy Spirit in preaching are potentially thwarted…   The Holy Spirit borne witness to *in the biblical text*, however, is active and responsive, always challenging and transforming the textual narrative itself.[116]

Preaching without this pneumatological corrective will end, he argues, with preaching only the textual Jesus and not the living Christ. McClure describes the relationship of the Spirit to preaching as "revealing and protesting the tension" between text and present experience.[117]

Paul DeHart similarly describes the challenge to intratextuality in pneumatological terms, asking whether the Spirit actually uses human interpretation to contribute to the meaning of Christ, or does it simply reference an already completely given meaning?[118]   He cites the influence of H. Richard Niebuhr (along with Schleiermacher) on Frei, arguing that Niebuhr's approach allowed worldly meanings to

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[113] By making this distinction, I am treating intratextuality as eliciting two questions: 1.) "Does the text absorb the world?" and 2.) "By what method is this possible?" The latter question deals more specifically with *ad hoc* correlation, while the former with the general aim of intratextual interpretation.

[114] John S. McClure, Review of *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*," *Journal for Preachers* 21, no. 2 (1998): 36.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.   McClure interestingly places this tension in an eschatological context.   The eschatological orientation of theology and preaching will become a critical element in the constructive section of this study.

[118] DeHart, 256.

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be retained even as that culture is appropriated by the church.[119] Thus, the *ad hoc*

approach to correlation, DeHart argues, actually has a greater degree of respect for

cultural sites of interpretation than the intratextual framework allows it to exercise. This

respect for the Spirit's work entails an element of risk in theology as it cannot assume

that its own meaning will not be transformed by the interaction with its unredeemed

environment. If DeHart's analysis of Frei and the *ad hoc* approach to correlation is

correct, then theology looks less like a straightforward intratextual absorption of the

world by the text and more like a dialogue through which meanings on both side are

transformed. He takes up the metaphor of theology as a "trial," echoing Rowan

Williams' description of theology as an "experiment" in which the rhetoric of the

uncommitted environment is taken up.[120] DeHart's description of *ad hoc* correlation calls

into question Campbell's easy assimilation of that approach to the work of intratextual

theology.[121] Instead of radically opposing the biblical text (or church) with culture, the

ad hoc approach implies a balance between Christology and a "pneumatology of culture"

in which the Spirit is seen to be already at work in the larger world in and under human

activity.[122]

4. *The Need for a Pneumatological Supplement*

Each of these three concerns – the relationship between faith and *habitus*, the

nature and use of narrative, and the intratextual project – touches more or less explicitly

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[119] Ibid. DeHart describes this approach in contrast to Frei's account of Barth's model, in which the non-Christian meaning of foreign language must be stripped away before that language is "reconstituted" for use within the Christian body.

[120] Ibid., 245. Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), xiv.

[121] As I will argue later, I believe that a relationship between the two is still possible, albeit within an altered intratextual framework.

[122] DeHart, 268, 265.

on pneumatological issues within the postliberal paradigm. These issues are not simply issues in the philosophy of language or textual interpretation, but they are the effects of the particular postliberal version of the Trinitarian relationships between Word and Spirit and, by extension, the church. On the one hand, it should be noted that postliberal theology establishes a strong connection between the Holy Spirit and the church. The Holy Spirit is the indirect presence of Jesus Christ in and through the church. But the manner of this connection and the scope of the Spirit's work outside the church are problematic. Ultimately, postliberal theology subordinates the Spirit to the Word and encourages a narrow view of the former's work. As we have seen, postliberal homiletics places an extremely high importance on Christology. The person of Jesus Christ is at the center of the postliberal hermeneutic and ecclesiology. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit is described, not in its own terms, but *solely* in terms of Jesus Christ – it is the "Spirit of Christ" in a fairly exclusive sense. It is the biblical narrative and the narrative description of Jesus Christ therein that is the basis for Christian formation in the postliberal homiletic, and the Holy Spirit plays a supporting role in this economy.

Postliberal homiletics has done a great service by striving to reintroduce the formative role of preaching in the pulpit. However, its underdeveloped connections between pneumatology and ecclesiology are a hindrance to its efforts. What is required is a more robust pneumatology that maintains postliberalism's emphasis on the relationship between the Spirit and praxis, but extends the work of the Spirit and more clearly articulates its role in the economy of salvation.

CHAPTER II

HÜTTER'S PNEUMATOLOGICAL CORRECTIVE TO POSTLIBERALISM

As we have seen, postliberal homiletics as explicitly articulated by Campbell (and implicitly by other postliberal homileticians such as Brueggemann) is dependent on a particular way of merging the cultural-linguistic theory of the church and doctrine developed by Lindbeck with Frei's theory of the Gospels as "realistic narratives" that depict the character of Jesus Christ by describing what he does and undergoes. The result of this merger is a theory that is radically christocentric, to the point that the Holy Spirit is relegated to an almost superfluous status. The Spirit's primary task, in this picture, is to actualize the practices that are given to the church through the narratives of Jesus Christ and now interpreted as schema for governing Christian praxis. Homiletics becomes catechesis by example – the job of the preacher is to render the character of Jesus so that the congregation can adopt for itself the pattern of Christ as its rule for living in the world.

The approach described above represents what might be described as a "first generation" postliberal homiletic. It draws almost exclusively from the theories of Frei and Lindbeck. Moreover, as we have seen, it is profoundly shaped by the polemical environment in which a "postliberal school" came to be viewed as an opponent of theological (and eventually cultural) liberalism. To maintain such a "school," Frei and Lindbeck had to be read as sharers in a common project that is "postliberal theology," and the differences between them had to be downplayed to maintain their unity.

Even by the time that *Preaching Jesus* was published in 1997, postliberal theology had arguably entered a second generation. While students at Yale were already pushing their work in new directions during their time there, Frei's death in 1988 and Lindbeck's retirement in 1993 marked the end of their primary contributions to theology, and it fell to a new generation of theologians to appropriate their legacy. This appropriation has led to new and sometimes surprising developments. One of these is a renewed appreciation for the differences between Frei and Lindbeck, such as George Hunsinger's observation (noted in chapter one) that Frei is perhaps closer to a Barthian neo-orthodoxy, while Lindbeck is perhaps better defined as a post-liberal ecumenical theorist.[1]

Hunsinger claims that Lindbeck's model of doctrine-as-rules has had, and will likely continue to have, few adherents;[2] nevertheless, the broader contours of the cultural-linguistic framework have continued to be adopted by theologians who see the theory as a useful tool for developing an ecclesiology that takes seriously the aspects of the church that make it distinct from other cultural forms and institutions while continuing Lindbeck's ecumenical trajectory that does not see the doctrinal divisions between denominations as irreparable schisms that create multiple "churches." Moreover, Lindbeck's insights have contributed to the development of an entire movement focused on the role of "Christian practices" and their relationship to belief. Nicholas Healy treats these trends together under the title of the "New Ecclesiology."[3]

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[1] Hunsinger, 44. Paul DeHart also notes the differences between Frei and Lindbeck that were glossed over in the (polemically-motivated) construction of the "postliberal school." See DeHart, xiv-xv, 54.

[2] Hunsinger, 50.

[3] Healy: 287.

This is not to say, however, that there has been a simple wholesale adoption of the cultural-linguistic model into these new theologies. Various theologians incorporate Lindbeck's insights piecemeal, and with varying degrees of centrality to their own projects. Over the course of this process, one shortcoming of Lindbeck's theory that has been repeatedly noted is the lack of attention to pneumatology and the *theological* dimensions of the church.

Of the theologians who have taken up Lindbeck's mantel, Reinhard Hütter has devoted considerable effort to repairing the pneumatological deficit in Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic theory. Hütter's central question is how the church may be understood as a public distinct from other publics, specifically in that it is the public of the Holy Spirit, and how theology may function as the unique discourse of the church-as-public in relationship to doctrine and practices. But Hütter's work involves more than simply adding the Holy Spirit to the back end of the cultural-linguistic model; that approach would mirror the one taken thus far in postliberal homiletics and would once again relegate the Spirit to an actualizing function. Instead, Hütter draws on Eastern Orthodox *communio* ecclesiology to develop a Trinitarian ontology and eschatological pneumatology that can ground the cultural-linguistic model.

In this chapter, I will examine Hütter's contribution to repairing the pneumatological, and ultimately Trinitarian, foundations of a "postliberal" homiletic. First, I will briefly describe the current landscape of Trinitarian theology. Reflection on the Trinity and the meaning of that doctrine has been a driving force in the renewal of pneumatology; the two are interrelated, and one cannot treat pneumatology adequately without some understanding of the entire Trinitarian framework within which it develops.

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Next, I will turn to Hütter's relationship to Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model. Hütter sees this model as the basis for renewed understandings both of the church as a distinct public in which Christian formation occurs and of theology as the main discourse practice of that public. I then turn John Zizioulas and his account of Trinitarian personhood and the relationship between pneumatology and Christology. Hütter uses these components to develop the theological foundations for a second-generation cultural-linguistic framework grounded primarily in pneumatology.[4] The fourth section develops Hütter's own ecclesiological synthesis of these threads in which the church is now understood as the eschatological public of the Holy Spirit and Christian practices are described according to the enhypostatic relationship to the Spirit. Finally, I examine Hütter's account of the role of theology within this pneumatologically-grounded church-as-public. Theology is a discourse of this public, and has three tasks: re-presenting and re-appropriating the object of faith (the economy of salvation), evaluating contexts in which the church finds itself to understand challenges that they pose to communicating and presenting particular doctrines, and (finally) forming communities through catechesis.

1. *The Renewal of Pneumatology and Practical Trinitarian Theology*

"Up until the last few decades," writes F. LeRon Shults, "most explorations of pneumatology began with a complaint about the material paucity and methodological poverty of treatments of the third person of the Trinity in the history of theology since the

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[4] Hütter also draws on Zizioulas' "eucharistic concept of truth," bringing it into dialogue with Lindbeck's contextual model of truth, though I will not attempt to address that dimension of his argument in this paper. See Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*, trans. Doug Stott (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000), 153.

enlightenment."[5] He goes on to note, however, that this is no longer the case, and his observation is most certainly correct. There has been a proliferation of texts on issues related to both the Trinity in general and the Holy Spirit in particular. Several factors have influenced this resurgence of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and pneumatology – so many, in fact, that even a cursory exploration of them is far beyond the scope of this project. A brief overview of major themes, however, will serve to situate this project within the broader trends in pneumatology.

In 1986, Catherine Mowry LaCugna remarked on the resurgence of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, citing nine major texts that had been published on the subject since 1980.[6] This trend of increasing interest has continued, to the point that David Cunningham has been led to remark that though "[o]nce threatened by its relative scarcity in modern theology, the doctrine of the Trinity now seems more likely to be obscured by an overabundance of theologians clustered around it."[7] These theologians represent a diverse array of traditions, from Eastern Orthodoxy to feminist to liberation theologies. Yet Cunningham notes that at least three common factors unite these seemingly disparate approaches.

First, one must notice in these works a renewed attentiveness to the doctrine of the Trinity as a function of the concrete biblical narratives themselves. Far from being grounded in abstract speculation, the doctrine arose from the unification of three distinct encounters with God in history: first, as Yahweh, the God of Israel who frees the people

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[5] F. LeRon Shults, "Spirit and Spirituality: Philosophical Trends in Late Modern Pneumatology," *Pneuma* 30, no. 2 (2008): 271.

[6] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, "Philosophers and Theologians on the Trinity," *Modern Theology* 2, no. 3 (1986).

[7] David Cunningham, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Lewis Ayers and Gareth Jones, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 19.

from bondage and makes covenant with them; second, as Christ, who is claimed to be God Incarnate; and third, as the Holy Spirit, whose presence is described less concretely but is seen as somehow connected to the new life of the Christian community.[8] Over time, the church came to realize that a unified interpretation of these three moments in its experience demanded some further account of God's own being and God's relationship with creation. Steven R. Harmon describes this process as the movement from a "triadic narrative" to "narrating the Triune God."[9]

This attentiveness to the biblical narrative of salvation has shifted the emphasis in Trinitiarian theology from the immanent to the economic dimensions of the Trinity. This does not mean, as LaCugna implies, that the shift from story to doctrine – a shift that hinges, in her view, on the Nicene Creed – was a movement away from a narrative faith. Instead, "[a] more carefully nuanced account of the development of patristic Trinitarian theology… would need to recognize the continued priority of narrative in the liturgy and catechesis of the church during and after the period of the hammering out of the church's doctrine of the Trinity."[10] In this context, the more "abstract" theological linguistic apparatus associated with reflection on the immanent Trinity, including conceptual terminology such as consubstantiality, perichoresis, and hypostasis (to name just a few terms), functions as "…condensed narratives, stories-in-a-nutshell intended to summarize

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[8] Ibid., 21. On the relatively amorphous character of the Spirit's presence, Louis Marie Chauvet remarks that this is a consequence of its description within the biblical texts: the very word "Spirit" is not anthropological in the same way that "Father" and "Son" indicate personhood by their very use. Also, the role of the Spirit in Scripture takes on the form of an "unrevealed revealer" who points to the other two persons of the Trinity while remaining obscured in its own being. This constitutes a kind of *kenosis* parallel to that of the Son. See Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 511-518.

[9] Steven R. Harmon, "From Triadic Narrative to Narrating the Triune God: The Development of Patristic Trinitarian Theology," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 33, no. 3 (2006): 305-322.

[10] Ibid., 305.

and clarify rather than replace the story handed over to catechumens and rehearsed in worship."[11]

Nor does this emphasis on the economic Trinity in the biblical narratives mean that the economic and immanent Trinity are to be viewed as entirely disjunctive realms. It *does* mean, however, that a certain apophatic stance may need to be adopted toward the immanent Trinity. Rowan Williams, who is in no small measure influenced by the Eastern theological emphasis on apophasis mediated to him by Vladimir Lossky, suggests just such a stance. If the story of God with us is all that we have, Williams argues, then we are left with an inherently apophatic theology, though not a *radical* apophasis that would refuse to say anything at all about God in God's self.

> We have, then, no concrete language for the unity of God but this story of risk and consummation, of unity forged through absence and death between God as source (Father) and the created life of Jesus of Nazareth (as Son). We are left with only the most austere account of God's life as such: that it must be what makes this possible.[12]

Williams thus stands as a *media via* between an approach to the Trinity that would begin with abstract speculation about the oneness of God as a metaphysical principle and the opposite extreme: a "social Trinity" like that envisioned by Jürgen Moltmann in which the language of the economic Trinity swallows up the language of the interior life of God, resulting in a model that borders on a form of tritheism. In such social Trinitarian models (and especially in that described by Moltmann in *The Crucified God*), the result is what Williams describes as a "mythological" view of internal conflict between deities.[13]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Williams, 159-160.

[13] Ibid., 161. See also Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

In terms of the Holy Spirit in particular, though the Spirit does not take on a "concrete" presence (as the Son does) in the biblical text, it is clearly seen as the ground for the Christian community's new life. This is particularly apparent in the narrative of Acts, but also in the Pauline corpus.[14] The Spirit's agency is at work throughout these texts, sending the apostles out into the world, setting individuals apart for minstry, aiding in decisions/discernment, etc. Attentiveness to the biblical texts and the narrative that they mediate necessitates a renewed attention to the Spirit. Without being able to give some account for the work of the Spirit as an act of God in unity with the events of the Hebrew Bible and Jesus Christ, it becomes difficult to account for the inclusion of the epistolary material in the canon. One must be able to offer a *theological* account for Paul's moral instruction, for example. In order to make sense of this material, a more robust understanding of the Spirit and its relationship to the Christian community is needed.

A second significant factor and positive development in the recent work on the Trinity is a focus on relationality. This, in Cunningham's view, is the "…single issue on which recent trinitarian theologians have achieved the greatest degree of consensus…"[15] The emphasis on relationality within the trinity has been perhaps *the* most significant contribution from feminist and Eastern theologians. These theologians have pushed against the traditional definition of "person" inherited from Boethius as an "individual substance of a rational nature."[16] For feminist theologians, the Holy Spirit is a

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[14] See, e.g., John McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 53, 56-57, 60.

[15] Cunningham, 25.

[16] Boethius, *The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. G. P. Goold, trans., H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 74 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 84ff. For an examination of the metaphysical problems inherent in Boethius'

particularly attractive subject due to the number of feminine images associated with it in both Scripture and tradition. Furthermore, in the West the Holy Spirit has been associated with the intra-Trinitarian relationality as a result of Augustine's description of it as the bond of love between the Father and the Son. Because of these factors, Elizabeth Johnson utilizes the doctrine of the Spirit (which she terms "Spirit-Sophia") as the entry point for her reflections on the Trinitarian persons.[17]

In a vein similar to that of feminist theology, process thought has taken up the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as one way of overcoming what it sees as a dualistic opposition between God and world in traditional, metaphysically-oriented theology. Although Marjorie Suchocki focuses primarily on the first and second persons of the Trinity in her work *God, Christ, Church*, the entirety of the work may be read as a pneumatologically-determined theology; the Holy Spirit receives less attention here because its activity forms the overarching framework within which the other persons are discussed.[18] Karen Baker-Fletcher, like Suchocki, sees the Holy Spirit as a primary description that is almost equivalent to saying "God" in relational terms.[19]

The relationality of the Persons has also been an emphasis in Eastern theology. While it has become something of a caricature, there is some truth in the claim that Western thinking on the Trinity has tended to start from the unity of substance and then move toward the multiplicity of the persons while Eastern theology has taken the opposite approach – moving from the multiplicity toward unity. In Moltmann's view, the

definition, see Roy Alexander Tracy, "*Persona* and *Substantia*: Metaphysical Problems in the Anthropological and Trinitarian Theology of Boethius" (Emory University, 2001).

[17] Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), 124ff.

[18] Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroads, 1989).

[19] Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing with God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 62.

Western approach has tended to be grounded in the attempt to prove the existence of God, and such proofs can only go so far as a single substance or person. Because of this, he claims, the doctrine of God in the West has tended in a problematic direction: a kind of practical monotheism in which the question of "…[w]hether God is one or triune evidently makes as little difference to the doctrine of faith as it does to ethics."[20] Trinitarian models in the West have therefore tended toward psychological analogies. By contrast, Eastern theologians have tended to focus on the persons in their concrete interrelatedness. This has the distinct advantage that the relationships are not viewed as a secondary quality, but are inherent to the definition of "person" in the Trinity. This has far-reaching implications for the way in which one views human anthropology; for example, the Eastern theologian John Zizioulas has developed an entire ontology of personhood based on the Eastern Trinitarian model.[21] Similarly, Miroslav Volf has used Moltmann's model of the social Trinity to develop a free-church ecclesiology.[22] One result of this approach for pneumatology is that the full personhood of the Spirit is affirmed at the outset, whereas the Western tradition has sometimes struggled to move from the Spirit as the bond between the Father and Son to an understanding of its personal agency.

While this turn to relationality has been a positive development in Trinitarian theology, it does run the risk noted above of turning the Trinity in a kind of mythology; that is, we must take seriously Rowan Williams' warning that we cannot "write a

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[20] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 1.

[21] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Contemporary Greek Theologians No. 4 (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985). We will examine Zizioulas' thought in more detail shortly.

[22] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness : The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Sacra Doctrina (Grand Rapids.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).

biography of God" on the basis of the economic Trinity whose relationships we can point to most readily.[23]   Again, what is called for is a certain kind of apophaticism that is particularly appropriate to Eastern theology and recognizes that the immanent life of God can only be described as what can make these economic interrelationships possible.

The third positive development that Cunningham notes in recent Trinitarian theology is a focus on the practical implications of the doctrine. "Theologians seem increasingly convinced that the doctrine is not merely an abstract theological affirmation, but that it should have real, concrete implications for how Christians are called to live their lives."[24]   We have already seen some of the evidence of this in Zizioulas' "trinitarian ontology" and Volf's ecclesiology. Both of these thinkers take the doctrine of the Trinity and draw from it particular implications for human life. In a similar vein, one can easily point to Moltmann's work in *The Trinity and the Kingdom* as a prime example of this approach that tends toward liberation theology.

All of these emphases brought from their various sources – the focus on economy of salvation in the biblical narrative as the foundation of Trinitarian thought, relationality, and the belief that the Trinity has a profound impact on Christian life – can be summarized in an expression that takes on particular importance in the work of Catherine Mowry LaCugna: "God for us."[25]   The over-arching trend in contemporary Trinitarian theology and pneumatology has been away from discussions of abstract metaphysics and toward the relationship between the doctrine and concrete Christian life. These elements make the recent work in Trintiarian thought a welcome – and natural – complement to the

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[23] Williams, 160.
[24] Cunningham, 29.
[25] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: Harper One, 1973).

postliberal model. Postliberal theology has often been termed "narrative theology" due to its focus on the biblical text as the primary source for theological reflection.[26] Moreover, the very foundation of the cultural-linguistic model is the idea that doctrines such as that of the Trinity function as rules that govern practice analogously to the way in which grammatical rules govern speech.

As theologians have turned their focus to the biblical and historical underpinnings of the doctrine, they have focused on the economic Trinity (as opposed, in some cases, to the immanent Trinity) and drawn out practical implications of a kind of "Trinitarian ontology" based on various forms of participatory logic. While many see these developments as a welcome change in theological priorities, the response has not been unanimously favorable. Wayne J. Hankey and Matthew Levering have both expressed strong reservations about this shift.[27] They draw on the work of Thomas Aquinas to raise a number of objections to what Hankey describes as a turn from *theoria* to *poesis*, from metaphysics and interiority to communitarian praxis grounded in what he sees as a revived Neoplatonism. Citing in particular John Milbank, Jean-Luc Marion, and John Zizioulas (though others such as Hütter could certainly have been included in his characterization), Hankey describes their tendency to subordinate theory to praxis as grounded in a post-Heideggerian "anti-philosophy."[28] Levering traces this turn to

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[26] Donald K. McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 125ff.

[27] Wayne J. Hankey, "Theoria Versus Poesis: Neoplatonism and Trinitarian Difference in Aquinas, John Milbank, Jean-Luc Marion and John Zizioulas," *Modern Theology* 15, no. 4 (1999): 387-415. Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Gareth Jones and Lewis Ayers, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

[28] While Hankey lays the blame for this "anti-philosophical" position at the feet of Heidegger, it is worth noting that the focus on the economic Trinity as a foundation for Christian praxis has earlier historical precedent. Certainly John Wesley is one case in point. See Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 145-149. The deep

William James' understanding of philosophy and dismissal of dogmatic theology.[29] This

trend continues, he argues, in the work of LaCugna, Cunningham, and others.   His

analysis of their work is no less critical than Hankey's:

> When practical relevance replaces contemplation as the primary
> goal of Trinitarian theology, the technical precisions of
> metaphysics come to be seen as meaningless, rather than as ways
> of deepening our contemplative union with the living God revealed
> in Scripture.[30]

Both Hankey and Levering propose a metaphysical remedy.   It is telling that they

describe the goal of salvation in terms of contemplation and interiority.   Their focus

remains on the immanent Trinity and metaphysics.   "It seems to me," writes Levering,

"that what is required is grasping how human transformation occurs within the movement

whereby we rise from idolatry and, instead of primarily contemplating creatures

(ourselves), *contemplate* God for his own sake rather than for the sake of creatures."[31]

Similarly, Hankey describes beatification in terms of vision and objective knowledge:

> Theology remains with the thinking of being, with ontology. The
> self-related structure of subjectivity becomes essential in the
> henological modification of that ontology.   The mutual
> modifications of the henology and ontology do nothing to reduce
> the perfection of the divine subjectivity or the totality of the
> system. The negative theology is for the sake of a hyperessential
> vision which is total presence and complete *theoria*. Even *in hac
> vita*, theology theoretically encircles and orders praxis.[32]

One must be careful not to establish too great a disjunction between the economic

and immanent Trinitiy. (Cunningham, for one, is critical of what he sees as LaCugna's

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influence of the Eastern Fathers on Wesley may contribute to this leaning in his theology. See Ted A.
Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville:
Kingswood Books, 1991), 79. Also Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical
Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 23.

[29] Levering, 12-15.

[30] Ibid., 2.

[31] Ibid., 17. (Emphasis added.)

[32] Hankey: 407.

rather extreme disjunction between them.[33]) Nevertheless, the preference for one of these emphases as a starting point for reflection is reflective of a general theological sensibility. While it is a bit of an overgeneralization and caricature, we might describe the tendency to begin with the immanent Trinity as indicative of a theology that is comfortable beginning from philosophical (rather than necessarily biblical) concerns, aims for complete presence and systematization, and sees the end of sanctification as contemplation. Beginning with the economic Trinity, on the other hand, tends to lead to a theology that is more practical, *ad hoc*, and clearly rooted in the biblical narratives.[34]

The historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity would seem to point to the economic starting point as the more sound option. As I have argued, the development of Trinitarian theology began not with abstract philosophical speculation, but with the attempt to make sense of the Christ-event and its place within the history of Israel and the larger world (understood from a Jewish perspective). Whether such a starting point *necessarily* results in the kind of denial of *theoria* that Hankey and Levering describes is a question that may be unanswerable; the tendencies in contemporary and historical works on the subject, however, suggest that this is the case more often than not. In the end, one must decide how comfortable one is with the lack of closure inherent in an *ad hoc* approach to theology grounded in *poesis*. Ultimately, these are grounded in two irreconcilable understandings of beatification.

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[33] Cunningham, 37.
[34] Hankey shows little concern for biblical texts in his argument, preferring to focus on Aquinas and other extra-biblical sources. While Levering does address the biblical text, his primary method is one of interpreting a text in light of a pre-given philosophical conviction. Cunningham, by contrast, spends significant time dealing with biblical texts in an exegetical manner at numerous points in his argument, giving them priority over metaphysical models.

As we have seen, the recent work in Trinitarian theology has focused on the biblical narrative, relationality, and practical implication. Shults suggests analogous emphases that should be at the heart of contemporary pneumatological reflection. He proposes three critical tasks for pneumatology: overcoming the problems of a dualistic understanding of God and world without collapsing into monism; finding a *media via* between psychological models of the Trinity (such as Hankey's) and tritheistic tendencies associated with certain current models (such as Moltmann's, though he is not mentioned in particular); and describing the power of the Spirit in a way that does not succumb to fatalism or voluntarism while maintaining that God is the ground of all things.[35] These tasks for pneumatology link the Holy Spirit to the questions of relationality and practice. I would also suggest that the turn to the biblical narrative exemplified in current Trinitarian thought should play a significant role in the development of pneumatology (as it does in the work of Zizioulas and Williams, for example).

This complicated nexus of themes and influences is the landscape in which Reinhard Hütter formulates his own pneumatological supplement to postliberalism, and many of the elements and influences cited above are present in his constructive proposal. As we shall see, the influence of Eastern theology is particularly strong in his work. That stream, however, also brings with it a focus on community and relationality (particularly in the work of John Zizioulas). The result is that, though Hütter himself does not himself cite movements such as feminist theology, his work shares common resonances with them. This is because all of these movements have both drawn in various ways from biblical images and descriptions of the Holy Spirit and have contributed these back to a renewed Trinitarian theology.

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[35] Shults: 285-286.

2. *Hütter's Relationship to the Cultural-Linguistic Model*

While the various concerns that have shaped the resurgence of Trinitarian theology (and pneumatology in particularly) have certainly had some effect on Hütter's work, the primary impetus for his proposal comes through Lindbeck's postliberal "cultural-linguistic" model of doctrine. Hütter sees in this model a starting point for thinking about the relationship between doctrine, Christian practices, and the work of theology as a Christian practice, but also sees it as lacking a significant pneumatological component. He is certainly not alone in making this connection; Jane Barter Moulaison has made a similar point and proposed her own remedy through the writings of Gregory of Nyssa.[36] As we shall see, Hütter proposes a pneumatological supplement to Lindbeck's work drawn from contemporary Orthodox *communio* ecclesiology, particularly the work of John Zizioulas.

At the outset, we should note that while this thesis is concerned with developing homiletics along the line of what might be called a "practical theology," Hütter is not. In *Suffering Divine Things*, his primary concern is the perceived autonomy of theology as a discourse. Theology, he argues, has come to be viewed primarily as a discourse that operates independently from the church – as it does in the academy – and is neither accountable to the church's doctrines nor seeking to support its practices. As we shall see in chapter 3, his view of the role of theology undergoes some significant shifts between *Suffering Divine Things* and his later work which is collected in the volume *Bound to Be Free*.[37] But this shift is, I believe, a direct development of the model of theology first

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[36] Jane Barter Moulaison, *Lord, Giver of Life: Toward a Pneumatolgoical Complement to George Lindbeck's Theory of Doctrine* (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

[37] Reinhard Hütter, *Bound to Be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2004).

developed in *Suffering Divine Things*. His project, however, takes its genesis in the critique of autonomous academic theology that he describes as "metaphorical constructivism."[38]

One of the first features of Hütter's theology that one notices in comparison with the postliberal homileticians examined in the first chapter is his relationship to the founding fathers of postliberalism, Frei and Lindbeck. Specifically, Hütter draws on Lindbeck's ecclesiology extensively; the cultural-linguistic model of the church outlined in *The Nature of Doctrine* provides the backbone for Hütter's own proposal. But Hütter cites Frei only briefly in two notes, neither of which relates directly to Hütter's argument; Frei's narrative Christology is noticeably absent from his work.[39] Yet as we saw, Frei's work is the foundation for the Christological center of postliberal homiletics as articulated by Campbell. Hütter's work is reflective of the recognition that has grown among theologians that Frei and Lindbeck are not necessarily working on the same project, nor is a melding of their proposals a necessary feature of a theology that would nevertheless proceed in the "postliberal" vein. The choice to follow Lindbeck's ecclesiology *separately* from Frei's narrative Christology frees Hütter from replicating in his own work the subordination of the Spirit to Christ that one sees in postliberal theology's first generation.

Hütter finds Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic proposal to be an appropriate starting point for his ecclesial proposal (and its accompanying methodology for theology) because of its marriage of both cognitive and pragmatic/practical aspects of Christian life. In *The Nature of Doctrine*, Lindbeck sought to articulate a "third way" of understanding

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[38] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 23.
[39] Ibid., 212n.5, 244n.107. The first of the citations is to Frei's comments regarding *The Nature of Doctrine*, while the second situates Bruce Marshall's work in relationship to Frei, who was his teacher.

the role of doctrine beyond what he termed the "cognitive-propositional" and "experiential-expressive" models. Each of these traditional models emphasizes one aspect of doctrine at the expense of the other. The cognitive-propositional model emphasizes the dimension of "*fides quae creditur*" by pointing to the metaphysical or objective truth claims made by doctrine. Doctrine in this mode relates primarily to objective realities. The cognitive model is mainly concerned with the "the cognitive or informational meaningfulness of religious utterances."[40] The experiential-expressivist model, meanwhile, stresses "*fides qua creditur*," pointing to the way in which doctrine expresses the inner dispositions and attitudes of believers. Doctrine in this model is not related to an objective world, but rather symbolically expresses beliefs, existential orientations, etc.[41] Lindbeck's proposed cultural-linguistic approach externalizes Christian faith, identifying it with neither cognitive propositions nor experience but seeing it as analogous to "…a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought."[42] Doctrine is both objective, in the sense of not constituted by the believing subject, as well as subjectively important, in that it affects inner experiences (rather than arising from them). In forming this definition, Lindbeck draws heavily from the linguistic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the idea of the "language game."[43] Doctrine does not derive from a primal experience, nor

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[40] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 16.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 33. Robert Greer characterizes Lindbeck's model as "post-foundational middle-distance realism." Robert Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism: A Survey of Christian Options* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

[43] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 33. The association of doctrine with Wittgenstein's "language game" is not without its own difficulties, not least of which is the loss of referentiality. While some see this as an advantage, rather than a weakness, that assessment is not universal. See Hans Zorn, "Grammar, Doctrines, and Practice," *Journal of Religion* 75, no. 4 (1995): 509-520.

does it attempt to describe "reality." Instead, doctrine functions as an over-arching rule that itself governs Christian language and shapes experience.

> [Religion/doctrine] functions somewhat like a Kantian *a priori*, although in this case the *a priori* is a set of acquired skills that could be different. It is not primarily an array of beliefs about the true and the good (though it may involve these), or a symbolism expressive of basic attitudes, feelings, or sentiments (though these will be generated). Rather, it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments. Like a culture or language, it is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals rather than being primarily a manifestation of those subjectivities.[44]

In Hütter's view, Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model provides a way past the issue of the relevance of the church. Following Peterson, Hütter argues that the Protestant church's loss of relevance is closely tied to the loss of its public character.[45] It is this eclipse of the church's public character that has resulted in the autonomy of theological discourse. There is actually a two-fold movement at work. On the one hand, with the loss of the church as public, theology is left without mooring and can justifiably be treated as a primarily academic discourse that is self-justifying. On the other hand, with the loss of theology as its defining discourse, the church "is susceptible to becoming the bearer of national and other identities and projects, securing for itself thus as a national or civil religion a measure of public relevance…"[46] Hütter argues that, in order to be reestablished as a public in its own right (and therefore to regain theology as its public discourse), the church needs a binding force. That binding force is "a particular

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[44] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 33.
[45] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 11.
[46] Ibid.

set of normative convictions, embodied in constitutive practices and directed toward a distinctive *telos*."[47]

Lindbeck's cultural linguistic model combines both of these elements – beliefs and practices – into a single matrix while simultaneously locating Christian discourse (i.e., theology) in a position that is dependent on this matrix. "…[T]his model is characterized by the *inseparable juxtaposition of faith actualization and faith content…*"[48] The "comprehensive praxis" of faith, which includes both believing (doctrine) and acting (practices) models a kind of "*poietic pathos*, as a situation of unavoidably 'undergoing' or being subject to that which we are, but one in which we always participate poietically."[49] This poietic pathos provides a useful way to describe saintliness as a pathos in which the saint allows him or herself to be shaped by God's actions on them, all the while embodying saintliness through their actions and practices. The cultural-linguistic model places an emphasis on this formation of saints who are understood as competent speakers of the church's distinctive "language," as we saw in chapter one. This formation occurs through catechetical theology in which a person is shaped into a proficient practitioner of the faith praxis as well as through an ongoing intratextual theology in which this praxis is maintained in a variety of contexts throughout life.

Because the church's cultural-linguistic field is not only defined by doctrine, but also by practices, Hütter turns to Martin Luther to examine the "marks of the church."

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[47] Reinhard Hütter, "The Knowledge of the Triune God: Practices, Doctrine, Theology," in *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*, ed. James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 40.
[48] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 45.
[49] Ibid., 47.

These marks are the "core practices" that, along with binding doctrine, define the cultural-linguistic field and therefore give the church its public character:

- proclamation of God's word and its reception in faith, confession, and deed
- baptism
- Eucharist
- office of the keys
- ordination/offices
- prayer/doxology/catechesis
- way of the cross/discipleship[50]

Hütter describes these seven marks as an "inner circle" of practices that are, in turn, supported by an outer circle. This second list is more varied, perhaps even exhaustive of all the "…things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."[51] It includes such activities as remembering saints and martyrs, discernment between justifiable and unjustifiable war, and reconciliation between denominations, to name a few of those specifically mentioned by Hütter.[52] To this list, one could add the practices of hospitality, stewardship/economics, keeping Sabbath, and healing, among others.[53]

The church can be defined according to these two elements – doctrine and core practices – that make up its cultural-linguistic field. *Together*, doctrine and core practices serve to demarcate the church's boundaries and establish the church as a unique public with its own *telos*. The significance of this step in Hütter's argument cannot be underestimated. Both doctrines and practices are required for the church to be a public. Without practices, Hütter argues, Lindbeck's model is susceptible to John Milbank's

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[50] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 36.
[51] Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*, 18.
[52] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 36.
[53] See Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass, The Practices of Faith (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

critique that it is a kind of Biblicism and formalism.[54] While practices and ecclesiology are subject to the primacy of Scripture, they are also enable the Bible to function as "Scripture":

> One characteristic of church practices is that they allow the canonical Scriptures to function as witness to God's word and subject themselves to this primacy. This is, the ecclesiological anchoring of the Bible within the framework of a church doctrine of Scripture is precisely *not* an ecclesiological functionalization of the Bible, but rather its implementation as "Scripture."[55]

The incorporation of practices into the cultural-linguistic field shifts the understanding of religion from being a *verbum externum* in the formal sense to being substantive. Lindbeck himself seems at times to allude to this necessity, as in his 1987 essay (cited above) in which he repeatedly insists that the referent of theology must be "empirical churches in all their crass concreteness."[56] Particular and concrete congregations must be given priority over any abstract titles. Yet even in making this clarification Lindbeck does not indicate the significant role that practices might have along with doctrine in constituting the concrete congregation. Hütter (rightly) argues that both are required if Lindbeck's model is to avoid the very formalism he critiques and the kind of Biblicism that he seeks to avoid.

Both doctrine and practices, then, are necessary to constitute the church as a unique public. Without the church understood as a public, Hütter's pneumatology (which we shall examine shortly) has no specific context. In Hütter's appropriation of the cultural-linguistic model, the church-as-public becomes the primary context for the

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[54] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 62-66. See also Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 382-388. As we saw in chapter 1, directly importing the biblical narratives as schema is actually more restrictive than a doctrinal norm. While I will argue in chapter 4 for a typological hermeneutic to govern participation, it is doctrine that acts as the hinge for this transition and enables the narratives to function in a typological fashion.

[55] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 66.

[56] Lindbeck, "The Story-Shaped Church," 173.

formation of faith and discipleship. Doctrine and core practices together constitute the cultural-linguistic field of the church. They also provide the twin poles that are necessary to situate theology as a unique discursive practice within the church public. "Theology as ecclesial discourse practice… is the occasion of bringing doctrine and core practices into that kind of interface that they constructively and critically inform each other…"[57] Theology, as a discourse practice of the church, is dependent on both the doctrines and the practices that it moves between. It is this position that establishes theology as a *catechetical* activity.

Let us flesh out this point. Lindbeck makes it clear that doctrine and theology are two distinct entities. To use the linguistic analogy, doctrine functions as the grammatical rules that govern construction while theology is the particular discourse that is governed by those rules. Yet clearly theology as a discourse is not identifiable with the core church practices that Hütter adopts from Luther. It is helpful, perhaps, to consider doctrine as the static element in this tension (though Hütter is more nuanced on this point) while the core practices are embedded in the flux of history. Theology stands between these two poles. "*Hence, if Lindbeck's distinction between church doctrine and theology really is to function, it implies theological discourse as an independent church practice between church doctrine on the one hand and the (ongoing) acquisition or learning of faith on the other.*"[58] Theological discourse is therefore pathically determined from both ends in terms of its origin and its *telos*. Yet it is also *poeisis* in the sense that it must adapt to ever-changing historical contexts in which the core practices occur.

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[57] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 45.

[58] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 58. (Emphasis original.) Here, the "acquisition of faith" must also be taken to include the practice of faith.

There is one final distinction that must be made in order to fully grasp Hütter's use of Lindbeck's model. Unlike Lindbeck, Hütter does seem to understand doctrine as functioning in some referential – or at least mediating – fashion. He is careful to distinguish between church doctrine (*doctrina definitata*) and the *doctrina evangelii* that is the Gospel itself, the very presence of Christ, and the sanctification of the Christian as life with and knowledge of God.[59] The *doctrina evangelii* is mediated through the *doctrina definata*, but is not identical to it. Because the gospel and doctrine are not identical, Hütter reserves a separate space for the Christ event in the world. Recall that one of the chief criticisms of the postliberal model raised in chapter one was the removal of Jesus from the realm of "the real world" of history and the consequent change in his status to that of a "narrative character." That shift resulted in the claim that the narrated Jesus is the real presence of Jesus, with its associated problem that Jesus loses all historical specificity and becomes a set of practical schema. By preserving the distinction between the Gospel, understood as the actual presence of Jesus Christ, and doctrine, Hütter makes doctrine a mediating entity distinct from Jesus Christ. Moreover, at no point does Hütter equate the presence of Christ with the narrated character of Jesus. In Hütter's appropriation of the cultural-linguistic model, the Gospel as Jesus' presence is distinct from both Scripture and doctrine, even though it is inescapably specified by doctrine. There is no "naked" knowledge of God, even though God is not strictly identifiable with any of the mediating entities.[60]

Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic theory is, in Hütter's argument, an important move in the direction of re-establishing the church as a distinct public, but it is not sufficient on

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[59] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 36-37.
[60] Ibid., 26-28.

its own. As we have noted, there is a lack of attention to church practices that prevents the cultural-lingusitic framework from achieving the necessary specificity to demarcate the church as a public.   But Hütter also sees an insufficiently described *telos* in Lindbeck's account.   In the cultural-linguistic theory, the goal of the church was described as forming people as competent users of the church's language, where language is understood as the complete range of meaningful praxis, whether spoken or enacted, e.g., through ritual.   Yet, as has become increasingly apparent to a number of thinkers who operate within the postliberal legacy, this *telos* is not defined in any *theological* fashion.   As Willimon has stated it, the first-generation postliberal understanding of practice drew heavily from the work of Alasdair MacIntryre, but left God out of the definition.[61]   As Hütter and Moulaison see it, the problem is one of pneumatology. The church is not merely *a* culture or public. These terms are at best analogies that describe the relationship of the church to the world. The church is also a work of the Holy Spirit and has a place within the economy of salvation. In terms of its institutional nature, the church is a culture and a public, but it is more than that because of its constitution by the Holy Spirit, which also defines it as an *event*. The connection between Christ and the church, in terms of its institution, receives some discussion in

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[61] William H. Willimon, "Too Much Practice: Second Thoughts on a Theological Movement," *The Christian Century* 127, no. 5 (2010).   Available online at http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2010-03/too-much-practice (accessed January 26, 2011). James K. A. Smith published a response to Willimon's "*retractiones*" on Duke Divinity School's "Call and Response" blog, criticizing what he perceives to be Willimon's "Barthian" move to critique "human striving" in favor of an "event-like God." (James K. A. Smith, "Practice Overload? A Response to Willimon," in *Duke Divinity Call and Response*, Duke University (2010).) This, however, is a misunderstanding of Willimon's essay. In his essay, Willimon favorably cites L. Roger Owens' recent book *The Shape of Participation: A Theology of Church Practices* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010) as an example of a robust theological grounding of Christian practices. Both Willimon and Owens are pushing (parallel to Hütter) toward a *teleological* account of Christian praxis that would be theologically rooted in a soteriological vision, not for an end to all talk about praxis. See James K. A. Smith, "Practice Overload? A Response to Willimon," available at http://www.faithandleadership.com/blog/03-25-2010/james-ka-smith-practice-overload-response-willimon (accessed January 26, 2011).

Frei's work.[62]   What is necessary, then, is a pneumatology that can give an adequate account of the church's rooting in *both* the work of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

3. *Pneumatology and* Communio *Ecclesiology*

As we saw in the analysis above, the Holy Spirit's role in the postliberal homiletic's use of Frei's work is limited to the task of actualizing what is already given in Christology. The Spirit appears as the "indirect presence" of Christ through the church. Because Lindbeck's cultural-lingusitic model does not have a significant pneumatological component, the relationship articulated by Frei (particularly in *The Identity of Jesus Christ*) has been the implicit pneumatological starting point for postliberal theology and homiletics. The relationship that is described by the postliberal homileticians like Campbell is one in which the work of the Spirit is entirely conditioned by the work of Christ. It is Jesus who is the major force that constitutes the church – the church is the continuation of Jesus' presence in the world, a presence that is embodied through practices that continue Jesus' ministry. The Holy Spirit empowers or actualizes these practices, but it remains subservient to the dominant christocentric model.

In order to provide a more robust pneumatological foundation for the church, Hütter turns to a version of *communio* ecclesiology.[63] During the course of *Suffering*

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[62] Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, 187ff.
[63] "*Communio* ecclesiology" is a very difficult term to define. Nicholas Healy notes that the term is used to designate what is "perhaps the most popular" model in contemporary ecclesiology. Nevertheless, different theologians use the label in different ways to various ends, from Zizioulas and the Eastern Orthodox tradition to Volf and the free church. For the purposes of this paper, I define a *communio* ecclesiology as one that takes its starting point from the idea that the intra-Trinitarian relationships provide a model for reflecting on the relationships of persons within the church and the relationship between the church and God. See Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*, ed. Colin Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 44-45.

Divine Things he draws especially on the work of John Zizioulas and Nikos A. Nissiotis, though in his other essays the former takes a somewhat dominant role over the latter.[64] In order to understand Hütter's proposal for the relationship between the Holy Spirit, Christian doctrine, practices, and theology, some examination of this movement will be helpful. In what follows, I draw primarily on Zizioulas' writing, as his work is somewhat more consistently utilized and referenced by Hütter.

The starting point for John Zizioulas' theology is "...the realism of divine-human communion…"[65] His entire theological project is structured around that theme, and all of the various elements are intended to support the central contention that the concept of *theosis* or deification – understood as interpersonal communion with God – is both a real possibility and the ultimate goal of human existence. Of course, Zizioulas is not alone in his emphasis on *theosis* as a uniquely Orthodox contribution to the understanding of sanctification; Vladimir Lossky similarly emphasizes *theosis* as the foundation of theology in his work *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Chruch*.[66] But as Aristotle Papanikoaou argues, this common starting point does not result in similar outcomes; in fact, in many ways Lossky and Zizioulas present irreconcilably different visions of the Trinity and human being.[67] This results from the fact that they begin with different views

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[64] One must ask whether either Zizioulas or Nissiotis plays a particularly significant role in Hütter's project, as neither is cited with any regularity outside of *Suffering Divine Things*. (Though in *Suffering Divine Things* Hütter draws on several different elements of Zizioulas' thought, as we shall see.) It would perhaps be fair to say that their work is utilized to develop a general theological sensibility. Again, Hütter's primary interest is not necessarily in the relationship between the Holy Spirit and practices, but in the relationship between the church and theology with doctrine and practices forming the framework of the church.

[65] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 1.

[66] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002).

[67] Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizoulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 3 (2003): 357-385.

of Trinitarian personhood and the role of the Holy Spirit, though the differences in the latter are more subtle.

Two primary pieces of Zizioulas' theology ground the possibility of divine-human communion. The first is a Trinitarian ontology grounded in primordial interrelatedness. This ontology opens the possibility for human participation in the life of the Triune God. The second piece is a particular understanding of the relationship between Christology and pneumatology that provides the means by which the divine-human communion is reestablished in and through the church, particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We noted earlier that one of the hallmarks of recent Trinitarian theology is an emphasis on relationality that subverts the classic definition of personhood inherited from Boethius. The Boethian definition, which has been traditional within Western thought, is grounded in the idea of individual substance. Zizioulas' work fits within the new relational understanding of personhood in that he sees relationship as inherent to the definition of personhood.[68] The very being or essence of God is relational; there is no "bare essence" that is separate from the interrelated *Personae* of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[69] Unlike human beings, who (under the condition of sin) first *are* then are related, relationship is intrinsic to God's very being.[70] Moreover, the re-establishment of this kind of relationality within human existence (and particular the relationship with God) is at the heart of God's atoning activity through Jesus Christ.

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[68] This is the fundamental point for his work in *Being and Communion*.

[69] John D. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas H. Knight (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 52. Here we see one significant difference between Zizioulas and Lossky. Lossky maintains a distinction between God's "energies" and God's essence that corresponds to the distinction between God's transcendence and immanence. At the same time, Lossky maintains the antinomy between unity and diversity by emphasizing the relations of origin, thereby emphasizing the *monarchia* of the Father as the source of the other persons. The distinction between essence and energies, which is so important for Lossky, is one which Zizioulas denies. See Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizoulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God."

[70] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 154.

From the outset, Zizioulas' theology is what we might describe as a "post-subjective" model in that it does not begin with a modern Cartesian ego as the model for authentic subjectivity.[71] It is thus a "pathic" model, in that identity is a mediated function defined by relationship. This understanding of *pathos* may help to clear up one significant misconception about Hütter's project, namely that he denies human freedom. In his description of *pathos*, Hütter uses language that describes an almost violent action of God as humanity is "rapt" by God, an image that is highly problematic, as Jeff Pool points out.[72] Hütter's use of this language is unfortunate, particularly because it is not necessary for him to accomplish his argument, nor does it seem to be reflective of his position that the Spirit does not annihilate human freedom. The *pathos* of Christian life need not be understood as a denial of freedom or as an act of being taken prisoner. In fact, such claims are actually contrary to Hütter's argument. Instead, the *pathos* of Christian life is grounded in the relationality that is at the heart of authentic (redeemed) human being. The core of human *pathos* in Hütter's argument is the relationship to God, a relationship that is not generated by the spontaneous ego but which is "external" to the self, yet entirely constitutive of the self.[73] The nature of human freedom, therefore, is not

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[71] The term "post-subjective" is somewhat problematic. For instance, in his essay "Radical Orthodoxy and the New Culture of Obscurantism," Paul D. Janz uses the term to denote a philosophy which does not place human subjectivity and meaning at the heart of interpreting discourse. The result of such a post-subjective account is what Janz describes as "slovenly reading." My use of the term is different, and is akin to the way in which we might speak of Emmanuel Levinas or Jean-Luc Marion as "post-subjective" philosophers in that their models are not dependent on a vision of *individual* or *isolated* subjectivity, but rather a subjectivity that is constructed by relationship. This is a meaning of "post-subjectivity" that falls outside of Janz's definition and is not subject to his critique. (Both Levinas and Marion are cited by Janz as examples of rigorous philosophical approaches to interpretation.) See Paul D. Janz, "Radical Orthodoxy and the New Culture of Obscurantism," *Modern Theology* 20, no. 3 (2004): 363-405.

[72] Jeff B. Pool, "Seizure by Divine Raptor: The Pathic Theology of Reinhard Hütter," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 30, no. 1 (2003): 65.

[73] In this sense, my disagreement with Pool over the relationship between *pathos* and freedom in Hütter parallels my reading of the relationship between self and other in the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion. Both Levinas and Marion offer what I have described as "post-subjective" models

absolute, but is freedom-in-relationship; it is freedom that comes about by the relationship with God, whose freedom is absolute with respect to creation.

This Trinitarian ontology, in which personal being is understood as being-in-relation, provides the foundation for Zizioulas' theology of divine-human communion. Because of God's very nature, there is "room" in the Trinity for human participation in the life of God. Moreover, human beings, by virtue of their nature, are created to be in communion with God. The most appropriate language for this relationship is one of *participation*.[74] Human beings are created to share in the divine life through their *theosis*. *Communion* between the Trinitarian persons is thus the *sine qua non* of human *theosis* in that it establishes a space for human communion with God, and communion with God is the *telos* of human being.

This communion is achieved through the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The relationship between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit is the second element of Zizioulas' theology that makes divine-human communion a reality. As I have been arguing, one way (typical in postliberal thought and brought about through its reading of Frei's work) of relating Christology and pneumatology is to see the Holy Spirit as subordinated to Christ. Zizioulas describes this approach as a "missionary-historical" pneumatology, in which the Spirit is understood as an agent *of* Christ who is sent *by* Christ to glorify Christ. The Kingdom of God is understood as a future goal of humanity (whether that goal is within the bounds of history or "after" history's end) toward which

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grounded in relationship, but Levinas' model is marked by a hyperbolic language of violence and being taken "hostage" by otherness. Pool's reading of Hütter understands him as promoting something close to Levinas' model of subjectivity, and not unjustly, given his unfortunate language on this point. Marion's account, on the other hand, sees the constitution of the self by the relationship to otherness as a gift, namely the gift *of* the self *to* the self. This understanding of subjectivity is closer to my reading of Hütter's *intent*, if not his actual language. See Alex Tracy, "The Other and (Post-)Subjectivity in Homiletics," *Papers of the Academy of Homiletics* (2007).

[74] I will argue for this point more fully in chapter 3.

the Holy Spirit leads the church. Christ goes before and leads the Church into the Kingdom by sending the Holy Spirit as the mediator who bridges the gap between the Head (Christ) and the Body (the Church). The result is a linear conception of history in which the Church is a pilgrim people following Christ toward the destination that is the Kingdom.[75] Zizioulas notes that this is the primary model of the relationship between pneumatology and Christology in the Western tradition.[76]

Zizioulas argues, however, that there is a second model for this relationship both in the Bible and in the early church[77], which he terms the eucharistic-eschatological model. In this model, the relationship between Christology and pneumatology is reversed – the Spirit conditions Christ and is "…the one who constitutes *his very identity as Christ*, either at his baptism (Mark) or at his very biological conception (Matthew and Luke)."[78] Moreover, the Spirit is the agency through which the Resurrection of Christ is accomplished. The Holy Spirit is therefore a decidedly *apocalyptic* agency: it is the agency through which the Son/Word becomes flesh in the Incarnation and it is the agency through which the New Creation is established through the Passion/Resurrection. The presence of the Spirit is not part of a distinct historical economy separate from that of the Son, a distinction implied by the succesionist account of the missionary/historical model.[79] In denying a separate "economy of the Spirit" as an historical succession to the economy of the Son, Zizioulas strives to maintain the *unity* of the divine activity in the

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[75] Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 34.

[76] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 129.

[77] The model that Zizioulas develops closely parallels that developed by Rowan Williams in his essay "Word and Spirit." For this reason, as we shall see, it is possible to use Williams as a "supplement" to Hütter's use of Zizioulas' pneumatology.

[78] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 127-128. (Emphasis original.)

[79] The question of whether a unique "economy" can be claimed for the Spirit is at the heart of the debate between Zizioulas and Lossky, with Lossky utilizing the language of economy more readily than Zizioulas. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid speaking altogether of an "economy of the Spirit."

world; there is only *one* economy in which all three persons participate, albeit each with their own characteristics. Any "economy of the Spirit' is therefore only a matter of perspective and/or emphasis. The Spirit makes present the eschatological Kingdom within the world, an eschatological Kingdom that is accomplished through the atoning work of the Son at the initiation of the Father.

This pneumatologically-conditioned Christology has several implications for ecclesiology. For one, it suggests an *exitus-reditus* understanding of the church's mission. Certainly, from an historical standpoint, the Resurrection precedes Pentecost. There is a sense in which the church "spreads out" from the Christ event, beginning with the disciples, moving through the conversions at Pentecost, and continuing beyond into the proclamation to the Gentiles. In this sense, the missionary-historical approach with its emphasis on the *exitus* of the church's mission has a certain truth. But Zizioulas also emphasizes the *reditus* of soteriology and eschatology in that the church's outward expansion in mission is coupled with a moment of gathering-in and return. The church exists not primarily as the scattered community sent forth by the Christ event, but as the gathered community who are being incorporated into Christ wherever they may be; the *reditus* of the church's gathering takes priority and gives the reason for the *exitus* of its missionary work.[80]

A second ecclesiological implication is that the church is now identified with the eschatological Christ. The church is the New Creation in Christ, the community that has been made into the Body of Christ. It is the community that now shares Christ's

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[80] Patricia Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 199.

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relationship with the Father, to use language suggested by Rowan Williams.[81]   This account emphasizes the priority of the holiness of the church as the presence of Christ in history over and against the sinfulness of the church. This prioritization means that "[the relationship of the Spirit to the person] consists less in inspiring and sanctification than in making present the eschatological person in history."[82]   The Spirit does not complete the work of Christ (as in Lossky's approach, or that of the missionary-historical pneumatology), but rather "translates" (again borrowing a term from Williams) the already completed work of Christ into the life of the person. The Spirit is therefore deeply involved in history, but is not a part of history in the same way as Christ.

While Zizioulas distinguishes between the missionary-historical and the eucharistic-eschatological dimensions of pneumatology, he notes that the two seem to co-exist in the biblical texts, particularly in Luke-Acts.[83]   There is, however, a priority given to the Eucharistic-eschatological dimension over the missionary-historical. This priority "…does not abolish the missionary-historical approach, but only gives it an eschatological meaning.   The early Christians simply understood their missionary endeavor as an extension of the eschatological event."[84]   This synthesis was lost in the church's later development, and the West embarked on the development of a pneumatology almost wholly conditioned by Christology.   In the East, both models continued to exist, but without the synthesis that was present in the New Testament.   In Zizioulas' thinking, renewing that synthesis with a priority on the eschatological role of

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[81] Williams, 124.

[82] Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 36.

[83] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 128. Thus, while both Williams and Zizioulas identify two streams of pneumatology, Zizioulas' reading is more nuanced. Williams identifies both "Lukan" and "Johannine" trends in the New Testament, but never addresses the possibility of their coexistence within any single text.

[84] Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 35.

the Spirit is necessary for both dimensions to receive their proper emphasis. The Holy Spirit's *primary* task is the gathering of people into the Body of Christ, the establishment of communion, to which the work of empowerment is secondary but indispensible.[85] The shift from a missionary model in which the Spirit empowers to an eschatological model in which communion is the main task of the Spirit moves ecclesiology away from the idea of the church as an institution fully given by the Christ event, an institution which would have a far more static character.

These two main elements of Zizioulas' thought – his Trinitarian ontology and his pneumatologically-conditioned Christology – come together in his understanding of the Eucharist as the locus of the Church. In the Eucharist, the community is formed by the work of the Holy Spirit whose activity is invoked in the epiclesis. Full personhood is achieved only in communion with others (including God), and the church is understood as such a communion of persons. The eschatological community and personhood are closely tied to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not one sacrament among many (or even two), but is "an assembly (synaxis), a community, a network of relations, in which a man 'subsists.'"[86] It is in Communion that the church is formed as individuals are brought into relationship with one another and with God through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus the church "happens" around the Table: "Understanding the church as 'communion' with its center and origin in the Lord's Supper allows one to overcome the ecclesiological contradiction between 'insitution' and 'event,' between 'being' and 'act.'"[87] In this

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[85] Fox, 199. Again, c.f. Rowan Williams. Williams identifies the Lukan model of pneumatology as that which focuses on the Spirit as the "continuator of Christ's work, filling a space left by Christ's exaltation, manifest in the conviction of extraordinary experiences." By contrast, Williams suggests that on the Johannine account the Spirit is understood to be constitutive of the very life of the church. See Williams, 118-119.

[86] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 60

[87] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 119.

moment, the church exists as the Body of Christ (hence its concrete corporality as an institution) and as the work of the Spirit (an event).

Zizioulas' conception of the relationship between Christology and pneumatology is complex and gives rise to several questions. First, we may ask whether the any real gain is achieved by simply inverting the relationship between Christology and pneumatology so that the latter conditions the former. Does this not simply replace a "Christo-monistic" emphasis with a "pneumato-monistic" one?[88] Again, it is key to recall that Zizioulas does not seek to *replace* one pneumatology with the other; rather, he only seeks to subordinate the historical to the eschatological so that history receives eschatological meaning. Both dimensions are required. As Chauvet points out, without a sufficient Christological rooting (the Spirit *of Christ*), pneumatology can "veer toward the universalism of a kingdom which, lacking criteria of identity, could not differentiate itself from all people of good will…"[89] On the other hand, the lack of a sufficient pneumatological foundation for the church can lead to an extreme particularism and strong institutional rules of orthodoxy and purity.[90]

It is perhaps most helpful to see the two as mutually conditioned, an interpretation that Zizioulas does not pursue, but which seems called for by the unity of the divine economy itself. The eschaton, and hence the Spirit, may represent the soteriological *telos* of humanity, but it is Christ who constitutes the paschal *condition* under which the realization of that *telos* becomes possible. As Randy Maddox has said of John Wesley's theology, we are "pardoned *in order* to participate."[91] Attention to both the *telos* and the

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[88] Chauvet, 545.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Maddox, 168.

conditions under which that *telos* is achieved is necessary, and neither is sufficient in itself. Christ represents a "necessary condition" for our salvation, even if that condition is insufficient without the Holy Spirit that translates the significance of Christ into believers' lives.

As a closely related question, we may also ask, as Miroslav Volf does, whether Zizioulas' ecclesiology does not represent a "fully-realized eschatology." Volf, following Baillargeon, argues that Zizioulas "…has no place systemically in the experience of salvific grace for the theologically necessary presence of unredemption… Hence, no dialectic of 'already – not yet' can attach to the experience of salvific grace."[92] In other words, by shifting to an eschatological emphasis, has Zizioulas so closely equated the Kingdom with the church that he no longer simply emphasizes or prioritizes the holiness of the church, but presents the church as already fully sanctified in the present when gathered around the Table?

Zizioulas claims that this is not the case, but does not provide any detailed explanation of why this is so. I want to suggest that there are two correctives or clarifications that are necessary for Zizioulas' theology to avoid slipping into the error of a fully-realized eschatology. The first is to remember that the church does not participate in any *straightforward* way in the eschaton. Instead, through the Eucharist, the church participates in the paschal mystery of Christ, which is centered on the Cross and Resurrection. This is why the *anamnesis* and the epiclesis rightly belong together, as their conjunction reflects the unity of God's works *ad extra*. The Eucharist "[proclaims] the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26, NRSV) and invokes the Spirit to create the church as the eschatological community in Christ. The church's participation is in the

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[92] Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 101.

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paschal mystery, and *from there* in the eschatological Kingdom that is established in that event. In the Cross and Resurrection, the eschaton breaks into history through the work of the Spirit. The Eucharist does establish the church as the "eschatological community," but it does so by first making it the paschal community. Again, both the Christological and the pneumatological poles are necessary for a thorough understanding of the sacrament. To the extent that Zizioulas *over emphasizes* the eschatological component or fails to derive the eschatological dimension from the paschal participation, a more thorough examination of the Christological emphasis one sees in the liturgies of the Western traditions provides a helpful corrective, but one that does not undo his fundamental insights.

At times, Zizioulas seems to move in such a direction. He describes the church in terms of iconicity.

> The Church is the image or 'icon' of the Kingdom of God. In the Church all things are brought together, included and recapitulated so they will continue in life forever. The Church depicts the end time in history. I choose the term 'depict' in order to avoid some of the problems that the word 'identify' would cause us. The Church in history is clearly not identical with the Kingdom of God. The trauma of history means that along with the rest of the world, Christians struggle with evil, and the way of the cross is this struggle. The Church is not the society of those who have overcome evil but those who are struggling against evil. The holy Church is full of sinners, being made holy. Therefore, we must say that the kingdom of God is *depicted* in the Church. This iconcological ontology is the key.[93]

Again, one can see here a synthesis of both historical and eschatological concerns. What is not addressed in this passage is how they might be related through the concept of iconicity. Thus my second suggestion for moderating Zizioulas' eschatological bias is to incorporate Jean-Luc Marion's account of the phenomenology of the icon.

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[93] Zizioulas, *Christian Dogmatics*, 136.

In Marion's phenomenology, the icon is defined by its mediation of a presence-in-absence. The icon follows something like the logic of the "trace" in deconstruction, in that it gives "a visible image of the invisible *as invisible*."[94] What the icon mediates is not a straightforward presence that could be circumscribed by the gaze of a subject; that presence would be an idol. Instead, it mediates the invisible by handing itself over to it thoroughly. In Marion's work, Christ on the Cross is the paradigmatic icon.

> Thus the visible surface must, paradoxically, efface itself, or at least efface within it every opacity that would obfuscate the crossing of gazes [*la croisée des regards*]: the icon *dulls* the image in it, in order to there prevent any self-sufficiency, autonomy, or self-affirmation… By completely effacing the glory of his own image, to the point of obscuring even his humanity, the Servant allows nothing other than his actions to be seen: these result from obedience to the will of God and thus allow it to become manifest… In fact, it is precisely at the moment that he loses his human appearance [*figure*] that Christ becomes the figure of the divine will… and shedding appearance, he gives shape [*donne figure*] to a holiness that would have remained invisible without the shrine [*écrin*] (not screen [*écran*]) of his body.[95]

This iconic logic suggests one possible way, utilizing the concept of the trace, that the church may be said to be the eschatological community without necessarily identifying itself with the Kingdom of God. Paradoxically, it is when the church confesses that it is *not* the Kingdom, when it invokes the work of the Holy Spirit that it might *become* the Kingdom, that the Kingdom becomes most clearly discernable in its midst.[96]

Again, it is important to remember that Hütter does not use Zizioulas or any other theologian's *communio* ecclesiology in a thoroughly systematic way. Where I have

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[94] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, ed. Mieke bal and Hent de Vries, trans., James K. A. Smith, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 58.
[95] Ibid., 60-61.
[96] As I will argue in chapter 4, this paradox necessitates a particular form of hermeneutical consciousness; there I will suggest that David Buttrick's hermeneutic of "being saved in the world" best matches the needs of this paradox.

suggested correctives or clarifications to Zizioulas' theology, it is with an eye toward Hütter's particular emphases. In some cases, I have read against Zizioulas' explicit statements toward what I think is an underlying intention based on a sense of his entire project. In any case, it is clear that Zizioulas proposes a complex model for the relationship between Christ, the Spirit, and the church – a model that is far more complex than the linear one that is at the foundation of the postliberal homiletic. As we will see, when Hütter takes up that model and combines it with his interpretation of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic framework, the result is a far more robust framework for thinking about the space in which Christians live and are formed.

4. The Church as the Public of the Spirit

When Hütter combines the insights of *communio* ecclesiology with the cultural-linguistic model of doctrine developed by Lindbeck, the church acquires a far greater theological depth. With this pneumatological supplement, it is no longer possible to describe the church in purely sociological or cultural terms such as a Wittgenstinian "language game." Instead, the church must be described in pneumatological, soteriological, and ultimately Trinitarian language.

Hütter adopts two key insights from the *communio* ecclesiology to describe the church's rooting in the Holy Spirit. The first is the ontological aspect in which the church is understood as the *poiesis* of the Holy Spirit. This aspect corresponds to the pneumatological conditioning of Christology discussed in the previous section. The church is both institution and event as the ecclesial body of Christ that is made by the work of the Spirit. The second insight is the eschatological aspect of the church which corresponds to the eschatological mission of the Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, the

church becomes the icon of the Kingdom of God as it is drawn into the *eschata* through the anamnesis of God's promises mediated to it by Scripture and doctrine, as well as through its practices that enact the shape of the Kingdom itself. "In believing affirmation, the congregation is taken up 'even now' into God's life, into the communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[97] Like Zizioulas, Hütter is careful to distinguish this eschatological dimension of the church's existence from a kind of historical anticipation.[98]

Hütter recognizes in these two elements of the *communio* ecclesiology a "pneumatologically conceived pathos" which is "the receptivity in the primary relationality qualifying us as believers."[99] That pathic relationship toward God is the shape of redemption, in that it is the relationship of communion with the Triune God. That communion, which has been broken by sin, is reestablished by Christ so that God "performs this pathos as economy of salvation."[100] Humans are no longer conceived of as spontaneous agents acting from an unmediated Cartesian ego; instead, humans are the "receiving party" in this relationship, undergoing God's actions of redemption and sanctification. In language highly reminiscent of Jean-Luc Marion's ontology of "the Gifted," Hütter remarks that "people become 'persons,' that is, they receive their essence – that which qualifies them – from communion with the triune God."[101] Human agency remains, but as we shall see in a moment it is an agency that is thoroughly redefined,

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[97] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 120.

[98] Hütter is particularly critical of Pannenberg's early work in this area, though he notes a change in Pannenberg's later writing (especially volume 3 of his *Systematic Theology*) that moves closer to the Eastern model. Ibid., 122-123. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991f.).

[99] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 124.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 125. C.f. the concept of "the Gifted" in Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, ed. Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries, trans., Jeffrey L. Kosky, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 268ff.

even to the extent that it is no longer appropriate even to describe the relationship in terms of a human response to the Spirit. Instead, Hütter uses the language of "cooperation" to indicate the kind of mutual relationship that is at work.[102]

When Hütter describes the church as "christologically 'instituted' and pneumatologically 'constituted,'" he means that with the utmost degree of seriousness.[103] The church is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is the Spirit's creation. Moreover, the Spirit is not simply a cause of the church, but is now identified with the very shape of the church's life.[104] The church is the "public of the Spirit," where "public" comes to mean something akin to the embodiment of the Spirit within history. There is an "inherent relationship" between the work of the Spirit in the economy of salvation and the church, to the extent that the church becomes the primary (though not sole) locus of the Spirit's salvific work.[105] As the primary locus, the church is the *paradigmatic* work of the Spirit, in light of which the Spirit's work beyond the church is to be understood. Without this priority, the Spirit is both "everywhere and nowhere," and the invocation of the Spirit "becomes an empty expression."[106] The relationship between the church and the Spirit gives the latter a degree of *concreteness* that is necessary if the Spirit is to be understood in personal terms.

Again, this does not mean that the Spirit is active only within the Church. Hütter is quite explicit on that point. "…[T]he Holy Spirit's publicity goes beyond the church's limits, in that the Spirit creates new things and can act as a critic of the church from both

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[102] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 125.
[103] Ibid.
[104] The Spirit therefore functions quasi-formally. C.f. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 297.
[105] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 127.
[106] Ibid. See also Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 38-39.

within and without."[107] To claim that the Spirit is at work beyond the church is not to imply that there is "naked knowledge of God" apart from the church.[108] In the world, we can describe the work of the Spirit in terms of its activity in bringing people to faith. This is the approach taken by William Placher, who describes the "epistemology of the Spirit" as the work of the Spirit in bringing people to Christ.[109] Such an account is quite different from that offered by Richard Crane, who suggests that the Spirit brings about some knowledge of God beyond the life of the church community.[110] As we have seen, Hütter's understanding of the Gospel is not propositional in nature, but is "the very presence of Christ in the *promissiones*;" or, as he develops it more fully, the gospel is the promise given by the Father through Christ of personal participation in the very life of the Trinity in the Holy Spirit. Beyond the church, we may describe the work of the Spirit in terms of its *call* to this participation, though that call is not identical with the imparting of a "saving knowledge" of God.[111] As Kevin Vanhoozer describes it, the Spirit's work in the act of conversion is an "effectual call" more than it is an efficient cause in the act of conversion.[112] Though Hütter does not address this question in detail or describe exactly how he envisions the work of the Spirit beyond the church, a view of calling such as that articulated by Vanhoozer is not incompatible with Hütter's view of the Spirit's work in the church. Moreover, it is at least conceivable that this call might be experienced by the

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[107] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 39.

[108] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 26-28.

[109] Placher, 84.

[110] Richard Crane, "Postliberals, Truth, Ad Hoc Apologetics, and (Something Like) General Revelation," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 30, no. 1 (2003): 29-53.

[111] The expression "saving knowledge of God" has a particular meaning in Hütter's writing. As I will argue more fully, this saving knowledge is the Gospel, the relationship with God and participation in God's life. This reinforces the lack of a propositional content, and moves it toward of a kind of practical *sapientia* for participation.

[112] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Effectual Call or Causal Effect? Summons, Sovereignty and Supervenient Grace," *Tyndale Bulletin* 49, no. 2 (1998).

church from within, even mediated through the church itself, as the Spirit works to convert it anew to greater faithfulness. Finally, two other factors that we have already mentioned prevent us from narrowing the work of the Spirit to the bounds of the church. The first is the priority given to pneumatology over Christology, which prevents the Spirit from being limited to the role of an agent of Christ within the church that Christ institutes. The second is that the Spirit's binding to the church is the result of God's free action, and this cannot imply that the Spirit is the possession of the church or that the relationship can be reified. The initiative always remains with God who has chosen to bind God's self to the church, and the church is pathically related to God's activity in the Spirit.

Nevertheless, the church remains the public of the Holy Spirit, in that it is the *poiesis* of the Spirit. As a public, the church is characterized by both its *telos* and is core practices. As we have seen above, Hütter utilizes Luther's list of the "marks of the church" as the core practices: proclamation, baptism, Eucharist, the office of the keys, ordination/offices, prayer/doxology, catechesis, and the way of the cross as discipleship. What makes the church not just one public among others, but the public of the Spirit, is that both doctrines and these practices are understood not simply as the "products" of the Spirit, but as its very form in Christian life. If the work of the Spirit is inseparable from its being, then the only way to understand doctrine and the core practices, according to Hütter, is by viewing them as "enhypostatic" in the Spirit.[113] The Spirit's activity becomes identical with the performance of the doctrine (in the sense of acts of memory or belief in God's promises) and practice. Hütter's use of the term "cooperation," therefore,

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[113] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 132-133.

must be understood in a very precise sense. The Spirit's agency overtakes human agency without obliterating it.

The relationship between the Holy Spirit, doctrine, and the core practices that Hütter delineates is remarkably complex, and must be teased out further for its implications to become more apparent. On the one hand, doctrine is clearly related to the Christ event; as we saw above, the purpose of doctrine is to clarify the Christ event against heretical distortions. Doctrine is therefore tied to the Christological dimension of the church's institution. At the same time, the very act of anamnesis in and through doctrine is the work of the Spirit. In other words, the act of formulating, recalling, and believing doctrine is the work of the Spirit.

From these two points, we can make a general statement about the work of the Holy Spirit. In reference to the liturgy, Louis Marie Chauvet elegantly describes the Holy Spirit as "the *agent of the Word's burial in the flesh*, more precisely, after Easter, as the agent of the *disappearance* of the Risen One into the flesh, which is thus sacramental, of humanity and the world."[114] This image helpfully summarizes the pneumatological picture that Hütter draws for the core practices and doctrines, as well as Zizioulas' claims regarding a pneumatologically-conditioned Christology. We may describe this work of "burial" – or, as Chauvet describes it elsewhere, "God's embodiment"[115] – at several moments in the biblical narrative and the experience of the church. First, as we have argued above, the Spirit is constitutive of the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, whether at his baptism or at his conception (in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, respectively). Second, the Spirit is responsible for the "real presence" of Christ in the elements of the

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[114] Chauvet, 526.
[115] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans., Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 166.

Lord's Supper. But ultimately, in Paul's thought, there is no other way to understand the resurrected body than Spiritual, and the Spirit's action is "…as a transforming agent of what is deepest in human nature (the passage from slavery to filiation), in the Church, and finally in the whole of humanity and the universe."[116] But in its act of constituting the church by enfleshing the Word within it, the Spirit also becomes the agent of the deposit of the Word within the Scriptures, since the Scriptures are understood as the products of the church.

Within the church, the Christological dimension of its institution remains conditioned by pneumatology, even as the life of Jesus as the Christ is pneumatologically conditioned. The doctrines that re-present the institution of the church in the salvific activity of Jesus are the work of the Holy Spirit in that same Christological reference, for it is the Spirit that has "buried the Word" in the letter of doctrine. In defining the church as the public of the Holy Spirit constituted by doctrine and the core practices, Hütter argues that these should not be understood primarily as boundaries that would demarcate an "intratextual" field; that would be the approach that DeHart criticizes in those who take the cultural-linguistic model and use it to polemically define a pure postliberalism opposed to liberal theology. Instead, Hütter describes these as a kind of "center."

> As the public of the Holy Spirit, the church is constituted not through "boundaries" but through a "center" that in the core practices creates "space" and "time" and is expressed authoritatively in doctrina. This center is of an utterly Christological nature, and as such also does indeed demarcate the one 'boundary' the church never transcends.[117]

In light of Hütter's description of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the church as enhypostatic, Chauvet's language of the Spirit as the agency that buries the Word in flesh

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[116] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 519.
[117] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 165. (Emphasis original.)

appears quite well-suited to Hütter's project. The Spirit buries the Word in flesh both in doctrines, which establish the horizon of the church by mediating to it the economy of salvation and defining its *telos* eschatologically in the promises of God; and the core practices, through which the church embodies its eschatological *telos* within the world. We may say then that the Spirit has a two-dimensional character. First, the Spirit is the Spirit *of Christ* in that it recalls the work of Jesus. The Spirit has an *anamnetic* function, recalling the promises of God that are implicit in the Christ event and re-presenting them in the present. Second, the Spirit has an *eschatological* function in that it makes present the Kingdom in history, an eschaton that is made possible by the Christ event even as it is the *telos* of the atoning work of Jesus. This eschatological dimension prevents the church from succumbing to an overly strong institutional view that would potentially be too rigid. Its eschatological *telos* and character mean that the church is a not-quite-finished project of the Spirit, even as it iconically substantiates the eschaton in history as an alternative community.

5. Theology

Within this complex nexus of doctrine and core practices, Hütter understands *theology* to have a very specific role. Theology is not a constructive *poesis* of its own, he argues, but is pathically related to both the core practices and doctrine. First, Hütter is clear that theology and doctrine are not identical. Just as doctrine is not identical with the gospel as a reality within history, so also it is not identical with any particular consensus of theology.[118] Doctrine makes present the economy of salvation as an object of faith for

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[118] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 37.

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the church. In relationship to the core practices, theology exists to enable the church to perform the practices, through which it participates in the life of God.

Hütter describes theology as having three distinct aspects. These aspects are the effect of its pathos in relationship to both doctrine and the core practices. Hütter argues that, through its pathos, theology overcomes the dualistic view of the relationship between theory and praxis that sees praxis as derivative or merely as "applied theory."[119] It also does not fit into the model assumed by Hegel in which praxis itself forms the horizon of theological reflection, so that praxis moves to theory and ultimately back to praxis. Instead, theology both takes place from within praxis (in the sense of participation in the core practices) and is oriented toward praxis. Nevertheless, Hütter takes pains to distinguish this practical aspect of theology from the kind of practical theology that one finds in liberation theology. Whereas liberation theology is determined by a political horizon, he argues, theology as he is describing it has its ultimate horizon in the economy of salvation, which relates to the political and social horizons without being identical with either of them.[120]

The first aspect of theology is its discursive aspect. Theology re-appropriates the object of faith (that is, the economy of salvation) by interpreting the meaning of doctrine in a variety of contexts. Theology does not generate its own object; instead, theology receives its object from beyond itself. It is dependent on the *regula fidei* (doctrine and Scripture) to mediate its object. In the *regula fidei*, theology "…always encounters the unity of the Christian faith… It must not establish it."[121] This means that theology is thoroughly exegetical; it is interpretive rather than generative. If theology produced its

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[119] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 172.
[120] Ibid., 173.
[121] Ibid., 178.

own object, it would no longer be pathic and dependent on Scripture and doctrine. Instead, it would be responsible for its own grounding. Theology would become a form of 'free-floating hermeneutics' that would lack any ethical relationship to its object. At the same time, the pathic relationship unfolds in the ability of theology to "portray" or "present" the *regula fidei* in different ways that are dependent on context while the *regula fidei* remains unchanged.[122]

At this point, we must ask a question that has haunted this analysis and will prove important for homiletics: in Hütter's framework, can doctrine (or the core practices) be revised? We have noted that Hütter establishes a particularly strong link between doctrine and the core practices on the one hand and the work of the Spirit on the other – so strong, in fact, that doctrine is considered one of the concrete ways in which the Holy Spirit is embodied in history. Jeff B. Pool argues that one of the results of this identification is that doctrine is placed beyond question or critique because it is identical with the Holy Spirit's work, which is in turn identical with the person of the Spirit.[123] Hütter is unfortunately less than clear or consistent on this issue. At times, he indicates that doctrine cannot change.[124] At other points, he indicates that it may change based on the decision of the church as a whole, a decision which would not be easily negotiated.

> …[Theology becoming dogma] requires a distinct and always new "the Holy Spirit and we have decided" (Acts 15:28), in other words, a binding confession of faith of the whole church through its appropriate channels. This always and only occurs as a reaffirmation of the one gospel (*doctrina evangelii*) under the conditions of its serious challenge, distortion, or rejection *inside* the church.[125]

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Pool: 55-69.
[124] E.g., "…the content of faith is from the outset fixed in the *regula fidei* and *always* remains the same…" (Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 178. Emphasis added)
[125] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 52.

Hütter recognizes the difficulties that this entails, given the state of disunity in the church.[126] In light of these difficulties, *church doctrine* as it is used here is best defined as the universal affirmations of the Christian faith, such as one would find in the ecumenical creeds and council decisions. The development of denominations would fall under the heading of *theological doctrine* which is more revisable. Theological doctrine might be binding on specific communities or denominations, but is not binding in the same way that church doctrine is.

For our purposes, a definitive answer to this question is not necessary. All that *is* necessary for Hütter's argument regarding the character of theology (as well as my argument regarding the character of preaching in chapter 4) is that *theology* cannot effect a change in doctrine on its own. Although theology, according to Hütter, is *bound* by the *regula fidei* such that the latter gives the former its object, this pathic relationship makes a different kind of freedom possible for theology. Because the *regula fidei* is fixed, theology has the potential to be flexible in the way it presents its object in various places and times.[127]

The pathos of theology in its discursive aspect has two significant implications for the shape that theology takes. The first is theology's *argumentative* form.[128] Theology takes place within a dialogical framework in the church. As theology is practiced in various times and places and gives rise to different presentations/interpretations of the *regula fidei*, these various interpretations are brought into dialogue with one another.

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[126] Ibid., 236 n58.
[127] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 178.
[128] Hütter describes this argumentative element of theology by drawing on the work of Thomas Aquinas. For the purposes of this project, I am intentionally circumventing his analysis of Aquinas (and the question of whether Aquinas actually does fit his description) and focusing on the conclusions that he presents regarding the character of theology.

The result is theological debate, in which the appropriateness of varying interpretations is considered. This argumentative dialogue results in the development of theological "schools" of interpretation. In Hütter's view, this development is not the undesirable formation of theological "cliques," but a necessary component of the dialogical structure of theological *discurrere*.[129] Theology does not continually return to a pristine origin for its reflections, but takes into account the dialogical activity that has preceded a given moment of theological reflection, recognizing both shared premises and different positions in relationship to other theological schools.

The second implication of the discursive aspect of theology is the limited and provisional nature of theological conclusions.[130] Theological reflection results in statements that do not aim at the comprehensive vision of church doctrine or the *regula fidei*. Instead, theology is discursive in the sense of proceeding from topic to topic, treating each with an additional degree of specificity. Just as doctrine provides a specification of the economy of salvation mediated by Scripture, so also theology as a practice further specifies the meaning of doctrine within particular contexts. The validity of theological statements is not a quality inherent to the statements themselves, but arises from their relationship to the prior objects of doctrine and Scripture. The *discurrere* aims at a degree of definiteness and concreteness not present in doctrinal statements, and "[if] the argumentative *discurrere* has not yet attained such definiteness, it is as yet unconcluded, and cannot yet contribute anything to theological judgment because that

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[129] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 184.
[130] Ibid., 184ff.

judgment itself cannot be accounted for responsibly in any theologically unequivocal way."[131]

The second aspect of theology which Hütter describes is its task of judgment and perception. In fulfilling its *telos* of making present the eschatological Kingdom in history, the church is confronted by a variety of social, political, economic, and philosophical arrangements. In short, all the things that make up 'culture,' broadly speaking, have an effect on the way in which the church actualizes its eschatological *telos*. The church must deal with these situations in specific ways, a task which calls for theological perception and judgment. "*Theological perception* here refers to the precise discernment of problems inhering in any given query, discernment that always takes place from the perspective of the *doctrina evangelii* and *within* the context of the core practices; that is, it is always *pathic* rather than abstract perception and discernment."[132] Theological perception gives rise to theological judgment, which is "the application of the *doctrina evangelii* in concurrence with church doctrine to a specific constellation of problems such that the judgment itself ultimately comes to bear precisely *in* this constellation."[133] Theological perception and judgment is oriented toward the *telos* of the church, and is carried out to support the teaching and preaching of the church.

That preaching and teaching takes place as part of the third aspect of theology, the presentative-communicative aspect. This aspect represents the culmination of theological practice in the work of instruction (both initial and ongoing) in the faith. Hütter explicates this aspect of theology in light of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic framework – the instruction in faith is directed toward the development of cultural-linguistic

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[131] Ibid., 186.
[132] Ibid., 187.
[133] Ibid., 188.

competency.[134]   This presentative-communicative work is context-specific; Hütter describes it in terms of "catechesis as *ad hoc* apologetics."[135] The ultimate task of this instruction is the formation that enables individuals to participate in the life of God through praise for God's actions on their behalf.[136]

Catechesis occurs in two forms. The first is the initial introduction of faith in which catechumens take on a new and unfamiliar form of language. In the catechetical dimension theology takes on both pathic and *poietic* dimensions. It remains pathic in its dependence on the mediation of the *doctrina evangelii* through Scripture, doctrine, and the *regula fidei*. It regains a *poietic* element in that it must consider the context of catechumens in terms of social, political, and economic context, among other factors.[137] The "poietic pathos" of theology appears through its "creative exposition of the received *doctrina evangelii* and of the core practices" on the one hand and its "regard to a specific cultural and social constellation" on the other.[138]

Following the initial acquisition of faith, theology has a critical role in the ongoing work of "peregrinational learning." This learning is "immanent to faith" and "begins daily anew and never ends."[139] This work follows the intratextual approach to theology described by Lindbeck, interpreting various situations from within the context of Christian praxis. The model of interpretation is typological, in precisely the sense described by Lindbeck: the absorption of the world into the text.

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[134] Ibid., 189.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., 190.
[138] Ibid., 191.
[139] Ibid.

In summary, Hütter describes the task of theology as mediating between doctrine and the core practices as a specific discourse practice of the church.

> Theology as ecclesial discourse practice… is the occasion of bringing doctrine and core practices into that kind of interface that they constructively and critically inform each other, since *both* are ways through which the saving knowledge of God is mediated. And they need each other, or to put it technically: the relationship of "lex orandi, lex credendi" is a two way street.[140]

But while theology brings doctrine and the core practices together, Hütter (in a characteristically postliberal move) argues that doctrine has the "right of way" in this traffic, since it is immediately normed by and accountable to Scripture.[141] Drawing from Aquinas, Hütter points to the way in which *sacra doctrina* relates to *sacra scriptura* in that doctrine "stands in [Scripture's] service such that [doctrine], in the mode of pathos, is able to become the implementing subject of [Scripture]."[142] In this way, Hütter maintains a kind of *biblical* control for theology that keeps it within a "traditional" postliberal framework *ala* Lindbeck and Frei.

Reinhard Hütter's work represents an important turn in postliberal theology that recognizes both the advantages of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model as well as its deficiencies. Hütter sees the cultural-linguistic model as a powerful means of describing the church as a unique public within which Christian formation occurs. What is lacking in Lindbeck's account, however, is a central place for practices and a robust theological understanding of formation. In Lindbeck's view, formation is the acquisition and increased proficiency in the use of the Christian language. By drawing on *communio* ecclesiology, Hütter provides a pneumatological account of formation. Christian

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[140] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 54.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 182.

formation is not simply the acquisition of a language, but is a process of "suffering divine things," of being shaped by the person/work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, formation in Hütter's work moves from being an act of poesis in learning to a pathic receptivity.

But the pneumatological repair goes far beyond identifying the cultural-linguistic model with a pathos that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Hütter also identifies the Spirit with what might be called the "means of grace." Scripture (in its reading and hearing), doctrine, and the core practices are not only the result of an impulse given by the Spirit; they are the very concrete shape of the Spirit's activity and person in the world. Through doctrine and the core practices, the Holy Spirit establishes the church as a unique public governed by its own institutional memory, eschatological *telos*, and practices.

In Hütter's model, what happens at the intersection of doctrine and the core practices is theology. Theology is the particular discourse practice of the church that brings doctrine and the core practices into dialogue with one another, though a priority is always given to doctrine. Theology cannot exist separately from these two poles of doctrine and core practices, which respectively represent the horizon of the church in the economy of salvation that is shaped by the promises of God (mediated by Scripture and doctrine) and the concrete mediation of the Kingdom in the church's practices.

Yet while Hütter's proposal for a pneumatogically-grounded ecclesia is powerful, there are some elements which deserve further examination. The first is an implication which Hütter recognizes, but does not elaborate in a sustained manner, namely that his understanding of the core practices directly results in an understanding of the Christian life as participation in the life of God. As Hütter succinctly states the issue, "Creation is redeemed insofar as the triune God draws it into his communion. The eschatological goal

is participation in the communion of the Father with the Son in the Holy Spirit."[143] On this point Wayne Hankey is correct: in Zizioulas' soteriology that Hütter adopts, the nature of sanctified or eschatological existence is a never-ending praxis or poesis. This praxis (which I will examine in terms of doxology in the next chapter) is the concrete form of the church's participation in God's life, paralelling the doxology given by the Son to the Father.[144]

A second implication is that theology is no longer understood as *theory* which would then be *applied* to practices. Theology moves between doctrine and practices in a dialogical fashion. Hütter's account of the role of theology, therefore, opens up into the realm of what has come to be described as "practical theology." In contemporary use, practical theology is understood as a way of approaching theology that overcomes the division between theory and practice by seeing theory as subservient to practice. As was noted in the discussion of Hankey earlier in this chapter, *theoria* ceases to be understood as a totalizing vision and becomes a tool to promote an infinite Christian *praxis*.

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[143] ibid., 124.

[144] Any mention of "participation" in relationship to theology immediately invites comparisons to Radical Orthodoxy, which has done much to reintroduce this term to the contemporary theological lexicon; however, Hütter (and Zizioulas) uses the idea of participation differently from Milbank, Pickstock, and others in the RO movement. The participatory ontology that RO proposes may be best described as a creational ontology. As James Smith describes this approach, "…nothing *is* autonomously or in itself but *is* only insofar as it participates in the gift of existence granted by God…" (James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy : Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 75.) In contrast to RO's model of a universal creational or ontological participation, the participation described by Hütter is a *soteriological* participation; it is made possible by the atoning work of Christ and the sanctifying work of the Spirit. It therefore constitutes the *reditus* that balances the *exitus* emphasized by RO. Siobhan Nash-Marshall suggests that, in Boethius' neoplatonic Chrisitianity (especially as elucidated in the *Quomodo Substantiae*), there is in fact a *double participation*: things are insofar as they participate in the forms that are the ideas of God, and things are made *good* insofar as they partcipate in God's own being which is the Good itself. While these two moments are distinguished within the Boethian structure, they cannot be distinct (since things are perfected insofar as they actualize their *telos*, which is their essence or nature). Boethius' metaphysics therefore emphasizes *both* the *exitus* and *reditus* within a participatory scheme. Seen in this light, Hütter's approach is not contradictory to that of Radical Orthodoxy, but it is an important corrective to a possible over-emphasis of the creational pole. For more on this issue in Boethius, see Siobhan Nash-Marshall, *Participation and the Good: A Study in Boethian Metaphysics* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000).

The third issue implied in Hütter's work is the relationship between theology and the core practices, particularly preaching. Hütter's account of preaching remains within a kerygmatic framework in that its primary goal is proclamation. The reason for this is that it separates the core practices as enhypostases of the Spirit from the discursive activity of theology that is hermeneutical and dependent on them. But this division is virtually impossible to maintain if one actually examines the practice of preaching. A more nuanced understanding of the relationship is required.

CHAPTER III

PREACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

Hütter's work presents a far more complex account of the church than that provided by Campbell's synthesis of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model with Frei's narrative Christology. In Campbell's work, the church emerges as a continuation of the Incarnation, a body that repeats the ministry of Jesus in its mission to the world. That mission is one of resistance to the principalities and powers, and that resistance takes place through the non-violent act of preaching as the repetition of the story of Jesus. The story of Jesus is not only an act of resistance in itself in that it names and lampoons the powers, revealing them for the fallen and weak entities that they truly are; it also provides the resources for other acts of resistance by illustrating other actions that, in non-violent ways similar to preaching, confront the powers. These other activities are the practices of the church such as hospitality, healing, etc. In sum, Campbell's ecclesiology is primarily founded in Christology, and his homiletic reflects that foundation in its focus on the narrated pattern of Jesus.

Hütter's appropriation of the cultural-linguistic model is radically different from Campbell's. At the outset, Hütter relies solely on Lindbeck's work, rather than on a synthesis of Lindbeck with Frei as in Campbell's writing. This has the effect of distancing Hütter's work the postliberal homiletic's focus on Frei's christological model (especially as he develops it in *The Identity of Jesus Christ*), a focus which leaves little space for the Holy Spirit except as the continuator of Christ's work. Instead, Hütter situates the cultural-linguistic model of ecclesiology within a pneumatological framework

in which christology plays a secondary (yet still indispensible) role. The Holy Spirit is not simply the indirect presence of Christ, but the Trinitarian person who brings the eschaton into the fallen world as the New Creation. The church is no longer depicted as the continuation of the Incarnation; rather, it is the icon or trace of the eschatological Kingdom made present in history.

This act of resituating ecclesiology from a primarily Christological foundation to a pneumatological one has a number of implications for preaching. These implications apply not only to the postliberal homiletic, but to homiletic practice generally. Hütter's pneumatological ecclesiology establishes a far more complex context for the preaching event, relating it to Scripture and doctrine on the one hand and the core practices of the church on the other, with all of these elements understood within an eschatological frame.

In this chapter, I turn from analyzing Hütter's work to examining this complex space of preaching and the impact that it has on homiletic practice. The eschatological orientation of Hütter's ecclesiology is the first significant factor that impacts preaching. This new orientation, which shifts its emphasis from proclamation of a past-tense Christ event to its eschatological implications, shifts the emphasis of preaching away from a focus on the event of justification to a focus on the sanctification of the church and, ultimately, of all creation. Just as a pneumatologically-conditioned Christology does not eliminate Christology but gives it an eschatological context, so I argue that this shift does not eliminate justification as a central concern for preaching the Gospel, but situates it within a further *telos*, namely eschatological sanctification. This eschatological *telos* is the church's participation in the life of the Triune God, which I describe using the category of *doxology* as the over-arching description of Christian praxis. When this

doxological praxis is understood as the eschatological *telos* of the church, we may define the purpose of preaching as the work of shaping individuals and communities for doxological existence.

Within that eschatological orientation, the first question regarding preaching itself that must be addressed is how preaching is located within the array of doctrine, theology, and core practices. While Hütter locates preaching among the core practices and distinguishes it from the practice of theology, that distinction is difficult to maintain. Hütter's separation of preaching from theology is based on an assumed academic context for theology, or at least a setting outside the bounds of any particular local congregation. The work of practical theologians such as Edward Farley, Ray S. Anderson, and Don Browning, however, calls this assumption into question, and in many respects Hütter's work pushes in this direction almost in spite of his effort to maintain the separation. In light of this, I argue that preaching fits into Hütter's account in the place occupied by theology and that this theological preaching is necessarily practical in orientation. The task of preaching is the work of discerning how the church may glorify and praise God within the various historical contexts in which it finds itself. To that end, preaching takes up the task that Hütter assigns to academic theology: bringing Scripture and doctrine (the *regula fidei*) into dialogue with the core practices in a hermeneutical practice that is oriented toward forming the community of faith to fulfill its eschatological calling.

Within this *telos* of forming and empowering communities and individuals to practice doxology, there are two constitutive factors that shape preaching. These correspond to the poles of doctrine and core practices in Hütter's account. However, I suggest that these are best understood as the Paschal and sacramental poles. The Paschal

pole corresponds to Hütter's account of doctrine, since doctrine in Hütter's work is primarily directed toward Christological concerns, making the promises of God that are implied in the Christ event available to faith. Just as doctrine, because of its accountability to Scripture, enjoys a primacy of place over the core practices, so this Paschal dimension of the church, which is constituted by Scripture mediated by doctrine, constitutes the ultimate horizon of the church's praxis in the economy of salvation. By mediating the eschatological promises of God in Christ, it situates the church within a space structured by the memory of the Christ event and the eschatological future that it promises. Because the eschaton is only made possible by the promises implied in the cross and resurrection, the church's doxological life necessarily participates in a Paschal space. The practical or sacramental element, on the other hand, provides a normative shape of doxology that governs the rest of the Church's life. The sacraments are the work of the Spirit, and through them the church participates in the eschatological Kingdom that is made available within history defined by the Paschal horizon. Each of these constitutive elements requires further explication. To examine the Pashcal horizon, I draw upon the Christus Victor model of atonement, elements of which are already present in Campbell's homiletic. Campbell, however, only briefly points toward an eschatological and doxological (rather than missionary/historical) option for understanding the significance of Christ and the powers. In relationship to the core practices, I focus on the contemporary sacramental theology of Louis Marie Chauvet, who has undertaken the task of interpreting the entirety of Christian existence in relationship to the sacraments as symbolic exchanges of glory. Both of these poles structure the task of preaching in particular ways: doctrine and the Christological element

by grounding it in the anamnesis of God's promises in Christ, as James Kay suggests; and the sacraments/core practices by providing a paradigmatic shape for Christian praxis within that horizon that can be used to understand the entirety of Christian liturgical and ethical activity as participation in the Pasch of Christ through which the eschaton is made present within history.

1. *Doxology and the Church's Eschatological Telos*

As noted in chapter 1, one of the main insights of Campbell's postliberal homiletic is that it places a greater emphasis on Christian practice (as part of the cultural-linguistic witness of the church) than has often been the case in homiletics. Campbell, however, continues to define this praxis in overwhelmingly Christological terms. Attention to praxis is situated within the kerygmatic proclamation of Jesus' saving activity; that narrated activity becomes the organizing schema for contemporary Christian praxis in the world. To the extent that he frames the encounter with the powers and principalities in terms of *resistance*, Campbell continues to place praxis alongside the doctrine of atonement or justification. Christian praxis, as the typological continuation of the Christ event, continues Christ's saving or atoning work.

By describing praxis in these terms, Campbell's account differs from that of much of contemporary homiletics. Paul Scott Wilson is one representative of a kerygmatic tendency in homiletics that sees practice as a response to the Gospel. He offers a strident critique of recent turns to ethics and ethical praxis as a focus for preaching, contrasting this with proclamation (his preferred model for homiletics):

> Ethics can be and often is preaching, but it is not usually proclamation. It typically is not accompanied by a preaching of the gospel… The key homiletical problem is that ethics puts

human behavior front and center, while, for what I am calling proclamation, God needs to be front and center. What God has done and is doing in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit is of greatest significance, and what we do as human beings is necessarily seen in light of that… What we do by way of ethics is an appropriate *response* to the gospel, an essential response, an empowered response.[1]

Wilson promotes this sharp divide between ethics/praxis and proclamation in order to combat what he sees as dangerous tendencies in "radical postmodern" homiletics like those developed by John McClure, Christine M. Smith, L. Susan Bond, and Lucy Rose.[2]

Wilson's model of gospel proclamation followed by ethical response is not atypical in homiletics, though the particular articulations of the relationship might vary from one homiletician to the next. Campbell's model, however, runs contrary to this gospel/response model by situating praxis as a constitutive part of the gospel. Praxis is not simply a response to Jesus' saving work; it is the continuation of that work through the church – the body of Christ – which continues Jesus' ministry in his name. Yet, as noted above, Campbell remains within an overridingly Christological framework for understanding the practice of the church. To that extent, his account continues to operate within the horizon of the doctrine of justification.

Hütter's pneumatological and eschatological account of the church changes this emphasis completely. While the doctrine of justification certainly continues to play a role in this model, the focus shifts, and the doctrine of *sanctification* comes to the fore. The Church is the *eschatological* community of the Kingdom. One might point to Campbell's work as emphasizing the way in which Christian practice remains incomplete

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[1] Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, 137-138. (Emphasis added.)

[2] Ibid., 137. Interestingly, Wilson is quite explicit that he does not include Campbell in this group of "radical postmoderns" because he sees Campbell's position as being "significantly different" despite Campbell's emphasis on forming praxis through preaching. (ibid.)

and awaiting eschatological fulfillment; in this sense, he remains within the missionary/historical model of pneumatology outlined in the previous chapter. Hütter, however, utilizes Zizioulas' Eucharistic/eschatological model of pneumatology. This model does not deny the church's sinfulness but places its greater emphasis on the church's holiness.[3]

To the extent that Hütter shifts the primary category of the gospel from justification to sanctification, he resonates strongly with elements of John Wesley's theology. Like Hütter and Campbell today, Wesley was particularly concerned with Christian practice and the way in which praxis constituted and shaped people in holiness (which he called "Christian perfection"). Wesley lived in a context (eighteenth century England) in which the vast majority of people were at least nominally Christian. They could claim baptism and connection with the church – in short, the could call themselves "justified." In light of this, Wesley altered his focus to the question of ongoing growth and sanctification toward Christian perfection. In Randy Maddox's analysis (following that of Albert Outler), Wesley thereby subordinated the doctrine of justification to that of sanctification: "…Wesley's characteristic emphasis was that we are pardoned *in order to participate*."[4] The eschatological *telos* of the restored image of God in humanity takes priority in Wesley's thought, and Wesley's sermons indicate a willingness to describe in detail the practical shape of that restored image. From the outset, then, we can see that Hütter's work, though certainly not intended in this way, offers the framework for a particularly Wesleyan iteration of postliberal homiletics.

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[3] See the account of iconicity in Zizioulas' theology above.
[4] Maddox, 168. (Emphasis original.)

As the agency of the eschatological Kingdom, the task of the Spirit is described by Rowan Williams as the work of translating the relationship between the Father and the Son into the medium of human existence.[5] The Spirit makes the atoning and justifying work of Christ available to all of creation. Here a careful distinction must be made, lest we shift back into the historical-missionary pneumatological model. What Williams suggests is that the work of the Son is "complete" in itself, but its *significance* must be translated into human lives and appropriated in every context. "The difference made by Jesus Christ is a difference to the whole of creation, but that difference doesn't simply sweep over the world removing all distinctions, all particularities… It is real in and only in the particular gifts of the Spirit and the community."[6] The significance of the Christ event is the restoration of the filial relationship with God in humanity. This relationship with the one whom he calls "Father" is constitutive of Jesus himself, and its restoration in humanity is the soteriological *telos* of the Christ-event.

The Holy Spirit, then, is a witness to the otherness or difference of God, which is expressed in Trinitarian terms as the difference between the Father and the Son. Drawing on Moltmann's theology of the cross, as well as Jüngel, Chauvet describes the Spirit as the distance that opens up within the Trinity through which the Son is both differentiated from and yet in relationship with the Father.[7] But that witness to the difference of God occurs not through explanation but through the *replication* of the relationship itself.

> Hence if we accept that the terms "father" and "Son" are, according to ecclesial tradition, especially suitable for characterizing God's and Jesus' identities, their relation *demands* the introduction of a third term: it's name is "Spirit." This goes

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[5] Williams, 121.

[6] Rowan Williams, *A Margin of Silence: The Holy Spirit in Russian Orthodox Thoelogy* (Quebec: Editions du Lys Vert, 2008), 39.

[7] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 510, 516. Also see Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 163.

> equally, although at a different level of course, for the relations of filiation established by Jesus *between believers and God*, according to Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15-16: Is it not, after all, the Spirit that allows them to cry "Abba! Father!" and to recognize that they are no longer "slaves, but free?"[8]

The work of the Holy Spirit can therefore be described in the language of *participation*. Through the Spirit we are brought into relationship with the Father alongside (or through) the Son.[9] We are made to participate in the Triune life that is exhibited in the economy of salvation. This is, as LaCugna points out, one of the sources of difficulty when speaking of the Spirit: the Spirit is self-effacing; its task is to lead persons into union with God.[10]

That participation, expressed in Trinitarian and soteriological terms, is the relationship of filiation. But that relationship is not without a practical content. Marion describes this relationship in terms of doxology and the act of praise.[11] Christ's glory as the Son is secondary, derived from his self-effacement to reveal and glorify the Father.

> Christ testifies to his righteous [*juste*] holiness only by testifying to the unique holiness of the Father; it is by never claiming his own holiness or his own glory; therefore it is only by giving back absolutely to his Father that he takes up that holiness that is given back to him in order to be glorified…[12]

As the practical shape of the filial relationship, doxology is eschatological in both its nature and orientation. As the filial relationship is the Holy Spirit's presence and work in the church and individual believers, the act of worship is, to follow our preceding

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[8] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 510-511.
[9] Language here becomes difficult, as the relationship of believers to Christ is expressed in various ways in Scripture. On the one hand, Christ's work is the foundation and possibility of our relationship of filiation; in this sense, our relationship to the Father is *through* Christ. On the other hand, we are made heirs *along with* Christ, and Christ is often spoken of as our "Brother."
[10] LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 362.
[11] Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, 61.
[12] Ibid., 77.

logic, the very presence of the Kingdom in history.[13] "In a certain respect, then, 'faith' and 'doxology' thus mean 'already' 'being in heaven.' This is the eschatological work of the Holy Spirit characterizing its hypostatic being as person."[14] Don Saliers, in his book *Worship as Theology*, argues that the entire range of Christian worship, including rite and prayer, is thoroughly eschatological.[15]

The category of doxology holds together the Christological and pneumatological poles of the church, as well as the entire range of Christian practices. The possibility and actuality of human participation in the triune life (or "divine-human communion," to use the language of Zizioulas and Papanikolaou) is the *telos* of the economy of salvation. When this ultimate *telos* of sanctification as participation comes to the fore, the doctrine of justification is not eliminated but contextualized. Because it articulates a mode of human life that is *in* the Spirit, *through* the Son, and directed *toward* the Father, doxology is a Trinitarian praxis. Insofar as the church practices doxology as the eschatological community within history, it parallels the intra-Trinitarian life.

Doxology represents the soteriological *telos* of the church and, ultimately, all creation. This insight necessitates a change in our understanding of the role of preaching. If preaching is, as Campbell argues, a task oriented toward the edification of the church to help it practice its unique way of life in the world, then that goal must be further clarified in terms of forming persons and communities for lives permeated by doxological practices. Because the church is the public within which the Holy Spirit performs its

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[13] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 124.
[14] Ibid., 120.
[15] Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 14.

sanctifying work through doctrine and practices, it is not improper to describe the work of preaching within this context as a mode of "spiritual formation."

Moreover, this doxological *telos* affects the way in which both Christ's atoning work and Christian practices (particularly the sacraments as the paradigmatic practices) are understood. If doxology as participation in God's triune life is the end for which humanity is destined, then an account of sin and atonement must be given that accounts for how that doxological relationship is broken by sin and its possibility restored through Christ. The core practices, and the entire range of Christian practice, must also be interpreted according to the pattern of doxology.

2. Preaching and Theology?

The relationship between preaching and theology in Hütter's work is unfortunately not developed in a systematic fashion. As noted in the previous chapter, Hütter adopts Luther's list of the "marks of the church." This decision situates preaching within the "core practices." But aside from the fact that Luther understands preaching in this way, there is no argument given for *why* preaching should be located among the core practices and not elsewhere. In fact, there are moments when Hütter himself hints at a different understanding of preaching that would situate it within the realm of theology. In particular, he hints that preaching may be identified with the presentative-communicative aspect of theology.

In a personal communication, Hütter himself acknowledges that he has not thought through the relationship between theology and preaching in an explicit way.[16] Instead, he writes, "my position [at the time of writing *Suffering Divine Things*] was the

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[16] Reinhard Hütter, Personal correspondence, August 28, 2010.

conventional Protestant one: theology as I described it stands between on the one hand 'receiving Divine Things' through the Word, in the liturgy, by way of Scripture, and on the other hand, the proclamation of the Word."[17]   Theology is "…an interpretative, hermeneutical, discursive, and speculative activity," but preaching is "proclamatory, rhetorical activity."[18]

All of this is predicated, however, on a crucial assumption, namely that at its most fundamental level theology is an activity that is dependent on doctrine and the core practices to receive its object, *yet simultaneously* taking place in a distinct setting apart from any particular congregation's life. In other words, Hütter's distinction between theology and preaching is predicated on the idea of theology as an academic activity, even if it is in the service of the church. Thus Hütter can say that the judgmental aspect of theology "…is to support concretely both preaching and 'instruction' in the broadest sense, areas in which the *doctrina evangelii* is proclaimed and taught in the context of a specific constellation of problems…,"[19] yet not connect the concrete act of preaching to the communicative-presentative aspect of theology, which would seem to be the natural culmination of this logic. Despite Hütter's recognition that theology is dependent on the church both for its data and purpose, his tacit insistence that theology be considered as an activity that occurs within a distinct sphere and not *within the church itself* blinds him to the conclusion that the distinction between theology and preaching may be neither necessary nor desirable.

Certainly Hütter's distinction does provide him with a particular benefit, namely that theology need not be considered as an enhypostatic work of the Spirit. The Spirit's

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 188.

work in doctrine and the core practices therefore appears insulated from the hermeneutical process that takes place in theological reflection. Binding doctrine and the core practices could be considered as completely static 'givens.' If preaching is identified with theology, however, one opens the door to consider an ever-changing hermeneutical process as the work of the Holy Spirit, and that slippery slope might lead to issues related to doctrinal or sacramental revisionism.

In relationship to this question, we may make two observations. The first is that there is no reason to assume that, simply because theology and doctrine are both works of the Spirit, that the Spirit necessarily utilizes them in the same way. In other words, I see no reason why one could not assume that there could be binding doctrine which would be tied to the Spirit's work of preserving the anamnesis of the Christ-event alongside a hermeneutical theology/preaching that would be the ongoing interpretation of that event's significance. One could make a similar case for the relationship between the Spirit and the other core practices (sacraments, discipleship as the way of the cross, etc.). Again, one can argue for a certain binding function in regard to these practices as the concrete forms of the church's eschatological embodiment in the Spirit and yet recognize that the significance of these terms or actions must be interpreted hermeneutically, an act that is also "in the Spirit."

Though he attempts to maintain the distinction between hermeneutical theology and static proclamation, Hütter's fundamental insight strains against it. Theology is a "*church* practice." After *Suffering Divine Things*, his work shows a tendency to understand theology as a *practical* discourse which might not primarily belong to the

academy, but to concrete congregations and all Christians as it relates to the knowledge of God.

3. Preaching as Practical Theology

As we saw in chapter 1, one of the significant difficulties in Campbell's homiletic is the movement from the narrative of Jesus to Christian practice. Campbell moves directly from the story of Jesus to the story of the church by way of a direct typology – the narratives that describe Jesus' own unique practices are treated as practical schema that organize the church's action in the present. Yet as Milbank points out, without some mediating body to facilitate this shift, two problems arise. First, the historical and concrete specificity of Jesus himself is lost in the interest of a narrative character who is nothing more than the collection of these practical schema.[20] Part of the rationale for a pneumatological grounding for ecclesiology, I have argued, is that it solves this problem by treating the Spirit as the "third term" between Jesus and the Church, which allows Jesus to retain his individual concreteness and shifts the responsibility of universalizing the salvific work to the Holy Spirit. Second, a straightforward application of Jesus' narrative to the church's practice without an intervening doctrine is too constraining; there is no way to account for variations in practice that are sure to arise due to varying contexts within which the practices take place.[21] In order to account for these variations in practices, Campbell is forced to introduce the rather vague notion of "improvisation."

Hütter's model of the relationship between doctrine and practices underscores the fact that, whether or not it is even possible, such a direct transition from the biblical narrative to contemporary practice via typology is not the way in which the church

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[20] Get cit. from Theology and Social Theory
[21] Get cit. Theology and Social

actually operates. At the same time, he offers a way of thinking about the relationship between Scripture, doctrine, and practices that avoids a critique that McClure levels at Campbell, namely that even his direct application of typology has implicit, though unacknowledged, hermeneutical dimensions. By situating theology as a hermeneutical discourse between doctrine and the church's core practices, Hütter provides a way to bridge the gap while maintaining an ecclesial (rather than academic) control over theology, even though he sees theology as occurring within a setting separate from the *ecclesia* itself. The result of this arrangement is that Hütter's description of the role of theology not only retains the catechetical and formative dimensions that Lindbeck describes, but it also moves in the direction of explicitly practical theological approaches such as those of Ray Anderson, Edward Farley, and Don Browning, among others. Theology, and specifically *practical* theology, therefore forms the third component of Hütter's ecclesiology that bears on the task of preaching.

Before he addresses the three main functions of theology (described in chapter 2), Hütter discusses the need to overcome the dichotomous alternatives of moving from theory to praxis on the one hand or from praxis to theory and back to praxis on the other. He remarks that the *theoria* of theology is "utterly inaccessible without the horizon of the core practices constituting the church."[22] Because theology is always undertaken from within the core practices and from their perspective, it is impossible to situate theology within a standard theory-application model. As a discourse that is both discursive yet shaped pathically by the core practices, theology is "neither theory in the classical sense as the free perception of the divine and of the divine order, nor in the early modern sense of the Cartesian knowledge of reflection, nor in the emphatically *modern* sense of a

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[22] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 172.

Hegelian mediation of the unity of theory and praxis through historical-philosophical speculation in which the world becomes the locus of the realization of reason."[23] Hütter is clear that theology does not fit into a hermeneutical circle in such a way that it would stand between praxis and praxis as a moment in the reflection *on* praxis *toward* praxis.

He goes on to remark that the "core notion of political theology," namely that praxis is the original data and the goal of theology, can only be partially accommodated by theology. Theology takes as its original context, not a politically conceived horizon of praxis, but the horizon of God's economy of salvation that cannot be identified with any particular political praxis and thus stands in critical or judgmental relationship to such praxis.[24] Context is critical in the discourse of theology, but cannot be its defining feature without it losing its pathic rooting in the economy of salvation between doctrine and the core practices.

To overcome the division between theory and praxis, Hütter returns to the need to understand human being as primarily receptive to the actualization of God's economy of salvation. He then, however, makes the claim that this is not be understood as a new and better theory which would then be applied to the church's life, but rather that this "angle of vision emerges from having taken seriously in a theologically explicit fashion God's economy of salvation as implied in the already existing core church practices."[25] By the end of *Suffering Divine Things*, therefore, we see Hütter striving to articulate the work of theology in a way that does not fall victim to the all-too-common academic disjunction between theory and practice, a disjunction that would see the latter simply as the application of the former to a specific context. Because theology is pathically (rather

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 173.
[25] Ibid., 174.

than poetically) related to the core practices, it cannot be reduced to modern definitions of theory.

These trajectories find their mark in Hütter's later essay "The Knowledge of the Triune God." Here Hütter begins to take up more fully the understanding of *theosis* as participation in the triune life that he receives through Zizioulas. As its title suggests, Hütter's theme in this essay is salvation as "knowledge of God," but this knowledge is not a kind of *ratio*. Instead, it has a decidedly concrete and practical character: "…saving knowledge of God means to be engaged and transformed by the Spirit's sanctifying works and thereby to be increasingly drawn into God's triune life."[26] It is toward that soteriological end of participation that theology undertakes its three tasks of re-appropriation, communication-oriented evaluation, and catechesis.

In this sense, Hütter's understanding of the role of theology moves in a direction similar to that proposed by John Milbank, who suggests that the task of theology is "[e]xplication of Christian practice."[27] Yet Hütter is more nuanced than Milbank in this respect, in that he understands theology as not only the explication of Christian practice but as a critical dialogue between that practice on the one hand and the significance of Christ presented in and through doctrine on the other. Hütter's definition retains what may be described as a 'vertical element' that prevents his approach to theology from succumbing to Hobson's accusation (directed at Lindbeck) that the cultural-linguistic model reduces theology to a sociology of the church that would amount to

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[26] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 39.

[27] John Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A Short Summa in Forty-Two Responses to Unasked Questions," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward, Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 268.

"ecclesiological fundamentalism."[28] But it is the work of theology in relationship to the core practices that enables it to retain its pneumatological dimension and concreteness. In Hütter's work, theology is always undertaken with an eye toward both God's action in Christ and toward God's ongoing action in the Spirit.

Hütter's approach to theology as a mediating discourse between doctrine and practice with the goal of increasing participation in the triune life has strong resonances with recent trends in practical theology, particularly the work of Ray Anderson. In his book *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry With Theological Praxis*, Anderson seeks to articulate a Trinitarian foundation for practical theology. He suggests that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ functions as a hermeneutical criterion for practice.[29]

> …[T]he resurrection of Jesus to be the living Lord of the church constitutes a continuing hermeneutical criterion for the church's understanding of itself as under the authority of Scripture. It is the risen Lord himself who is the criterion, not the event or idea of resurrection. For [this purpose] take the expression "resurrection of Jesus" to mean "the resurrected Jesus."[30]

He points out that this criterion, which is present in Paul, introduces an "eschatological tension" into pastoral hermeneutics, since it anchors Christian life in the parousia, in which that same risen Christ returns to consummate the Kingdom of God.[31] This eschatological anchor is the work of the Holy Spirit in the present, since the Spirit comes to the church from the eschaton rather than the past.[32]

The purpose of practical theology, Anderson argues, is to help the church discern its course of action with two criteria in mind: an *eschatological preference* that

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[28] Hobson: 48-59.

[29] Ray Sherman Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology : Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 79.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 84-85.

[32] Ibid., 105. While Anderson is drawing here on the work of Jürgen Moltmann, his language here parallels that of Zizioulas that we noted earlier.

recognizes the limits imposed by history and context on the church's practice at any time and thereby opens the church to new possibilities; and an *historical precedence* that keeps the church true to the biblical text and Christ's own practices.[33] As the incarnational, and hence eschatological, community in the world, the church's nature is sacramental, as "…the incarnational community assembles to celebrate its life in Christ in liturgical and kerygmatic service as the church, with its own appropriate expression of order and sacrament. But his liturgical and sacramental celebration must have vicarious significance on behalf of the total incarnational community, which in its very mission is both evangelical and eschatological."[34] The task of practical theology is the praxis of ministry through which the church "intercepts" social structures and individual persons and relates them to the eschatological Kingdom of God.[35] In this way, practical theology deals concretely with the church and its action in the world, connecting practice to the resurrected Christ whose presence is made known (in Hütter's language) through doctrine and Scripture.

Anderson's approach has many resonances with Hütter's work, namely the emphasis on eschatology and the attempt to maintain a better balance between Christology and pneumatology in the church's constitution. Yet Anderson remains within a more Kantian theory-to-practice model, in which theory always has priority and comes before practice. This means that "the discipline of practical theology extends systematic theology into the life and praxis of the Christian community."[36]

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[33] Ibid., 106-109.
[34] Ibid., 121.
[35] Ibid., 128.
[36] Ibid., 23.

In several of his writings, Edward Farley argues for a definition of theology that moves the entire discipline toward concrete practice. In *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*, Farley traces the development of theology's nature from a *habitus* of the soul to a discrete discipline within the four-fold pattern of theological education.[37] Theology, he argues, is now one discipline among many (namely systematic theology, biblical studies, ethics, and practical theology) within a clerical approach to studies that focuses on training students in a number of particular tasks that relate to the work of ministry. As a result of this shift, the unity of theological education has been sacrificed. In particular, the sub-disciplines of "practical theology" (notably homiletics) have lost their connection to the other disciplines, so that it is no longer possible to articulate a rationale for their place in theological education.[38]

This was not always the case, however. At one point, Farley argues, theology was understood differently, and it is this more ancient definition of theology that he seeks to recover. He defines theology as "…a deliberate, focused, and self-conscious thinking that has its origin in faith's need to interpret itself and its situation."[39] It is therefore related to "knowledge of God," and, in its original use, denoted "…a cognitive disposition or understanding of the self-disclosing God."[40] This cognitive disposition, however, was inherently practical in orientation: "…theology is a *practical*, not theoretical, habit having the primary character of wisdom."[41] This wisdom is directed

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[37] Edward Farley, *Theologia : The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1994).

[38] Ibid., 143-144.

[39] Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel : Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*, 1st ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 3.

[40] Ibid., 15.

[41] Farley, *Theologia*, 35.

toward a soteriological and salvific end.[42] As a result, theology in Farley's view is best

understood not as an academic discipline, nor even as a discourse primarily belonging to

the academy. Instead, his model assumes that theology is an interpretative task that

belongs to all believers and is directed toward the concrete existence of Christians within

the world in light of a soteriological *telos*. "In its most fundamental form, theology

names the interpretation or reflective thinking that subjects situations to the power and

illumining light of Gospel."[43] The importance of this practical and soteriological

disposition of theology in Farley's work cannot be overstressed. Theology "…is for the

sake of God, but, specifically, for God's appointed salvific end of the human being.

Theology in this sense *cannot be anything but practical*."[44] Theology has to do with

situations, and thus with history and the world.

Don Browning similarly situates the fundamental task of theology within lived

experience. He describes "fundamental practical theology" as "…critical reflection on

the church's dialogue with Christian sources and other communities of experience and

interpretation with the aim of guiding its action toward social and individual

transformation."[45] Like Farley, Browning proposes that theology begin from questions of

how one ought to act within a given situation. Theology therefore consists of four

"submovements" of descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and

strategic (or fully practical) theology.[46]

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[42] Ibid., 35-36.

[43] Farley, *Practicing Gospel : Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*, 7.

[44] Ibid., 19. (Emphasis added)

[45] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 36.

[46] Ibid., 42.

Both Farley and Browning suggest a model of theology that has significant similarities to that proposed by Hütter. One similarity that is immediately apparent is that the role of theology described by Farley and Browning is *pathic* in precisely the way in which Hütter describes. The primary locus of theology is no longer the academy, where it tends toward the kind of metaphorical construction denounced by Hütter. Rather, theology is a practice of the *church*, and the concrete life of congregations is its primary home; academic theology is a secondary or derivative task.

Also, like Farley and Browning, Hütter places theology in a mediating position between doctrine (Farley's "gospel") and the concrete life of the congregation in the core practices. Yet here a distinction must be made, for Hütter, unlike Browning, does not see theology as simply a stage in the hermeneutical spiral situated between moments of praxis. As already noted, the core datum for theology is not a given context but God's salvific economy; that economy is its ultimate horizon. Any specific contextual analysis must take place within the meta-context of God's saving activity. This is a necessary corrective introduced by Hütter from the postliberal model that prevents his approach from collapsing back into a political practical theology. The *exitus-reditus* pattern of God's salvific work is the horizon within which each particular context is subjected to theological analysis and interpretation. The ultimate question is not, then, simply "What shall we do in this situation?" but "How in this situation can we participate in God's saving activity?" Those two questions are quite different, as the latter retains a *doctrinal* and hence Christological element that is lacking in the former. This doctrinal control constitutes, at least in part, the "right of way" that Hütter grants to doctrine on the two-way-street between it and core practices.

When Hütter's approach to theology as the relationship between doctrine and the core practices is interpreted in light of contemporary practical theological models, several implications for homiletics emerge. As theology mediates between doctrine and the core practices, Hütter argues, it performs the three tasks of reappropriating the faith by developing and testing doctrine, perceiving and judging how specific doctrines inform particular contexts and what challenges those contexts raise for communicating doctrine, and presenting and communicating the gospel within those varying contexts in catechesis.[47] If we apply this model to the relationship between doctrine and the core practices (as Hütter himself suggests), then we would describe the role of theology as: 1.) reappropriating the faith by developing and testing doctrines; 2.) perceiving and judging how specific doctrines *and core practices* inform specific contexts and how those contexts might present challenges for Christian practice; and 3.) articulating models for faithful praxis.[48]

This hermeneutical component of interpreting situations (to use Farley's language) means that homiletics must pay greater attention to context than is admitted by Campbell and those like Willimon who adhere strictly to the idea of "the text absorbing

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[47] Hütter, "Knowing the Triune God," 44.

[48] John McClure raises concerns about a similar form of theological judgment, asking whether some corrective might be needed to prevent "illative reasoning" of the sort practiced by Newman from becoming insular and impervious to critique. His concern is that a binding confessional horizon (such as Hütter's doctrine) might not be open to new activity of God in the world. "If God's activity in the world can be discerned and communicated through the careful management of theological *topoi*," he asks, "what is the exact nature of this God?" (John S. McClure, "In Pursuit of Good Theological Judgment," in *Loving God with Our Minds: The Pastor as Theologian*, ed. Michael Welker and Cynthia A. Jarvis(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 216.) McClure suggests that one might avoid this temptation by turning theological judgment away from "the task of shoring up dogmatic, ecclesial, and personal identity and toward larger public concerns of historical and theological praxis", by applying critical theory to discern systematic distortions of ideology, or by using theological judgment in an iconoclastic mode to overturn or transform traditional theology (ibid., 218.). While Hütter clearly sees a need for binding doctrine, his turn toward an interplay between doctrine and praxis situates him alongside McClure's first suggestion. On the one hand, Hütter does not identify Scripture and doctrine as a single entity, and doctrine is always accountable to Scripture. On the other hand, while doctrine may have a right-of-way, it is also in constant dialogue with Christian practice that is accomplished through theology.

the world" and/or straightforward typological application of biblical narratives depicting Jesus' praxis. Preaching is a *theologically informed* endeavor, and hence has an ineradicable hermeneutical element. This interpretative task includes not only the external context surrounding a congregation, but the internal context of congregational life for preaching as well.

While it may seem as though Hütter is proposing a revisionist model of theology in which changing contexts could result in changes to doctrine, this is not the case. Doctrine, in Hütter's view, is *binding* by its very definition; it is this very fact that makes it distinct from theology which may (and does) vary considerably according to time, place, and the disposition of the theologian. But Hütter's denial of a revisionist paradigm becomes most apparent in his identification of the catechetical aspect of theology with "ad hoc apologetics."[49] As we saw in chapter 1, this is one of the foundational components of the postliberal paradigm. Theology as a church practice places doctrine into dialogue with the *core* practices and, from that dialogue, results in various other Christian practices. The core practices (and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper in particular as ecumenically agreed-upon practices) have a special privilege of place and a binding function alongside doctrine. Without core practices there can be no public church. It is the "secondary" practices that exist within the realm of ad hoc correlation and may change significantly over time, but these do not relate directly to doctrine. Instead, binding doctrine and the core practices together form the soteriological horizon of the Spirit's saving work; and theology is pathically related to that horizon, dependent upon it for its shape as the church's discourse. As Hütter states the issue, "[theology] is pathic insofar as it stands within the story described in the canonical

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[49] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 189.

Scripture and, from the perspective of this story, then (poietically) interprets the world within the context of discovery attaching to theology as a church practice."[50] Hütter remains squarely within the intratextual hermeneutic proposed by Lindbeck, but not as it is articulated by Campbell, who conflates intratextuality with Frei's model of ascriptive narrative and provides no mediation between them. In other words, Hütter proposes a way of maintaining theological control over practical theology in homiletics that is thoroughly postliberal. Theology has both a pathic dimension in relationship to doctrine and the core practices and a poietic dimension in relationship to a particular context; Hütter describes it as a "poietic pathos," the "creative exposition of the received *doctrina evangelii* and of the core church practices with regard to a specific cultural and social constellation." [51]

Preaching that takes context and hermeneutics seriously, then, need not be identified straightaway with revisionism or liberalism. Instead, preaching is constantly engaged in this kind of theological judgment, and Campbell's model of direct typology supplemented by a concept of improvisation implies just such a judgment but cannot account for it theologically. Hütter's fundamental critique of Lindbeck – that his work assumes a distinction between doctrine and theology but explicitly conflates them – and his proposed solution apply equally well to Campbell. As Kay notes, no postliberal preacher simply repeats the story of Jesus in a straightforward way.[52] Hütter's model explains why this is the case from a theological perspective.

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[50] Ibid., 192.
[51] Ibid., 191.
[52] Kay, 125.

4. *Doctrine, the* **Promissiones***, and The Paschal Horizon*

In Hütter's account of the relationship between doctrine, core practices, and theology, doctrine maintains a priority, even over the core practices. This is because doctrine is directly accountable to Scripture, and exists solely to serve the Scriptural narrative. Together, Scripture and doctrine constitute the *regula fidei* that binds theology and gives it a stable object on which it may reflect hermeneutically. Doctrine is therefore the first element in Hütter's theology/ecclesiology that shapes the task of preaching.

Unfortunately, Hütter does not offer a full account of the nature of doctrine; however, he does make indications that point toward a model of doctrine that is based on the promises of God in doctrine's mediation of the person of Christ. At several points, Hütter utilizes the idea of "Christ's presence in the *promissiones*" to describe the *doctrina evangelii*, gospel itself, which is specified by *doctrina definata*.[53] It is the christological character of the doctrina evangelii that leads Hütter to the conclusion that the focus of all doctrine is ultimately christological; the purpose of doctrine is to "…mediate in a distinct and thus binding fashion God's salvific action in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth…"[54] Because it is the specification of the presence of Christ in the *doctrina evangelii*, *doctrina definata* becomes the mediation of Christ as the "form" of faith, both in terms of content and the act of believing.[55]

As noted in chapter 1, James Kay has drawn upon the work of Frei's student Ronald Thiemann as well as the branch of linguistic philosophy known as speech-act theory to develop a model of preaching as "promissory narration." His work picks up an important thematic shift in Thiemann's work from an emphasis on *revelation* that

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[53] E.g., Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 51.
[54] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 138.
[55] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 51.

dominates Barth's theology (and with it the postliberal emphasis on the narrative rendering of Jesus' character as a kind of revelation of his character) to an emphasis on God's speech-acts, particularly in covenantal promises.[56] "If we attend to the Scriptures and to the liturgical traditions of the church," writes Kay, "we discover that promises about the future are embedded and enacted in them."[57] These promises of God create a temporal space in which the church exists defined as the interval between God's promise to reconcile all things and the final consummation of that promise's fulfillment.[58]

A similar logic (though without the linear temporality) appears to be at work in Hütter's account of doctrine. In the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ, God makes a promise to reconcile the world to Godself. This promise is nothing other than the Christ event itself; it cannot be reduced to any particular spoken words from Christ, but is coextensive with the entire narrative of Jesus, including his exaltation and return. The *doctrina evangelii* is the narrative of Jesus Christ understood as the promise of God. *Doctrina definata*, however, conceptually specifies that narrative in such a way that it becomes possible to invoke the entire narrative by means of synecdoche through the naming of one of its constitutive elements.[59]

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[56] One can see a similar shift from questions of revelation to questions of performative speech in the work of Nicholas Wolterstorff. See Wolterstorff.

[57] Kay, 120.

[58] Ibid., 122.

[59] This approach to doctrine as specifying one aspect of the narrative and thus acting as a means of encountering the whole is developed more fully in Wilson, *God Sense*, 152-155. If this reading of doctrine in Hütter's work is correct, then he is very close to Steven Harmon's approach described in chapter 2. I am wary of what may be a tendency to use doctrine as a *replacement* for the biblical narrative in preaching in Kay's approach. "In my judgment, while the sermon should always speak God's word of promise, in accordance with a theological frame of reference, the narrative rendering of Jesus Christ in his unsubstitutable particularity is not always required of the sermon." (Kay, 125.) I agree that not every sermon need recite the biblical narrative in order to proclaim the promise of God; however, if doctrine is to remain in the service of that narrative as its specification, then some connection between doctrine and the biblical narrative on which it depends needs to be made regularly in preaching. Hütter's emphasis on this dependency is one safeguard for the principle of doctrine's accountability to Scripture.

Because doctrine is the mediation of God's promise in Christ, it has both an anamnestic and eschatological orientation, though anamnesis has a certain priority. By referring the church back to the Christ event, the christological center of doctrine prevents the church from slipping into an eschatological universalism independent of the particular narrative of Christ. As Chauvet points out, it is as a memorial of *Jesus Christ* that the anamnesis of the cross and resurrection opens up into an eschatological future because "Christ" is tiself a paschal/eschatological title.[60] The space in which the church exists is therefore a *paschal* space, since it is the pasch of Jesus Christ which constitutes the "speaking" of the promise itself.

The elements of biblical narrative as anamnesis and eschatological embodiment come together homiletically in Campbell's *Christus victor* account of Christ overcoming the powers and principalities of the world, an act which opens a space of freedom from their domination for Christian praxis.[61] While Campbell briefly hints at an eschatological interpretation of the relationship between Christ and the powers, he does not situate that eschatological orientation in terms of doxology and praise, nor does he describe it in terms of participation in the very triune life of God. Instead, Campbell describes an apocalyptic framework as one of several possible ways of articulating the saving work of Christ in relationship to the powers. Of the five approaches that Campbell describes in detail, two touch explicitly on eschatological themes. One approach draws on a future-oriented eschatology and frames practices as *anticipations* of the Kingdom of God. Here

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[60] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 546.

[61] Campbell is not alone in turning to a *Christus Victor* model of atonement. Since Gustaf Aulén published his famous work by that title in 1930, a number of theologians have been drawn to his work. (Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans., A. G. Hebert (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).) Homiletically, the *Christus victor* model has gained a popularity that transcends the liberal/conservative or liberal/postliberal divide. In addition to Campbell's work cited below, see David Buttrick, *Preaching Jesus Christ: An Exercise in Homiletic Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), esp. 45ff. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching*, 137.

"…the vision remains in the future but nevertheless impinges on the present as the people of God seek to live toward it."[62] While eschatological in orientation, this approach to understanding practices still situates them within the missionary-historical framework of pneumatology.

Campbell also describes a more apocalyptic eschatology as an option for preaching to frame Christian practices.

> Within an apocalyptic framework, such practices may be presented as means of participating in the new creation that has broken into the world in Jesus Christ. A 'new space' of freedom and life has been opened up in the midst of the powers through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and particular practices offer the means for living into that new reality.[63]

As an example of this mindset, Campbell cites Galatians 3:28, in which Paul announces the overcoming of the binaries of Jew/Greek, male/female, and free/slave in Christ. Campbell suggests that, framed in these apocalyptic terms, "…the turn to practices is not burdensome but redemptive – and possibly even exciting!"[64]

Again, Campbell does not frame this praxis in terms of doxology or participation in the triune life; he limits his remarks to the idea of a "participation in the Kingdom." He is also clear that he views the apocalyptic framework as one option among many for describing Christian practices. This apocalyptic framework, however, parallels the pneumatological ecclesiology I have been developing throughout this project, and is therefore a preferable option (especially compared to the more future-oriented eschatology Campbell describes that threatens to infinitely postpone the eschaton, overlooking the way in which the Kingdom is *already* made present in the world).

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[62] Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 151.
[63] Ibid., 150.
[64] Ibid., 151.

Moreover, the model of Christ saving humanity from powers and principalities that have enslaved it is quite amenable to the category of doxology that was outlined above.

When Campbell describes the life redeemed from the powers, he does so primarily in the language of further resistance to them. This resistance is in turn depicted in primarily ethical terms, "friendship" and "character ethics" being the dominant choices.[65] Because one of the major tools employed by the powers and principalities to enforce their power is isolation and the related fear of otherness, friendship with one another in the body of Christ is an ethical act of resistance to their rule.

When describing the powers themselves and their motivations, however, Campbell employs the language of idolatry. The powers "…seek to claim the ultimate and complete loyalty of human beings… They do everything in their power to create the illusion that they, not God, are the divine regents in the world. The beast in the book of Revelation first and foremost seeks to receive the *worship* of human beings. Idolatry is the fundamental sin of the fallen powers."[66]

Building on similar themes, Douglas Harink frames the saving work of Christ in terms of the first commandment. The powers and principalities hold the nations (including, perhaps, Israel) in bondage, preventing humans from properly serving Yahweh, the God of Israel.[67] It is this fact that calls for God's justifying (or "rectifying," to use Martyn's term), action. In Jesus Christ, God "…conquers the powers which hold the nations in bondage and reconciles the world to himself, in order that he might create

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[65] Ibid., 164ff.

[66] Ibid., 24.

[67] Harink's evaluation of Israel's faithfulness is rather positive. He disagrees, for instance, with N. T. Wright's evaluation, that Israel "falls into paganism" (Harink 153ff). He further maintains that Christ's action, rather than superseding Israel's election, in fact sustains it (Harink, 160ff). It is difficult not to acknowledge, however, that Israel's record of faithfulness to Yahweh is mixed in the biblical record. It would be fairer, perhaps, to say that the solution is to be found in God's free action. It is God's election of Israel, rather than Israel's faithfulness to God, that is upheld in Christ.

in Christ a new people, indeed, finally a whole new world, in which loyalty, obedience, and faithfulness to the one God of Israel is made possible among the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit."[68] While Harink does not use the term doxology in this list, he does make explicit reference to the first commandment as the foundation for his reading of Paul.[69] Because the exclusivity of Yahweh as Israel's God includes worship as a component of obedience, the idea of doxology is certainly not excluded and may even be implied.

Harink also interprets Paul's apocalyptic thought in terms of participation. This becomes particularly apparent in his treatment of the Thessalonian correspondence. The Thessalonians, Harink says, participate in the grace and work of God through their faithfulness in persecution, active pursuit of holiness and love, etc.[70]

John Milbank more explicitly connects the themes of victory over sin and worship in Christ's work. What God truly desires, he claims, is not blood sacrifice, but the offering of our free will in love. Ultimately, creation must be reconciled to God in this offering, but cannot accomplish that reconciliation itself on account of its bondage to sin. "…[E]vil prevents it from doing so, therefore God must offer creation back to God, through the incarnation of the *Logos* who includes all things. Yet for early Christianity, it is clear that God suffers a contradiction until all make for themselves the offering already made by Christ."[71] Milbank combines elements of sacrificial models of atonement with themes from the *Christus Victor* model of Aulén. In his explication, the church is established in Christ as the space within which creation is free to make this offering back

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[68] Harink, 44.

[69] Ibid., 47.

[70] Ibid., 36-37.

[71] Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A Short Summa in Forty-Two Responses to Unasked Questions," 272.

to God.[72] Milbank's language is almost exactly opposite that of Harink – whereas Harink uses the language of powers but not that of doxology, Milbank uses the language of worship and sacrifice but not the language of the powers. He prefers to refer simply to "sin."

Each of these authors point toward a convergence between the themes of justification (or rectification) and doxology/worship. In each case, the work of Christ is understood as instrumental (albeit thoroughly necessary) to a greater goal, namely the obedience of the nations to Yahweh (Harink) or the self-offering of the will in love to God (Milbank). The necessity of Christ's work appears in the fact that humanity is unable to free itself from its bondage by its own power. The right praise and obedience to God is not possible because the powers/sin have enslaved humanity and demanded that humans worship *them* in the place of God. What is more, they enforce their rule over humanity by wielding the power of death.

The work of Christ in overcoming the powers and principalities creates a space of freedom within which humanity can worship God in word and action. In this space, as Campbell argues, the powers' primary weapon of death has been disarmed by the power of the Resurrection and the promise of eternal life to those who are in Christ. When described in terms of this space of freedom, Christ's passion constitutes the horizon against which all Christian praxis takes place because of the promise of God mediated through it.[73]

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[72] Ibid.

[73] The *Christus victor* model is just one theory of the atonement. Peter K. Stevenson and Stephen I. Wright describe ten primary textual metaphors for the atonement. To the extent that any theory of the atonement has implications for contemporary human existence or for an eschatological future, however, it can be understood in light of the idea of promissory narrative we have described. See Peter K. Stevenson and Stephen I. Wright, *Preaching the Atonement* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

As theological practice, preaching is dependent on the mediation of God's promises through the anamnesis of Christ's passion in Scripture and doctrine. Unless it retains the memory of God's promises in Jesus Christ as the horizon of Christian practice, "preaching for formation" slips into the act of maintaining an ideology for a cultural-linguistic community, not equipping the church for the eschatological praxis of doxology. While the eschatological *telos* of the church conditions this anamnesis of Jesus and gives it an eschatological meaning as the memory of Jesus *Christ*, it remains an indispensible part of the preaching task. Preaching proclaims the promises of God that are given through the narration of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and promised return. The use of doctrine in preaching becomes a means of locating and specifying those promises, first in the narrative of Jesus Christ, and then in the rest of Scripture according to the unity of God's actions in the economy of salvation. The anamnesis of Christ and his saving work through doctrine is one aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, namely the missionary-historical aspect. The Spirit's work is rooted in the atoning work of Jesus Christ and directed *toward* the eschaton which that work makes possible.

But doctrine alone does not suffice, because doctrine can only speak the promises; it does not make their fulfillment a present reality. Doctrine operates at the level of the promise as a concept. In order for the promises to be lived, there must be another dimension of the Spirit's work that effects the embodiment of that eschatological concept in the present. For that, the church needs core practices through which the promised life with God is made concrete in the Spirit, if only in an iconic fashion, within the church's life.

5. *The Core Practices, Sacramental Logic, and the Embodiment of the Telos*

The second element of Hütter's model of the church as pneumatological public that constitutes the space within which preaching takes place is the Spirit's activity in the core practices of the church. Because the core practices are, along with doctrine, the concrete mediation of the person and work of the Spirit, they are a necessary element of the public nature of the church. Through these practices, the horizon of the economy of salvation defined by doctrine is acknowledged even as the church embodies the eschatological Kingdom of God within history through ethical and ritual actions.

As noted above, the core practices have a privilege of place over other practices because it is in them that the shape of Christian life in the world is normatively expressed. In other words, the core practices are the concrete form of the church's participation in the life of God. This is not to say that these are the *only* activities in and through which this participation takes place; however, the various other practices that constitute the doxological activity of the church *derive* their character from the them. At the outset, we must note that different ecclesial traditions have different "lists" of what can be called core practices. Hütter, drawing on Luther, names seven: proclamation of the Word, baptism, Eucharist, the office of the keys, ordination, prayer/doxology/ catechesis, and the way of the cross. This list of core practices, therefore, might include the sacraments, but may also extend beyond them to include non-sacramental activity that is nevertheless intrinsic to the church's mission, as does prayer in Hütter's estimation. Because of this, it is not possible simply to identify the core practices with the sacraments, whether one adopts an extensive view of their number (as in Roman Catholicism) or a more restrictive view (as in Protestantism). It is entirely conceivable

that there might be a list of sacramental practices in a tradition which nevertheless *implicitly* adds other practices to constitute its core practices.

For our purposes, however, I want to focus on the sacraments as *the* paradigmatic Christian practices. My reason for this is two-fold. First, Hütter's definition of core practices has much in common with Miroslav Volf's rationale for distinguishing between practices and sacraments:

> The distinction is especially important to maintain in treatments of the relation between beliefs and practices, because beliefs… relate to sacraments differently than they do to "practices." Core Christian beliefs [Volf's analogue to Hütter's 'doctrine'] are *by definition normatively inscribed in sacraments* but not in "practices." Hence sacraments ritually enact normative patterns for practices.[74]

Hütter's definition of core practices is based on the idea that these practices are "constitutive for the mode of enactment of the Holy Spirit's economic mission and thus for the church itself."[75] Therefore, Hütter treats worship, and particularly the Lord's Supper, as the paradigmatic embodiment of hospitality, through which "…hospitality is concretely remembered and tangibly received."[76] The sacrament qualifies the shape of the more general practice. A second (and closely related) reason for focusing on the sacraments is that there has been far more explicit attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments (because of their explicit invocation of the Spirit) than to its activity in practices generally. An account of the work of the Spirit in relationship to Christian practices generally will therefore call for a "sacramental" interpretation of history and

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[74] Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology : Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, 248. Volf follows the contours of Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass' definition of "practices" as "cooperative and meaningful human endeavors that seek to satisfy fundamental human needs and conditions and that people do together and over time." (Ibid.)

[75] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things : Theology as Church Practice*, 132.

[76] Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 69.

human existence in which "the world" can nevertheless become the eschatological site of doxology.

In this vein, the Roman Catholic homiletician Mary Catherine Hilkert argues for what she calls "sacramental imagination" in preaching.[77] Hilkert distinguishes between two approaches to the relationship between the Gospel and the world. The first, which she associates with Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and elements of the New Hermeneutic is grounded in dialectical themes that emerge in the Reformation such as law/gospel.[78] This dialectical approach has become the dominant mentality in homiletics, she claims, because of the rich theology of the word of God in the "ruling neo-orthodoxy."[79] The emphasis is on the radical otherness of God and the fallen, sinful nature of the world. The word of God enters into this fallen world to speak a word of redemption and reconciliation. In contrast to this dialectic approach, Hilkert describes a "sacramental imagination" that emphasizes the Incarnation as a paradigm for a kind of sacramental hermeneutic. Following Rahner, she argues that, just as the world is able to receive and contain God through the hypostatic union, so also God's grace is already available *within* the world. "…Rahner, speaking from a sacramental perspective, emphasized the continuity between creation and redemption and the openness of humanity to the divine."[80] Similarly, Edward Schilebeeckx locates revelation, not in the depths of human consciousness, but in history. Although God's action is in history, only "the eyes of

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[77] Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace : Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997).

[78] It is interesting that Hilkert herself utilizes a binary approach to this issue, describing only "Reformational" and "Catholic" approaches; however, there are arguably *media via* approaches to these questions, such as those embodied in Anglican traditions.

[79] Hilkert, 19.

[80] Ibid., 32-33.

faith" are able to rightly interpret this activity.[81]   This sacramental view of creation results in a homiletic of "naming grace," articulating the activity of God that is already at work in situations of brokenness and suffering.

Louis Marie Chauvet presents a more nuanced "sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence."[82]   Whereas Hilkert draws a fairly sharp distinction between Reformation dialectial imagination and Catholic sacramental imagination (only Tillich earns extended praise on the Protestant side), Chauvet is deeply influenced by Protestant theologians such as Eberhard Jüngel and Jürgen Moltmann. He appropriates the strong emphasis on the cross in their theologies to shift the focus of sacramental theology from an Incarnational to a Paschal logic.[83] The result of a focus on the cross, taken in its full weight, he argues, necessitates a Trinitarian theology.[84] As Rowan Williams describes it, "'God' vanishes on the cross: Father and Son remain, in the shared, consubstantial weakness of their compassion. And the Father will raise the Son in the power of Spirit."[85] The cross, understood in Trinitarian terms, becomes the locus of an exchange, as Marion describes, in which Christ hands himself over so fully to the will of the Father that he becomes the icon of the invisible God, and thus glorifies the Father.

Chauvet argues that this disappearance of "God" in the cross and the revelation of the distance between Father and Son requires the introduction of a third term, namely the Holy Spirit.[86] The Spirit is the very difference of God, even from God's self within the

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[81] Ibid., 37.
[82] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*.
[83] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 155-161.
[84] "Moltmann is right: 'A radical theology of the cross cannot give a theistic answer to the question of the dying Christ. It would do away with the cross." Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 531. The quote of Moltmann that he cites is from the French edition of *The Crucified God*.
[85] Williams, *On Christian Theology*, 121.
[86] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 510.   Chauvet therefore stands squarely within the Augustinian theology that describes the Spirit as the bond between the Father and the Son.

Trinity. Yet the Spirit is also the difference between God and creation. The Spirit is the holiness, or radical otherness, of God.[87] Here we see a key element of Chauvet's pneumatology that bears on our consideration of the sacraments and Christian praxis as the enhypostasis of the Spirit: the Spirit does not simply witness or point to the otherness of God; it *is* that difference. The agency of the Spirit resides in its task of inscribing the holiness of God into the world and human beings – in Chauvet's terms, into corporality.

This, then, is the work of the Holy Spirit: to translate the relationship between the Father and the Son into humanity. That relationship is one of filiation, but filiation also entails difference. The Son is not the same as the Father. The Spirit *is* that very difference between Father and Son; hence, when the Spirit "translates" that relationship into humanity, what is given is actually the presence of the Spirit itself. This identity of the Spirit with the filial relationship is why it is called the "Spirit of adoption." It is also the grounds for describing the Spirit's work in quasi-formal, rather than efficient, causal terms.

Because the sacraments inscribe the holiness of God in ritual word and action, it is not improper to speak of them in terms of doxology. The acknowledgement and confession of God's otherness and holiness is doxology. The sacraments inscribe the holiness of God in ritual action by effecting a participation in the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. The Spirit "makes possible the expression of the crucified Word by removing it to another space than that of the concept."[88] The sacraments 're-present' the paschal space within history as a space in which the congregation can participate in the death and resurrection of Christ and thereby situate

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[87] Ibid., 513.
[88] Ibid., 528.

themselves in the site in which the holiness of God is most clearly revealed and acknowledged. For this reason, Chauvet insists, it is impossible to separate the pneumatological pole of the sacraments from the Christological pole that is expressed in the anamnesis.[89] The sacraments are memorials of Jesus Christ, remembering both the concrete act of the crucifixion as well as the eschatological reality that it opens up, yet it is by participation in this event through the Spirit that the eschatological new creation becomes iconically present in history as the church.

This paschal horizon of participation is perhaps most clear in the case of baptism, where the themes of death and resurrection are made quite explicit. Paul, for instance, speaks of baptism as the symbolic act of dying and being raised with Christ (Romans 6:1-14). This participation in Christ's death and resurrection locates believers within the paschal horizon of the economy of salvation, the space of freedom in which Paul says it is possible to submit oneself not to wickedness but to God (6:13). Similarly, the Eucharistic anamnesis situates the epiclesis within the paschal mystery. Again, Paul points to this vividly in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Rowan Williams succinctly summarizes this theology of sacramentality: "…prayer and sacrament… *name* and interpret the deepest direction and growth of human life as being *in* Christ and *towards* the Father."[90] The sacraments, as the eschatological doxology of the new creation in history, point to history as the place in which the proper worship of God must occur. The place of worship is "always and everywhere." "The spatio-temporal coordinates, '*semper et ubique*,' suggest a priority of gift over both time and space… The place and time in which it is right to offer praise are

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[89] Ibid., 546.
[90] Williams, *On Christian Theology*, 124. (Emphasis original.)

transgressive and eschatological: all places and all times, a location which shatters the priority of any particular place or time…"[91]

This doxology takes place not only in and through liturgy, but through the entire range of Christian ethical praxis.[92] The sacraments simply mark this transition in which the economic horizon of the pasch is moved into corporality and history; as such, they remain normative yet not the exclusive site of doxology. Without this transition, which the sacraments effect, Christian praxis remains a vague concept. The sacraments, by linking doxology to the paschal mystery, give concreteness to what would otherwise remain either a vague concept or an endless list of specificities. L. Roger Owens is right to remark that the church's participation in God has a peculiar shape and visibility which is the form of Jesus.[93] Yet this statement is not entirely accurate, as it is incomplete. The shape of the church's participation in the life of God is the cross of Jesus Christ. By participating in the paschal event through the sacraments and other praxis, Christians join with their Lord in praise to the Father, acknowledging the holiness of God through the Spirit. In so doing, they become the Body of Christ, the new creation.

The core practices or sacraments play a complementary role to doctrine in relationship to preaching. Whereas doctrine defines in a conceptual way the horizon of the economy of salvation, the core practices anchor that economy and the church's life within *history*. Homiletically, this prevents us from saying with Campbell and others that the purpose of preaching is to absorb the world into *the text*. That approach to intratextuality remains rooted in the conceptual horizon of the economy, and does not

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[91] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consumation of Philosophy*, ed. Gareth Jones and Lewis Ayers, Challenges in Contmporary Theology (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 235.

[92] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 528.

[93] L. Roger Owens, *The Shape of Participation: A Theology of Church Practices* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010), 186.

take sufficient account of the church's historical embodiment. As theology, preaching must navigate a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between text and context if its *telos* is forming communities for this kind of existence. As I will argue in the next chapter, we may still describe an approach of *ad hoc* correlation that is performed by preaching, but the intratextual goal of postliberal homiletics must be significantly modified if it is to take history as seriously as the pneumatological grounding of Christian praxis demands.

CHAPTER IV

PREACHING AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION: AGENCY, OBJECT, AND FORM

We began by exploring Charles Campbell's postliberal homiletic and the way in which this approach to preaching seeks to form communities that engage in Christian practices by presenting the pattern of Jesus as the ante-type for the practices of the church. In the postliberal homiletic, proclamation is catechesis. Preaching re-presents the story of Jesus and invites the congregation to make it their own by continuing Jesus' ministry. This continuation is achieved through a typological model in which the congregation repeats the pattern of Jesus, but does so with variation akin to jazz improvisation. Nevertheless, the emphasis remains on *Jesus*. The church finds its rooting as a continuation of the Incarnation, and the practices of the church are defined solely in the terms of Christology. The Holy Spirit is introduced after Christology to serve an actualizing or empowering function. However, this model, which treats Frei's narrative Christology as foundational while wedding it to Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model of religion, does justice neither to the specificity of Christ nor to the work of the Spirit, since Christ must be understood in terms of a collection of universal practices and the Spirit is largely superfluous.

Reinhard Hütter's approach to the problem is radically different. By treating Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model of the church community and theology on its own terms, he distinguishes this element from the Christological premises that constitute Frei's project. This gives Hütter the freedom to reinterpret the cultural-linguistic model, not in terms of Christology, but of pneumatology derived from the rich Eastern Orthodox

tradition, particularly *communio* ecclesiology as framed by John Zizioulas. The church is the public of the Holy Spirit, and the church's tradition – binding doctrine, sacraments, and theology – are understood as the "enhypostasis" of the Spirit. These elements, which constitute the church as a public in its own right, are the actual concrete embodiment of the Holy Spirit's work in the world. This enhypostatic understanding prevents the church from being defined simply as a Christologically-grounded institution which is then empowered by the Holy Spirit. With this "pneumatological supplement," the church is given an eschatological dimension: the church is the new creation within history. The Holy Spirit is primarily the formal, and not efficient, cause of this public.

I have suggested a further supplement to Hütter's work by using the category of *doxology* to describe this life. As Louis Marie Chauvet suggests, the Spirit is the holiness of God the Father; in this way he captures the filial relationship within the Trinity as well as the adoptive filiation that Christians have with the Father in the Spirit that results from Christ's redemptive work. Doxology, I have argued, is the eschatological *telos* of the church and all creation, and it is through praise and the act of glorifying the Father that the church becomes the eschatological community in history. Each of the three components of the church-as-public can be understood in these terms. Doctrine, accountable to and in conjunction with Scripture, describes the economy of salvation as a whole and the conditions under which this doxological mode of existence becomes possible. The sacraments establish the normative shape of doxology for all of the church's practices as a participation in the paschal event through which the church offers itself as a living sacrifice of praise to the glory of God. Finally practical theology provides the hermeneutical bridge between doctrine and practices by connecting the

economy of salvation with the particular requirements of the various contexts in which the church finds itself.

As we begin this chapter, we return specifically to homiletics and the practice of preaching. Above, I situated preaching within Hütter's tripartite model as a mode of practical theology. As an act of practical theology, the work of preaching is expanded beyond the bounds implied by an understanding of preaching as proclamation. At the same time, by identifying preaching with practical theology, we gain a deeper understanding of the way in which preaching builds up and forms the church to engage in mission in the world through its practices, thereby building upon the key insight of postliberal homiletics.

As an act of practical theology, preaching is engaged in the three tasks that Hütter assigns to the discourse of theology. First, preaching reacquires the object of faith – that is, the economy of salvation – through interpretation of the foundational witness of the church, an interpretative act that is itself the work of the Spirit. Second, preaching engages in theological judgment, a hermeneutical act in which the world is named as the arena in which doxology is offered to God through ministerial praxis that participates in the pasch of Christ. This requires both a "phenomenology of the Spirit" that can name the world in sacramental terms as well as the use of judgment that can identify the opportunities for and challenges to performing this doxology. Third, preaching as practical theology will be involved in catechesis as *ad hoc* correlation in which the congregation is given the tools needed to offer itself as a living sacrifice of praise to God through praxis in the world. To this end, I argue, preaching will involve the work of rhetorically paralleling the Spirit's work of gathering creation into the church by not only

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translating the Gospel into worldly terms, but also by converting those terms toward the eschatological *telos* of doxology.

1. *Preaching as Spiritual Formation*

Throughout Hütter's work, the task of theology is seen as a tool for preaching – that is, the work of theology, while pathically related to and dependent on preaching, is nevertheless somewhat independent of preaching in that its work is complete before the preaching task begins. While theology is in the service of preaching, it is not the same as preaching. In each of its dimensions, theology aims toward preaching.

In the previous chapter, I called this division between preaching and theology into question utilizing the work of Edward Farley. Farley's work raises serious doubts about the tendency (which Hütter shares) to define theology as a primarily academic discourse. Rather than the academy, Farley argues that theology most properly belongs in the *congregation*; in this, his proposal is a more radical one than Hütter's, which only situates theology within the academy as pathically related to the church. In locating theology in the church, Farley further blurs the boundaries between theology as a discourse practice of the church and the discourse of preaching. This blurring is continued by the turn toward *practical* theology as the primary mode of theological reflection, a mode that is harmonious with the primary ecclesial context. While this does not eliminate the possibility of academic theology as described by David Tracy and others, it does make that mode of theology *derivative* and, hence, secondary, to the primary ecclesial work of theology.[1]

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[1] On the "three publics" of theology – church, academy, public square – see David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), ch. 1.

Within Hütter's framework, theology is tasked with bringing together doctrine and the core practices in a way that enables them to illuminate each other – theology is thus an essential component in the church's task of fulfilling its eschatological *telos*. But in this mode, theology is also closely connected with the work of the Spirit and the Spirit's role in the economy of salvation. It is not unfair to say, then, that within Hütter's model theology functions as a project of "spiritual formation." The task of theology culminates in the work of catechesis: "Formulated substantively from the perspective of the economy of salvation, this [presentative-communicative] aspect of theology as a church practice aims at enabling human beings to praise God for God's salvific acts and for their own *pergrinatio* with God toward God, that is, for their own *life with God*."[2] Since that doxological act is the concrete embodiment of the eschatological Spirit, theology takes on the work of shaping individuals and congregations for the work of participating in the eschatological Kingdom of the Spirit.

As we saw in the first chapter, Campbell and other homileticians of a 'postliberal' bent make a significant contribution to homiletics by reclaiming the formative element of preaching that one sees in homileticians such as Augustine and (especially) Alan of Lille, but their work lacks a significant and necessary pneumatological component.[3] Hütter's pneumatologically-grounded ecclesiology goes far in correcting that shortcoming and deepens our understanding of formation in postliberal homiletics by describing that

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[2] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 189.

[3] Augustine describes the purpose of preaching in relationship to two audiences. For those who are ignorant of the Gospel, the preacher aims to win them over and help them to understand what is at stake in their ignorance. For those who are "friendly, attentive, [and] eager to learn," however, the task is instruction and moving them to act on the truth. See Augustine, *Teaching Christianity (De Doctrina Christiana)*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans., Edmund Hill, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, vol. I/11 (New York: New City Press, 1996), 203. Alan of Lille offers one of the earliest popular definitions of preaching in the his *Ars Praedicandi*: "Preaching is an open and public instruction in faith and behavior, whose purpose is the forming of men..." Alan of Lille, *The Art of Preaching* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 16-17.

formation not only in terms of Christology, but also (and even primarily) in terms of

pneumatology. At the same time, this approach provides a more robust pneumatology

and ecclesiological foundation to undergird homiletics that aim toward this often

amorphously-defined goal of "spiritual formation."

There has been increasing interest in the relationship between preaching and other

approaches to "spiritual formation." Ronald J. Allen links preaching to "spirituality" as

one of the ways in which preaching relates to practical ministry. He defines "spirituality"

as:

> …ways in which human beings attempt to become attuned to the
> presence and purposes of God and to live in the light of that
> presence. Spirituality involves Christian practices through which
> we become aware of the divine. Spirituality eventuates in patterns
> of thinking, feeling, and acting. Because spiritual awareness is
> interpretive, spirituality includes methods and criteria for reflecting
> on the adequacy of its sources and the conclusions that we draw
> from them.[4]

Preaching should be directed toward three areas – the inner life, the common life, and

action in life – with the goal that there should be spiritual fruit that results.[5] Preaching

that aims to address these areas in light of the work of the Holy Spirit must, in Allen's

words, "explain the nature and work of the Holy Spirit."[6] This will involve describing

the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.[7] Preaching will address the inner life that takes up

contemplation and prayer, the common life that is centered around the sacraments and

communal life, and especially "action in life." Preaching contributes especially to this

latter dimension of spirituality by helping the congregation to "form a theological

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[4] Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, Preaching and Its Partners (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 119.
[5] Ibid., 127-137.
[6] Ibid., 134.
[7] I treat this requirement as the articulation of a phenomenology of the Spirit (and of sin) below.

consciousness that can function like a radar," helping them to interpret their actions and the world in theological terms, sensing God's activity and presence in their lives, and joining with that activity.[8]

More recently, Kay Northcutt (to whom I alluded in the introduction to this project) has focused on the example of the Desert Mothers and Fathers to develop a model of preaching as "spiritual direction."[9] This model shifts the emphasis of preaching from issues of persuasion ("and its subsequent preoccupation with *explanation* and *communication*") to an emphasis on guidance and spiritual formation.[10] In place of a therapeutic model of formation (exemplified, in her view, by Fosdick), Northcutt proposes that "…*spiritual direction* be the paradigm (and wisdom tradition) upon which formational preaching is built. Spiritual direction's fundamental concern is guidance, specifically guiding individuals and congregations toward noticing God, practicing receptivity with God, and seeking God always and *in* all ways."[11]

The turn to the Desert Fathers and Mothers, however, has both advantages and disadvantages. One benefit of this approach is that the arenas of formation, spirituality, and preaching are brought together in an explicit way. Northcutt's model provides a hermeneutical orientation for the entire process of sermon preparation and performance. The hermeneutic of spiritual direction, which governs the preacher's approach to both Scripture and the contemporary context, encourages the preacher to look for ways in which the Bible calls the church to holistic attentiveness to the work of the Holy Spirit, provides images of Christian vocation, evokes a sacramental understanding of all

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[8] Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, 135.
[9] See also my review of this text in *Homiletic* 34, no. 2 (2009): 58-59.
[10] Northcutt, 33.
[11] Ibid., 34.

existence, and calls us to see others and the world as God sees them.[12] These themes

resonate with the emphases that have been lifted up in the course of this study. A second

advantage of Northcutt's approach is that it renews emphasis on the person of the

preacher herself. Northcutt foregoes an emphasis on persuasive rhetoric in favor of a

model of "formation by attraction," in which the preacher is put forth as a guide

knowledgeable in the ways of God and capable of leading others to discern God's

activity.[13] The person and rhetorical ethos of the preacher matters as much as the words

that the person speaks.[14] A third benefit of this approach is the substantial body of

literature that is opened up for homiletic reflection. The Desert Fathers and Mothers have

not been a primary reference for preachers in the modern period, and Northcutt presents a

compelling case for reappraising their place – or lack thereof – in contemporary

preaching.

While Northcutt's approach has these significant benefits, however, her approach

to spiritual direction has its own shortcomings. First, her reliance on the Desert Fathers

and Mothers tends to push Northcutt to a view of spirituality as interiority that neglects

the dimensions of communal life and action in life that Allen describes. She

distinguishes between *active* practices such as "visiting the sick and imprisoned, clothing

the naked, feeding the hungry," etc.) on the one hand and *receptive* practices such as

"*lectio divina*, meditation, vocal and mental prayer, devotional reading," etc. on the

other.[15] The latter set of practices is the one which Northcutt most highly commends,

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[12] Ibid., 81-97.

[13] Ibid., 9, 61-62.

[14] For further reflection on the role of *ethos* and the *persona* of the preacher in the sermon, especially as it relates to the sense of connection between the listener and the preacher, see John S. McClure and others, *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies*, Channels of Listening (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 14-16, 49-70, 136-137.

[15] Northcutt, 104-105.

arguing that very often the active practices can give way to activity for the sake of busy-ness and can actually obscure the vision and awareness of God in the practitioner. A more balanced view of the role of both the active and passive dimensions of praxis is needed to avoid slipping into a form of individualist interiority. Second, Northcutt's emphasis on the idea of "formation by attraction" leads her to reject the persuasive dimension of preaching altogether. But one might ask whether there is not some need to 'make the case' for a particular interpretation of Scripture or the current context. By giving up the persuasive dimension, Northcutt also gives up the idea of an appeal to any communal consciousness or sense of discernment. Rhetoric is largely neglected or reduced in Northcutt's estimation to the issue of "personal voice-print" and style.[16] Preaching risks slipping from a communal work of spiritual discernment into an unhealthy focus on the preacher's charisma.

Hütter's contributions of a pneumatologically robust ecclesiology and the role of theology within that ecclesiology help to further the task of understanding the work of preaching in terms of spiritual formation. His analysis of the three dimensions of theology – discursive reacquisition of the object of faith, perception and judgment, and presentation-communication – provide a more complete vision of the elements that are required for preaching to be in the work of preparing people for lives and praxis that participates in the life of the Trinity. This actually takes place through the presentative-communicative work of theology (i.e., *preaching* itself) which is the *telos* of theology itself. But as part of that work preachers will be engaged in discursive presentation of the economy of salvation as well as perceptive/judgmental work through theological

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[16] Ibid., 35ff.

hermeneutics applied to the contemporary context, and these aspects of theology will not only shape the final sermonic outcome but also be present in it.

2. *Reacquiring Faith through Discursive Interpretation of Scripture*

The first dimension of preaching as formative theology that will be examined is the task that Hütter describes as "re-appropriation" in which particular interpretations of doctrine are developed and tested through the development of particular discourse traditions. This dimension represents the discursive aspect of theology. Although Hütter understands this task primarily in terms of theology's relationship to doctrine, there is ample reason to expand it to the interpretation of Scripture, as well. Theology, Hütter says, is dependent on those things which it does not constitute through its own workings, namely the *regula fidei* and the core practices. From these, theology is constituted by discursive traditions that explicate the economy of salvation in a particular, argumentative fashion.

The understanding of preaching as a discursive task has several important implications when it is understood in terms of theology for spiritual formation. The first is the direct result of the pathic constitution of preaching itself. *Pace* Farley, preaching does not have direct access to "the Gospel."[17] If preaching had such an access, it would not be pathic, but would instead be responsible for establishing the unity of Christian faith and would therefore generate its own object. Preaching would become a form of

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[17] Farley argues that the "bridge paradigm" whereby a preacher constructs a relationship between a biblical text and the present day is a failed model. Rather than preach passages, he says, preachers proclaim the gospel. To the extent that the gospel is not available in an unmediated form, however, the Bible would continue to play an indispensible role in preaching. See Farley, *Practicing Gospel*, 71-82. For a rebuttal, as well as alternative ways of understanding the role of the Bible in preaching, see Ronald J. Allen, "Why Preach Passages from the Bible?," in *Preaching as Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture*, ed. Thomas G. Long and Edward Farley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Pres, 1996), 176-188.

"free-floating hermeneutics" that would lack any ethical obligation toward its object.[18] Instead, preaching remains an *exegetical* and interpretive enterprise that is directed toward a fixed object, namely the *regula fidei* through which the economy of salvation becomes available for faith.

Because it is interpretive, preaching will therefore be engaged in the discursive work of developing and testing particular interpretations and presentations of doctrine in particular circumstances. This testing constitutes a dialogic that is the "argumentative" aspect of preaching. Preaching becomes a paradigmatic discourse of the church, an ongoing dialogue about the meaning of its foundational texts and the best way to present that meaning. This dialogue results in the development of *traditions*, both of interpretation and of rhetoric. Just as Hütter argues that the development of theological "schools" need not be looked upon negatively, but should be seen as the necessary shape of the *discurrere*, so preaching should embrace a number of interpretive and rhetorical traditions which may be radically local in character but may also be grouped together in various configurations for heuristic purposes, such as "African-American preaching," or "Methodist preaching." Such groupings, while fluid, enable significant interlocutors to take shape as part of the dialogue process.

This understanding of preaching as a discursive practice also recognizes the concrete character of formation. Theological *discurrere* is, in Hütter's language, "finite," "provisional," and "definite."[19] One of the key contributions of Lindbeck's postliberal cultural-linguistic model is the acknowledgement that the acquisition of Christian faith

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[18] For an analysis of the problem of "free-floating hermeneutics" in contemporary theology, see Janz: 363-405. For the ethical implication of what he calls "performance interpretation," see Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Resuscitating the Author," in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 35-50.

[19] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 184.

occurs in a concrete fashion mediated by the very *particular* cultural-linguistic field of a given community. As we have seen, Lindbeck expresses this in terms of the priority of concrete congregations over any mystical identification of the church. The discursive character of preaching means that preachers, along with congregations, will be involved in an ongoing task of identifying the 'classic' texts that contribute to the shape of the particular discursive tradition within which they situate themselves.

Preaching's discursive nature implies a positive view of "tradition," such as can be found, for instance, in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer argues that, far from preventing access to truth (as claimed by a number of enlightenment thinkers such as Kant), "tradition" is a necessary component of the search for truth.[20] In a particularly powerful essay, Vladimir Lossky expresses a view similar to that of Gadamer, arguing that "tradition" is not an impersonal deposit of past material, but the "critical spirit of the church."[21] Through discursive traditions, interpretation becomes possible.

For this reason, Burton Z. Cooper and John McClure advocate that preachers claim their theological traditions in the pulpit.[22] To that end, they propose a theological typology based not on principal figures, but on overarching themes and motifs. Their "theological profile" covers eight broad areas: basic theological mode, view of authority (including the authority of Scripture, of tradition, and of experience), theistic worldview, theodicy, theory of atonement, the relationship between church and world, the relationship between Christianity and other religions (especially Judaism), and "endings"

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[20] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans., Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 14ff.

[21] Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 141-168.

[22] Burton Z. Cooper and John S. McClure, *Claiming Theology in the Pulpit* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

(the relationship of the Kingdom of God to history and view of eternal life).[23]   While Cooper and McClure advocate this typology primarily as a means of achieving consistency across individual sermons as well as preaching careers, such an evaluation is also a helpful beginning in the task of situating oneself within the discourse tradition. This approach certainly is useful for locating a position within the contemporary range of interlocutors, but it does not provide depth reaching back through history. That kind of memory would require further work in identifying key texts and figures within particular strands of discourse.

The discursive character of preaching also emphasizes the concrete character of formation. Theological *discurrere* is, in Hütter's language, "finite," "provisional," and "definite."[24]   The particularity of the cultural-linguistic fields in given communities necessitiates a concrete mediation and a certain amount of archaeological work to understand the location of the community within the dialogic. The purpose of this work is not to constitute a reified or unmediated tradition that would completely bind the present or fail to acknowledge the differences of its interlocutors; instead, the purpose of this archaeology is to understand the current state of the dialogical process of theology and situate oneself within it. Such situation is necessary if the dialogue is to proceed to its next step, whatever form that may be.

Given this concrete and particular quality of formation, there is a real risk that these traditions might reify and become impervious to critique. However, as we have seen, one safeguard against this is Hütter's insistence that theology cannot establish its

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[23] Ibid., 135-139. A summary of the typology, as well as a profile form, are presented in the appendices. The entire typology is explained at significant length in the body of the text. This typology, which addresses more of the cognitive dimension of preaching, is complimentary to the rhetorical typology which McClure develops in *The Four Codes of Preaching*.

[24] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 184.

own validity given its pathic relationship to doctrine that qualifies it. The regula fidei, and ultimately Scripture, stands over any discourse tradition that would claim absoluteness. The finite and definite qualities of theological *discurrere* prevent it from rising to an absolute status.

Theology, especially in the form of preaching in which communication occurs in highly contextualized oral modes, is always a provisional enterprise. It seems entirely reasonable, therefore, that one critical element of such tradition might be a "deconstructive" moment, such as that outlined by John McClure in *Other-wise Preaching*. In such a moment, some *disruptive* element would call into question a given configuration of the tradition. McClure utilizes the work of the French phenomenologist Emmanuel Levinas to argue that face-to-face encounters with others provides a de-centering element that calls into question the absoluteness of any tradition. In light of human others, we recognize not only our own ethical obligations to do justice to them, but also the ways in which our own overlapping discourse traditions (and McClure emphasizes that the idea of one uniform tradition is itself a myth) are developed differently, and sometimes oppositionaly.

The discursive quality of preaching also addresses a recurring concern among homileticians influenced by postmodern theory, namely the question of the status of theological statements. Paul Scott Wilson has been critical of homileticians who stress the provisional character of theological language in preaching.[25] Wilson is concerned that this "minimizes transcendence" by not calling preaching "truth," opting instead for terms such as "wager," "testimonial affirmation," etc. Certainly one reason for the

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[25] Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, 140-141. Wilson names McClure, Lucy Rose, L. Susan Bond, Campbell, and Anna Carter Florence as examples of this tendency.

current impasse on this issue is that these terms (including "truth") are often used in varying ways by different authors. But our approach to preaching based on Hütter's model of theology illustrates that, while we may say that preaching does achieve some degree of truth, the truth of preaching is always provisional and dependent on context. This has less to do with any penchant for postmodern theory than with the quality of preaching itself as a discursive enterprise.[26]

As a discursive practice, preaching participates in the Spirit's work as the anamnesis of God's promises, but does so in a mediated, hermeneutical fashion. Through the discursive aspect, preaching "unfolds" the promises of God (the economy of salvation) that is mediated through Scripture and doctrine through time in a dialogical manner. Ray L. Hart suggests that the notion of "revelation" must therefore be taken more broadly than simply the foundational event which is to be interpreted. "…'[R]evelation' embraces (a) that which incites the hermeneutical spiral and also (b) this 'that which' taken into human understanding, the movement of the hermeneutical spiral itself."[27] Rowan Williams builds on this insight in his essay "Trinity and Revelation" to describe the work of the Holy Spirit as the hermeneutical questioning of the community in relationship to its foundational texts: "…my thesis is that any such puzzlement over 'what the Church is meant to be' *is* the revelatory operation of God as

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[26] A further avenue of inquiry in this vein (far beyond the scope of this paper) would be to develop further the idea of "opening as truth" articulated by Habermas and Vattimo and embraced by McClure, but to do so according to a logic of Trinitarian Communion. The rudiments of such a model exist already in Zizioulas' theology, and Hütter himself has made gestures in this direction. See his essay on "Hospitality and Truth" in Hütter, *Bound to Be Free*, 56-77.

[27] Ray L. Hart, *Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Ttoward an Ontology and a Rhetoric of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 99.

'Spirit' insofar as it keeps the Church engaged in the exploration of what its foundational events signify."[28]

In relationship to the discursive aspect of preaching, then, we may describe the relationship to the Holy Spirit in terms of the Spirit's *agency* in the preaching event. Through preaching, which interprets Scripture and doctrine across time and in various contexts, the Holy Spirit speaks the promises of God to particular contexts so that their significance can be appropriated within a given time and place. In this regard, "…this unending re-discovery of Christ or re-presentation of Christ, the revelatory aspect of the 'hermeneutical spiral', is, in Trinitarian perspective, what we mean by the illuminative or transforming operation of the Holy Spirit."[29] Through this activity, the significance of Jesus Christ as the promise of God is rediscovered in a myriad of contexts.

3. *Interpreting Contexts: Theological Judgment*

In order for preaching to fulfill its task of enabling human beings to have communion with God through the act of praising God in the world, preaching must have a phenomenology of the Holy Spirit. By a "phenomenology of the Spirit," I do not mean to imply that theology must correlate itself to a Husserlian or Heideggerian phenomenology in a strict sense; rather, I mean more broadly that preaching must have some rhetoric for naming and describing the Spirit's presence and activity in the world. In short, preaching must be able to say something about how the Spirit appears in any given situation. Such a phenomenology is necessary in order to name the world as the place in which humans in the Spirit offer themselves as a living sacrifice of praise.

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[28] Williams, *On Christian Theology*, 144. (Emphasis original.)
[29] Ibid., 143.

Hütter refers to this need as the task of "theological perception" oriented toward "theological judgment," but defines it only 'negatively' in relationship to challenges:

> The goal of theological judgment within the framework of the theological *taxis* of theology as a church practice is to support concretely both preaching and "instruction" in the broadest sense, areas in which the *doctrina evangelii* is proclaimed and taught in the context of a specific constellation of problems and challenges so that human beings might be able to join in praise of God's salvific work.[30]

In light of this description, two issues become apparent. The first is that a prior assumption underlies it, namely that theology has a means of discerning God's Spirit in the world. The second is that, while Hütter is certainly correct in saying that theological judgment evaluates challenges to doxology, it also must be able to name *opportunities* for acts of praise.

The task of theological judgment will therefore require a two-fold movement. First, preaching, utilizing a phenomenology of the Spirit, names concrete opportunities in the world as occasions for doxology through praxis. The challenge to this task, however, is that preaching must accomplish this without entirely collapsing the distinction between God and creation. In other words, a phenomenology of the Spirit in theological judgment must incorporate both the kataphatic and apophatic moments of theology. Second, preaching must also examine the challenges presented by the context that must be overcome in order for praxis to accomplish its doxological task.

It is in this dimension that preaching comes closest to the model of "spiritual formation" described by Northcutt and which is the most common understanding of that term. "Spiritual direction," writes Northcutt, "cultivates attentiveness, specifically the

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[30] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 188. Again, here Hütter treats the tasks of preaching and theology as separate; I have already called that distinction into question. See above.

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ability to *notice* God's presence and activity in one's life and the world."[31] In this sense,

the Holy Spirit appears as the *object* of preaching. It is part of preaching's content as

preaching names the world in terms of the Spirit's presence.

A. The Phenomenology and Hermeneutics of the Spirit

Much of the groundwork has already been laid for a phenomenology of the Spirit

that would help to guide both theological judgment as well as shape preaching's rhetoric.

Chapter 2 drew on the work of Jean-Luc Marion to describe the church as the icon of the

eschaton, while chapter 3 utilized Louis Marie Chauvet's description of the Spirit as the

holiness of God – that is, the space established within which praise can occur – in the

discussion of the sacraments. These two figures are mutually complementing and

together can provide us with a phenomenology of the Spirit that is both sacramental and

rich in rhetorical promise.[32]

Several common themes link Marion's work with Chauvet's. First, both operate

within a post-Heideggerian philosophical framework in which ontotheology – the

identification of God with Being itself – has been abandoned.[33] For both thinkers, God

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[31] Northcutt, 3. (Emphasis original.)

[32] It is not my intention here to address the central element of Marion's phenomenology, namely the "saturated phenomenon." "Saturation" is Marion's term to describe a phenomenon that would appear without horizon, a phenomenon that could only be described in terms of its pure "givenness." There have been several excellent studies of Marion's work. See especially James K. A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation*, Radical Orthodoxy Series (London: Routledge, 2002); Shane MacKinlay, *Interpreting Excess: Jean-Luc Marion, Saturated Phenomena, and Hermeneutics*, ed. John D. Caputo, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010). For Marion's own work on saturation and givenness, see Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), which contains a number of Marion's previously published essays on the subject, including his seminal article "The Saturated Phenomenon." Ultimately, however, the question of saturation is a separate one from the question of the relationship between Marion's concept of filiation and the appearance of God; the saturated phenomenon represents one possible mode or understanding of that appearance within a general logic of the "trace."

[33] See Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, Religion and Postmodernism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Also see Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 74.

cannot be equated with Being in any sense, even the crossed-out BeXng of Heidegger. A second common theme is the centrality of the cross as the hermeneutical center for theology. For Marion, the cross becomes the icon *par excellence*, the place in which revelation is most completely achieved, while for Chauvet the cross is the place in which a theistic description of God becomes impossible and one is forced into Trinitarian concepts. Finally – and most importantly for our purposes – both thinkers turn to a concept of *distance* to express the relationship between the Son and the Father and find that distance expressed in both the cross and the life of the Trinity itself. For Marion, this takes the form of "filial distance," while in Chauvet it is the distance between the crucified Jesus and the Father; and though Chauvet is more explicit than Marion in identifying this distance with the Holy Spirit, Marion's work is difficult not to read in such Trinitiarian terms following Chauvet. It is this concept of distance that opens up a theological hermeneutic and provides a phenomenology of the Holy Spirit along the lines of the "trace." It also dictates a theological rhetoric that incorporates both the kataphatic and apophatic moments of theological reflection.

As we saw above, Marion's concept of iconicity is grounded in the distance between the icon itself and that which it mediates. This distance becomes apparent in the icon *par excellence*, the cross of the crucified Christ. The cross makes the invisible God visible *as invisible*; there is a rupture between the "visible spectacle" and the "invisible sense."[34] Gxd, the invisible Holy One, appears in the continual reference of the Son to the Father; Gxd is only available as an "object" in the sense that God is the one *to whom* the Son hands himself over.[35] The Holy Spirit both constitutes the distance between the

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[34] Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, 73.
[35] Ibid., 75-76.

Father and the Son and allows the observer to make the epistemic transition from the visible Crucified to the invisible Father.[36]

Louis Marie Chauvet picks up the motif of distance, but develops it in more explicitly Trinitarian terms. While Marion is primarily concerned with the phenomenology of God's appearance, Chauvet is concerned with the way in which the Pasch of Christ constitutes a symbolic exchange; as a result, his approach has a more dramatic element. The Cross is no longer simply the place in which God is revealed, but the place in which Christ's Pasch is accomplished as an act of doxology directed toward the one he calls Father. The Holy Spirit appears as the space in which that self-offering becomes possible; it is the space of the *otherness* of the Father from the Son, and hence the *otherness* of God from the world. It is, in Chauvet's words,

> God in the neuter. Blank space of God, anti-name of God, the Spirit is this third term which, while fully of God's very self, works to subvert in us every idolatrous attempt at manipulating God (whether at the conceptual, ethical, or ritual level…), and to keep perpetually open, as "the question of questions," the question of God's identity: God crossed out, never so divine as in God's erasure in the disfigured humanity of the Crucified.[37]

The paradox of the Spirit is that, even as it represents the otherness of God (which in spatial terms might be described as Marion's distance), it also represents the closest proximity of God to creation and to human beings; the Holy Spirit, the otherness of God which is also God's holiness, comes to be "in" us, and the holiness of the Father is inscribed into our corporeality as we in turn witness to the Father's holiness.

The identification of the Spirit with *distance* in Marion or what we might summarize as *holy otherness* in Chauvet situates us within what postmodern philosophy

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[36] Ibid., 84.
[37] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 517.

has called the logic of the "trace." While 'something like' the logic of the trace has been developed by several thinkers in phenomenology, the concept has received its most familiar explication in the work of Jacques Derrida. [38] The trace, according to Derrida, is "…not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace."[39] The trace is that which is "other" – other than language, other than experience – which cannot or does not itself appear within language or experience. While some theologians such as Rowan Williams raise cautions about assimilating God completely to the idea of the trace, it is nevertheless difficult not to find in this concept a useful *analogy* to describe the experience of God.[40]

The hermeneutical implications of this move are developed more fully by Luca D'Isanto, who draws heavily on the work of Jüngel, Robert Scharlemann, and Gianni Vattimo.[41] D'Isanto recognizes that the identification of God's nature or essence with the person of Jesus Christ has far-reaching impacts for theological hermeneutics. If God is revealed most fully in that which is *other than* God, then it follows that "…God cannot by definition be identified with anything or anybody, and yet that God can appear anywhere as the *symbol* of God."[42] God's appearance takes the form of the trace, the

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[38] See in particular Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), especially the essay "Difference," 129-160.

[39] Ibid., 150.

[40] Rowan Williams, *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology*, ed. Mike Higton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 25.

[41] Luca D'Isanto, "Gianni Vattimo's Hermeneutics and the Trace of Divinity," *Modern Theology* 10, no. 4 (1994). Recall that Jüngel is also a foundational thinker for Chauvet.

[42] Ibid., 373.

recognition that God is "not-this" and "not-I" – God "appears in every occurrence as the unmasterable negation."[43]

Let us return to Chauvet to develop this insight in more Trinitarian language. It is the Holy Spirit which constitutes the bond between the Son and the invisible Father in the Crucifixion. But it is also the Spirit which, after the Resurrection, translates that relationship into the rest of creation. The Spirit thus is "the agent of the *disappearance* of the Risen One into the flesh, which is thus sacramental, of humanity and the world."[44] The Spirit takes the reference or handing over from the Son to the Father that occurs in the Cross, as well as the subsequent glorification of the Son in the Resurrection, and translates that reality into all of history by "removing it from the realm of the concept" and placing it in the body. This transference can occur anywhere in which doxology occurs, but it occurs particularly in the form of *ethical praxis* within history.[45] "Where human beings give flesh to their confession of the Risen One by following him on the way of the cross for the liberation of their brothers and sisters (and thus for their own as well), there the body of Christ comes forth."[46]

The act of theological judgment in preaching will therefore take on a character that is similar to what John McClure describes as "other-wise."[47] McClure utilizes the phenomenology of otherness developed by Emmanuel Levinas to push for an ethical approach to preaching that recognizes "the glory of the infinite" in "the face" as a site of

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[43] Ibid. Vattimo himself remarks that it is the Incarnation (as opposed to the Cross) which provides the hermeneutical key: "…Christ legitimated, through the event of incarnation, the many natural ciphers of the divine." Gianni Vattimo, *After Christianity*, trans., Luca D'Isanto, Italian Academy Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 39.

[44] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 526.

[45] Ibid., 528.

[46] Ibid., 529.

[47] McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching*.

encounter with otherness.[48] In the hermeneutic that I have been outlining, preaching will incorporate something of this "other-wise" ethic, yet will do so within an over-arching framework of doxology. Preaching as theological judgment, in its phenomenological and hermeneutical moment, will name and describe the world in sacramental terms as the arena in which the Kingdom appears when doxology is given to the Father, not only in worship, but particularly in ethical service to others.

This sacramental naming of the world as the arena in which doxology is offered honors both the kataphatic and apophatic moments of theology. God the Father is named in relationship to the world, but not as an object *within* the world. More properly, preaching names the world in relationship to the Father as it describes the transfer or exchange of glory that occurs through doxology. Rather than describing the Father as an object in the world, preaching will describe the shape of Christian existence toward the Father. Preaching remains thoroughly theo-centric, with God the Father as that-toward-which Christian life is directed, yet does so while maintaining the divine holiness and mystery. The kataphatic moment is maintained by the insistence that God the Father nevertheless *appears* in the event of the Pasch as invisible, and as the that-toward-which Christ lives his entire life and which defines his human existence.

The act of doxology itself, moreover, further incorporates both the *via positiva* and *via negativa*.[49] The discourse of praise, by which we should understand not only spoken words but also praise that occurs through action, whether ritual or ethical, is a non-violent mode of predication that feeds on the play of both presence and absence.[50] Praise is a de-nominative mode of discourse that feeds on the incompleteness of

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[48] Ibid., 8.
[49] See, for instance, LaCugna, *God for Us*, 361.
[50] Smith, *Speech and Theology*, 133.

signification. This insight is at the heart of Marion's understanding of apophatic theology as it appears in Pseudo-Dionysius' *Divine Names*.[51] As a hermeneutical practice, praise is an *infinite* act, recognizing that there is an inescapably analogical element to language; this structure of likeness and difference calls for a continual string of signifiers that iconically re-present the site of the initial Paschal glorification of God. In other words, doxological practice in the world functions on a kind of typological logic, participating in and thereby re-creating the paradigmatic site of praise that is the cross and life of Jesus Christ.

B. Sin and Contextual Challenges

It is not sufficient for preaching simply to name the opportunities available for doxology in a given context; it must also honestly describe the challenges that might be present. In short, preaching will involve activities of *confession* in which sin and evil are named so that they may be confronted and overcome in the praxis of doxology. Alongside the activity of theological hermeneutics that describes the 'positive' aspect of opportunity for doxology, preaching will actively name the ways in which, to use Milbank's language, God's glory is "trapped" by a sinful world.[52] The fulfillment of the *telos* of humanity and the church in doxology can only be achieved in its fullness once the powers and principalities of the world that demand human allegiance and praise are overcome.

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[51] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trans., Colm Luibheid, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). On Marion's use of Denys, see Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and Distance: Five Studies*, ed. John D. Caputo, trans., Thomas A. Carlson, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 139-195.

[52] Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, 189.

If the phenomenology of the Spirit described above represents the possibility of the doxological participation in God's life within history on the basis of relationship-in-distance, then the challenge that sin poses to the practice of doxology may be described as the denial of relationship and an immanentizing view of reality that reduces it to the possession of the subject. Such a proposal is entirely coherent within the *communio* ecclesiology on which Hütter draws: "Under the condition of sin, the world consists of objects and individuals, that is, of substances whose being precedes their relationships and whose substance is not determined by their relationality."[53] This insight has been developed phenomenologically by both Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion. In both of their phenomenological analyses, the loss of relationship and the reduction to the subject are connected – the reduction to the subject constitutes a reduction to *solipsism*, or – in Levinas' terms – *totality*, which prevents true relationship and eliminates otherness.[54] But Marion develops this thematic utilizing a theological lens that is not part of Levinas' work, namely the concept of *idolatry*.

Marion describes idolatry in contrast to the phenomenology of the *icon* alluded to in chapter 2. While the icon points beyond itself and, in so doing, mediates a gaze, address, or presence from that beyond, the idol is constituted by the gaze of the subject. "The idol thus acts as a mirror, not a portrait: a mirror that reflects the gaze's image, or more exactly, the image of its aim and of the scope of that aim."[55] The idol is the construct of the subject's gaze, a stopping point for the gaze. The idol "allows the divine

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[53] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 154.
[54] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans., Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
[55] Marion, *God without Being*, 12.

to occur only in man's measure" and, as such, is "a certain low-water mark of the divine."[56]

While Levinas retains a narrative priority for the ego over relationality such that relationality is something which is *added to* the subject, Marion situates relationality at the very origin of subjectivity.[57] He describes a phenomenology of "the gifted" in which subjectivity is constituted through relationship. "…[T]he call gives *me* to and as *myself*, in short, individualizes me… The result of this is the birth of the gifted, a subjectivity or subjectness entirely in conformity with giveness – one that is entirely received from what it receives, given by the given, given to the given."[58] While Marion develops the phenomenology of the icon and the subjectivity of the gifted in separate works, one can find the common threads that link the two themes. Iconicity is not a rare phenomenon, but is in fact the standard mode of phenomenality; idolatry is a deficient phenomenon. As such, subjectivity is consistently constituted through the transcendence mediated through iconic phenomena.

It is at the concept of the idol that Marion's phenomenology and the postliberal emphasis on the powers and principalities as the forces that oppose the Kingdom of God intersect. One of the characteristics of the powers in their fallen state is that they have set themselves up as idols.[59] The powers demand human loyalty and worship that rightly belongs to God. They therefore represent a phenomenological collapse of the world into itself, a loss of distance and otherness that is the transcendence of God. With the loss of that transcendent element (what proponents of Radical Orthodoxy such as James K. A.

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[56] Ibid., 15, 14.
[57] For my analysis of this critical difference, see Tracy, "The Other and (Post-)Subjectivity in Homiletics."
[58] Marion, *Being Given*, 270-271.
[59] Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 24.

Smith refer to as the metaphysical "leveling" of the world[60]), the powers are free to perpetuate the myth of individual isolation and division that originally constitutes them through the narrative of the non-relational ego. The idolatrous powers must therefore be recognized as such – as the loss of relationality with that which is other than the world – in order for their power to be dismantled and human praise freed to be oriented properly toward God.

Christine Smith has made great contributions to the work of theological judgment in this area. In *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil*, she evaluates the methods through which preaching can confront several cultural "-isms" that perpetuate injustice: handicappism, ageism, heterosexism, sexism, white racism, and classism. Preaching as Smith describes it takes the form of weeping for human suffering in a world filled with violence and injustice, confession of the reality of sin and human culpability in suffering, and resistance against radical evil through both speech and action. In its movement of theological judgment, preaching as I am describing it can take up Smith's call to confront systematic injustices. When such injustices constrain human flourishing so that it is not possible for persons to fulfill the *telos* for which they were created, a tragedy is occurring that demands more than an intellectual response. But this moment of weeping would be reduced to mere fatalism without the moment of confession, in which the alternative praxis of doxology is held up to the reality of human sinfulness and the choice for evil is named. Confession thus involves a recognition that things *might be otherwise*. Finally, preaching enables resistance through the announcement of a new space of doxological praxis in the church through its participation in the paschal mystery.

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[60] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 74-75.

To describe these realities, theological categories such as sin and doxology are necessary. As we have seen in Campbell's work, one of the critical components of the theology of the "powers and principalities" is the identification of these realities with idolatry and, hence, questions of worship and praise. It is this element that prevents a theology of social evils from slipping into a purely objective mode. Systemic/social/structural evil does not exist independently of human intention. There is still an element of human culpability that must be named, as Smith argues. As Marilyn McCord Adams argues, it is possible to account for both the individual and social dimensions of sin.[61] She proposes an understanding of sin which begins with personal intention and action; however, through social relationships, the negative effects of actions (whether intentional or not) are amplified and come to take on an *almost* independent existence.[62] The powers and principalities exist as idols that exercise dominion over humanity in a fallen world, but they are idols that humans themselves have constructed.

The work of distinguishing the challenges that confront the church is not always clear-cut. Oftentimes the identification of the powers and principalities will necessitate work of intense moral discernment. David Schlafer and Timothy Sedgwick argue that preaching can and should play an important role in the process of communal discernment that leads toward praxis.[63] They point to the aftermath of 9/11 including the lead-up to the American invasion of Afghanistan and Hurricane Katrina as examples of situations in which a crisis demanded some word from the pulpit, but the proper course of action is not

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[61] Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[62] Her argument in this regard bears a number of similarities to John Milbank's poetic account of sin and salvation. See Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, esp. 123-144.

[63] David J. Schlafer and Timothy F. Sedgwick, *Preaching What We Practice: Proclamation and Moral Discernment* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2007).

clear-cut. "The 9/11 crisis and Hurricane Katrina are graphic illustrations in the United States of many different moral situations wherein stakes are high, issues are conflicted, and pressures for resolution are intense."[64] Their approach to preaching as an act of "moral discernment" calls for the kind of hermeneutics that I am suggesting. They outline six characterisitics of preaching as moral discernment: 1.) a nonpartisan and non-polarizing analysis of the situation; 2.) theological exploration of how God is present in the situation and what God is calling people to do, a task which resonates with the theological hermeneutics outlined above; 3.) listening to Scripture and the patterns of moral discernment it depicts; 4.) interpretation of the current situation in light of relevant Christian practices such as prayer, hospitality, forgiveness, etc.; 5.) emphasis on corporate accountability and response; and 6.) an "integrated unfolding" of these through rhetoric guided by a "tension/*telos*" trajectory that understands the crisis in relationship to the promised Kingdom of God.[65] Schlafer and Sedgwick envision preaching having a long-term effect of communal formation through this kind of moral discernment, shaping congregations into responsible moral agents who act thoughtfully and transformatively in complex situations.

As a work of theological judgment, preaching engages in acts of theological hermeneutics to name situations as opportunities for doxological praxis. It does so first by naming history as the arena of doxology and filiation using a phenomenology of the Spirit. It then identifies the challenges that confront the church and seeks to understand how even these situations can become opportunities for the community to embody the

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[64] Ibid., 3.
[65] Ibid., 75.

Kingdom of God within history. This work of judgment is carried out in order to support

the presentative-communicative aspect which is the rhetorical act of preaching itself.

4. *The Presentative-Communicative Aspect: Preaching as Ad Hoc Catechesis*

The third dimension of theology described by Hütter is what he terms its

"presentative-communicative aspect." As we saw in chapter 2, it is at this point that

Hütter returns to Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic framework in order to describe the task of

theology in terms of "learning the faith."[66] This learning takes two forms: the first being

the initial acquisition of faith, and the second being the "perigrinational learning" that

accompanies the ongoing life of Christians.[67] Having reacquired the object of faith and

engaged in theological judgment, theology finally engages in communication of faith.

A. Ad Hoc Catechesis and the Turn to the Listener

But Hütter, as we have seen, is acutely aware of the widely varying contexts in

which this communication takes place, as well as the impact that this might have on the

catechetical activity. Not only does changing context affect the way in which faith is

presented (and learned) in terms of linguistic constraints, but changing contexts directly

affects communication in that catechesis is always directed precisely *toward* those

contexts with the goal of shaping faithful living within them. While Hütter is clear that

the *ultimate* horizon of theology, and hence of preaching, is God's economy of salvation,

he recognizes that theology must comport itself in a critical sense toward specific cultural

consciousnesses of truth, even while recognizing that those are not normative.[68] In this

sense, there is a strong connection between the *ad hoc* correlational approach and the

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[66] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 189.
[67] Ibid., 190-191.
[68] Ibid., 191.

"faith consciousness" that David Buttrick seeks to form through preaching. Buttrick describes the Christian faith consciousness as having a "double" quality, because it is shaped by the two realities of "being saved" and "being in the world."[69] These correlate to the two poles of the eschatological horizon and historical embodiment. One caveat that Hütter would no doubt raise in relationship to this claim is that the consciousness of "being saved" must in some way qualify the consciousness of "being in the world" in order to prevent a wholesale identification of the Gospel with the cultural context in which the church finds itself. In this sense of preaching to the consciousness of being saved in the world, catechesis is an *ad hoc* activity that does not simply communicate eternal or non-contextual truths, but situates the Christian life and Gospel within quite specific contexts and finds within them elements or attributes which might be taken up by theology and turned toward the purpose of doxology. The way in which catechesis occurs will vary significantly as theology "creatively considers" the political and social context in which it occurs in an external sense, but also the condition of the catechumens in their personal situations, including their own consciousness of truth.

When we view preaching in terms of *ad hoc* catechesis as described by Hütter, we find that it presents an important corrective to a distortion that may potentially occur within postliberal homiletics. In its more "Barthian" moments, preaching can very easily dismiss context as irrelevant for the proclamation of the *verbum externum* at best or, at worst, a corruption of that *verbum*. William Willimon expresses something of this tension, agreeing on the one hand with Tom Long that the "turn to the listener" in homiletics is "the most significant homiletical trend of the twentieth century"[70] and

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[69] Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 41.
[70] Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching*, 84.

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maintaining that he is not a "Barthian" because (among other things) he "[cares] more for [his] listeners than Barth seemed to care."[71] At the same time, Willimon is quite critical of "this preoccupation with the listener and with the listening abilities of the audience that contemporary homiletics has most concerned itself with when it has concerned itself with rhetoric."[72] As a result, Willimon makes a shift from discussion of "rhetoric" that would concern itself with such things to using the term "style." Preaching, like Barth's theology, will be passionate and evocative in style, not because of a concern with the listener, but because of "pressure from the subject [i.e., God and the Gospel]."[73] Campbell shares a similar explicit disdain for rhetorical concerns (as seen in chapter 1), a concern which is arguably attributable to the influence of Barth that he receives through Frei. If Hütter is correct, however, this may be an instance of discarding much that is important in the name of avoiding an undesirable extreme, namely the subordination of the gospel entirely to a cultural horizon. The very model of *ad hoc* correlation is based on providing a *media via* between a full-blown systematic correlational approach on the one hand and a thoroughly decontextualized *verbum externum* on the other.

If rhetoric is defined in terms of manipulating either the emotions or rationality of listeners in order to produce desired effects, then the concerns voiced by Willimon, Campbell, and others of a postliberal bent are certainly worthy of consideration and attention. There are some guarantees that rhetoric cannot make; to think that a desired response or even conscious effect can be guaranteed through the use of skilled language

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[71] Ibid., 3. See Thomas G. Long, "And How Shall They Hear? The Listener in Contemporary Preaching," in *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, ed. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 167-188.
[72] Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching*, 84.
[73] Ibid., 85.

without the use of manipulative techniques is to severely overstate the case for rhetoric.[74]

Hütter's approach, however, is grounded in the model of *ad hoc* apologetics, and comes closer to what postliberal homiletics describes as the work of "absorbing the world" into the Gospel – through rhetoric, "the truth consciousness of a given age is drawn poietically into and qualified by the *doctrina evangelii* itself."[75] But it is precisely *the world* that is thus transformed by the Gospel. The communicative aspect of preaching is therefore closely linked with the work of theological judgment, but functions as a specification of the task of theological hermeneutics described above. If theological hermeneutics is the work of naming the world as the arena in which our filiation is "performed" (both in the sense that it is given by God and received by human beings) in and through doxology, then the work of ad hoc catechesis is the "thick description" of that possibility in concrete terms.

As part of the "turn to the listener," homiletics has paid increasing attention to this work of thick description. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, for example, has presented a thorough analysis of the task of "exegeting congregations" as part of the homiletic endeavor.[76] Just as Hütter suggests, Tisdale takes the situation of listeners quite seriously. She recognizes three errors that are often perpetuated by preachers in this regard: 1.) they "prepare generic sermons for generic humanity" and avoid the real-life situations of the

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[74] This critique has been made against Buttrick's use of phenomenology and empirical research methods to ground his *Homiletic* in a particular rhetorical style that governs not only the overarching logic of the sermon, but also the precise construction of sentences. Buttrick at times seems to overstate the case for rhetoric of a certain type, while simultaneously denouncing alternatives as incapable of forming congregational consciousness. As Ronald J. Allen, Tom Long, and others have argued, Buttrick's approach tends to treat one form of "consciousness" as universally normative, then mold preaching entirely to the needs of that consciousness. See Ronald J. Allen, "The Turn to the Listener: A Selective Review of a Recent Trend in Preaching," *Encounter* 64, no. 2 (2003): 182. See also Long, *Witness*, 134.

[75] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 191.

[76] Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

congregation; 2.) they "paint overly simplistic pictures" of their listeners and attribute stereotypical characteristics onto them that are not true; and 3.) they "project onto congregations – unconsciously and unintentionally – their own issues and concerns."[77] Preaching that falls prey to the first two of these errors, in particular, will have difficulty in helping a congregation see how it can perform its eschatological *telos* in the world, because it will fail to "touch down" into *actual* history.

Tisdale suggests that preachers become "local theologians" and that preaching aim toward being a fully contextual theology. She utilizes a "symbolic approach" to exegeting the congregation based on the ethnographic work of Clifford Geertz.[78] Pastors are encouraged to analyze seven particular repositories of congregational symbols: stories (and intentional interviews), archival material, demographics, architecture and visual arts, rituals, events and activities, and people who are respected figures.[79] These repositories provide invaluable material to help the pastor understand the worldview and ethos of a congregation. With these factors in mind, the entire process of sermon preparation is contextualized and shaped to fit the needs of a particular congregation. Preaching becomes "local theology," but Tisdale is quite careful in her use of that term, and avoids the pitfall that Hütter sees in local theologies that simply acculturate the gospel into a particular set of local categories. This interpretative work is directed toward the proclamation of the faith "…in relevant and *transformative* ways for particular communities of faith."[80] The work of preaching remains situated within the ultimate

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[77] Ibid., 23.

[78] Tisdale's approach is just one of several for interpreting congregations based on interpreting the congregation's deeply-held symbols. Another important contribution in this area is James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[79] Tisdale, 65-76.

[80] Ibid., xi.

horizon of God's economy of salvation. Preaching does not simply repeat the cultural language, but works to transform it by incorporating it into the story of God's redemptive action and its eschatological *telos*. To that end, the kind of "thick description" that Tubbs Tisdale suggests is necessary and thoroughly situated within a postliberal framework.[81]

B. Intratextuality and Homiletical Starting Points

As *ad hoc* catechesis and formation grounded in pneumatology, preaching retains a kind of "intratextual" approach grounded in typological logic, but now with a greater recognition of the complex relationship between "text" and "experience." This approach begins to address concerns raised by McClure and Lose about the radical dichotomy between text and experience that Campbell articulates. Ultimately, the shape of intratextuality is maintained by the church's eschatological *telos*. The purpose of the church is to be a space in and through which all creation can be gathered into the Kingdom of God by offering itself as a sacrifice of praise. In this sense, it is still possible to maintain that the textualization of experience is a critical element of preaching. However, the agency of the Holy Spirit as I have described it calls into question the simple one-directional movement that Lose critiques in Campbell's work. If the work of the Holy Spirit is to "translate" the relationship between the Father and the Son into the lives of Christians or, as Chauvet describes it, to move the word from the realm of conceptuality into the space of the body, then there is also a moment of *exitus* that is a necessary element of the preaching task *prior to* the *reditus* of the eschatological ingathering of creation. This corresponds to the Eucharistic-eschatological conditioning

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[81] See, e.g, Frei, Hunsinger, and Placher, *Types of Christian Theology*, 12-13.

of the missionary-historical dimension of the church in Zizioulas' pneumatology – both remain, but the eschatological dimension has teleological priority.

This is a more "open-ended" type of intratextuality that is qualified by an element of risk. Paul DeHart argues that "Church witness… always has the form of *experiment*."[82] He references Rowan Williams, who describes one of the tasks of theology as "experimenting with the rhetoric of its uncommitted environment."[83] This, DeHart argues, is the nature of *ad hoc* correlation: bringing Christian witness and contemporary context together in experimental ways so that the internally developed language of the church's witness can be tested and enriched.[84]

Perhaps a better metaphor for this activity – preferable to the language of "translation" – is "assumption." The metaphor of translation implies that the end result is the subordination of the Gospel to culture; but the language of "assumption" is derived from Christology and has transformative connotations: the second person of the Trinity assumes humanity in order to redeem it. The logic of assumption, however, is not only Christological; it also has pneumatological connotations. The Incarnation, the assumption of humanity by the Word for the former's redemption and transformation, is the work of the Spirit, as I argued above.

The eschatological conditioning of mission prevents this activity from slipping into the opposite extreme of "liberal theology" criticized by Frei, Lindbeck, and Campbell. When systematic theology is articulated in terms of the assumption of contexts for their transformation oriented toward the eschatological *telos* of the church

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[82] DeHart, 244.
[83] Ibid., 245. See also Williams, *On Christian Theology*, xiv.
[84] DeHart's preferred metaphor of theology as "trial" has resonances with Hütter's description of the discursive aspect of theology in which interpretations are developed and tested within various contexts. See above.

(what Anderson terms the "eschatological preference"), a theological control is maintained that keeps the correlation *ad hoc* and does not allow the contemporary context to become the ultimate horizon of practical theology. If the eschatological iconicity of the church is, in part, defined by its constant reference to the eschatological reality which even it does not yet fully instantiate, then the eschaton provides a criterion that maintains a mode of intratextuality without the claim that "[t]he ultimate cultural determinants of Christian identity are *totally* provided in advance."[85] The eschaton is available in fragmentary, yet nevertheless real, form through the iconic reference of the church. The "experiment" stands under an eschatological vision that qualifies the provisional, *ad hoc* experimentation of preaching while at the same time situating it within the sanctifying economy of salvation. The text may yet absorb the world, but that absorption is only partial at this time; and its completion is postponed until the final consummation of the Kingdom.

Utilizing this logic, we may say that postliberal preaching cannot be content with a straightforward one-directional process of textualizing experience. No unidirectional model can do justice to the more complex *exitus/reditus* movement of the Spirit. Instead, we will turn below to McClure's "four codes" model for guidance on ways in which the church's texts that mediate the economy of salvation and the contemporary context can be brought together within an eschatologically-oriented horizon.[86]

The more complex interplay between text and context afforded by situating preaching as practical theology creates a possibility that is an anathema to postliberal homiletics along the lines devised by Campbell, namely *postliberal topical preaching*. In

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[85] DeHart, 252. (Emphasis added.)

[86] John S. McClure, *The Four Codes of Preaching: Rhetorical Strategies* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Campbell's homiletic, as we have seen, beginning with contextual concerns is a violation of the most fundamental aim of postliberal preaching, the narrative rendering of the character of Jesus Christ. While it is true that Lindbeck's original model of intratextual theology also rules out the experiential starting point, the primary impetus for a biblical text as the starting point for preaching in Campbell's homiletic actually derives from his use of Frei's narrative Christology. In the model that I have developed, two important changes have occurred. First, Frei's Christological project has been separated from the cultural-linguistic model developed by Lindbeck. As a result, homiletics has also shifted from the task of *narration* to the task of *interpretation*, in line with the discursive aspect of theology. Second, the pneumatological supplement to Lindbeck's work alters the shape of intratextual theology, shifting it onto an eschatological foundation and complicating the relationship between text and context. In this model, it is not the textual starting point that defines this homiletic as postliberal, but the eschatological *telos* of the church and the pathic relationship of theology to doctrine and the core practices which establish the economy of salvation as the ultimate horizon of theological reflection.

The impetus for theological reflection can therefore come from two different directions. On the one hand, the faithfulness of the church's practices may be called into question by the foundational texts and the discursive tradition of theology. In this case, the church experiences a call to *reform* its practices in accordance with the eschatological vision. On the other hand, the adequacy of the church's practices may be questioned by the context. In this situation, a lack of "fit" between praxis and context calls for the church to discern new ways in which it can fulfill its *telos*. Again, the key postliberal

quality of this reflection lies in its horizon; the pivotal question is not simply, "What shall we do?" but "How can we fulfill our doxological *telos* in this situation?"

C. The Rhetoric of Formation in Four Codes

This chapter has been exploring the way in which each of the three aspects of theology – the discursive, perceptive, and communicative – relates to the task of preaching and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Spirit was located as the agency in preaching within the discursive development of tradition and as the object of preaching within the perceptive aspect. In the communicative aspect, the Spirit's work provides a model for the rhetorical form of the sermon. If the work of preaching is, as I have maintained throughout this project, *cooperative* with the work of the Spirit (in the way that Hütter uses that term), then the logic of preaching should, insofar as it is possible, *perform* the work of the Spirit rhetorically. The complete development of such a rhetoric constitutes the "next step" in this project, but would require a full treatment at least equal again to what has been presented thus far. At this point, I wish to only provide some indications of the shape such a rhetoric *might* take. In order to do this, I will employ John McClure's analysis of the "four codes" of preaching as a framework.

McClure provides a helpful tool for analyzing the rhetoric of sermons based on the way in which they use four primary "codes" or fields of language. A *code*, in McClure's use, is "a system of signs, words, or ciphers that becomes a way of organizing a particular level or aspect of human interaction."[87] McClure's framework provides a useful tool for categorizing the way in which sermons perform this organizing work in relationship to four such systems: Scripture, semantics, theosymbolism, and culture.

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[87] Ibid., 8. McClure's definition is based on that of Roland Barthes, whose influence McClure readily recognizes on his own work.

Within each of these four codes, McClure identifies several major types of organization through which the sermon works to "sponsor" a particular "intertext," which is a way of "textualizing" particular concerns related to reality as a whole.[88] Thus, the Scriptural code, when organized in particular ways, sponsors a particular form of the intertext of anamnesis; the semantic code sponsors an intertext of truth, the theosymbolic code an intertext of theological worldview, and the cultural code an intertext of experience.

McClure begins with the Scriptural code, which is "any direct or indirect verbal allusion to the words of the biblical text or to the events to which the biblical text testifies."[89] This code sponsors an intertext of anamnesis, which is the remembering that moves the past into the present. As we have seen, part of the work of the Spirit is the recollection of God's promises in Jesus Christ. Through the Spirit, the *promissiones* are re-presented through the anamnesis of the event of Christ's passion. Of the patterns that McClure describes for sponsoring the intertext of anamnesis – translation, transition (traduction), transposition, and transformational – the transformational approach comes closest to the pattern of *assumption* described above. Through transformational encoding, "…Scripture is encoded in preaching as 'an active agent transforming the context into which it speaks.'"[90] It does this through the promotion of a *kerygmatic* intertext. This approach therefore diverges from the postliberal homiletic of Campbell, which McClure situates within a "transpositional" model in which Scripture provides the rhetorical model for preaching.[91] Through the doctrinal specification of Scripture, the

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[88] Ibid., 10.
[89] Ibid., 15-16.
[90] Ibid., 36. McClure is here quoting Gabriel Fackre.
[91] Ibid., 29. McClure specifically points to the similarities between the transpositional style and Lindbeck's intratextuality. Ibid., 34 n27. Along the lines that I argued in chapter 1, McClure voices concerns that the transpositional approach "…carries the danger of dissociating the church's recalling from the objects of its recall…" Ibid., 33.

kerygma helps to mediate the *promissiones* of God to speak to the church today. McClure does raise concerns about the possibility that the transformational style, with its emphasis on proclamation, may tend to address any concern for history, specifically the historicity of the foundational events of faith. But one of the advantages of the the eschatological pneumatological developed over the course of this project is the way in which the historical embodiment of the eschaton in the church is maintained, thereby providing a kind of retroactive grounding that keeps the Christ event from slipping into pure textuality. Part of McClure's concern is also attributable to the fact that he considers each of the codes in relative isolation from one another, without considering, for instance, how the cultural or semantic code may significantly modify the intertext of the Scriptural code.

The second code that McClure describes is the *semantic* code, which is "the meaning of the sermon or, more profoundly, it is the meaning of the gospel as it is encoded in the language of the sermon."[92] McClure describes two overarching styles of semantic coding, the denotative and connotative, which each have a set of sub-styles that create a kind of continuum along which the strength of the various truth-claims can be organized. On the far denotative end of the spectrum, "defensive" preaching declares "the absolute universality and objectivity" of the preached meaning.[93] In contrast, "assertive" approaches to preaching remain denotative and committed to particular meanings, but makes more reserved claims for them, putting them forward as important paradigms for a given community that are justified by a "canon" or "paradigm tradition,"

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[92] Ibid., 53.
[93] Ibid., 81.

but not necessarily universal in scope.[94] This continuum proceeds into the connotative range, through conversational and artistic approaches to homiletic truth. "Conversational" approaches situate truth within an ongoing dialogue of meaning in which reciprocity is vital, while the "artistic" approach eschews the conceptuality that the conversationalist might employ to focus on truth disclosed through metaphor and poetics. The defensive and artistic approaches therefore represent something of the "extreme ends" of homiletic approaches to truth.

Because of its discursive character, a pneumatologically-defined homiletic incorporates elements of both the conversational and assertive styles, though the emphasis falls more on the connotative element of conversation. The assertive character of preaching's *discurrere* is found in its development of paradigmatic traditions or theological/rhetorical "schools." These traditions function as a kind of "conversational memory" that constitutes the participants in the *discurrere*. As noted above, it is not so much the case that these traditions function as hardened paradigms as that they situate given participants at any given moment within the dialogic of the argumentative/discursive aspect of preaching as theology.

The development of paradigmatic traditions within discursive theology, however, is a secondary point; the primary motif that Hütter uses to describe theology within the pneumatology grounded *ecclesia* is conversational or dialogical. Hütter raises concerns similar to those voiced by McClure that there is a risk of traditions becoming "fossilized" so that there would be no further theological development.[95] Both McClure and Hütter propose a similar solution to this problem, namely the *interpretative* or *predicative* status

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[94] Ibid., 74-75.
[95] Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 184.

of theology. The defining feature of theology in Hütter's articulation is its *pathos* in relationship to the core doctrines and practices. This parallels the features that McClure attributes to the conversational model of semantic encoding in preaching, namely the predicative status of hypothetical forms. In conversational encoding, the dialogic is continued *about* various topics by continually re-introducing them through the course of preaching. Such continual revisiting of topics, however, risks them "solidifying and becoming cliché in the community's expressive life."[96] McClure suggests that a practical safeguard against such reification:

> …be sure that hypothetical forms of predication are never sued as assumptions or as subjects. Keep hypotheses… in the predicate role. As you work to ensure the repetition of an emergent truth in the community, be sure that it recurs as part of the back and forth of conversation about other topics and never achieves topical status itself.[97]

The hermeneutical work of the Spirit in preaching, which is the pathos of the theological *discurrere* in relationship to Scripture/doctrine (primarily) and the core practices, is maintained by its interpretative status. Preaching is *about* things other than itself; it receives its object (the Gospel) through that which is other than the paradigmatic traditions of preaching itself.

Within this pathos, theological paradigms (the equivalent of "theological doctrine" in Hütter's writing) take on an intermediary status. They are more robust than McClure's notion of a conversational hypothesis. Theological doctrine has the benefit of a weight of conversational memory and testing. It is perhaps closer to what would be called a "theory" in the sense in which that term is used in the physical sciences. Unlike a hypothesis, which is *untested*, a theory in science has the benefit of experiential

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[96] McClure, *Four Codes*, 71.
[97] Ibid., 72.

confirmation in at least a small number of cases. Similarly, theological paradigms achieve paradigmatic status precisely by their "explanatory power" (to borrow a phrase that Lindbeck attaches to doctrine.)[98]

The third code that McClure utilizes is the "theosymbolic" code. This code has similarities to the semantic code and finds its expression therein, but remains distinct from it. The theosymbolic code is a structure of "pregiven symbols" that are "nonnegotiable, except in their interpretation."[99] Because the theosymbolic code is ultimately derived from Scripture, it takes on a narrative organization or shape, even though its components are not necessarily narrative themselves. While McClure organizes this narrative structure according to A. J. Gremais' structuralist model utilizing "*actants,*" or "basic spheres of narrative action," there are any number of possible interpretative or organizational schemes that might be used in relationship to the theosymbolic code.[100] The theosymbolic code provides the overarching framework that sponsors an intertext of theological worldview.

The closest analogue to the theosymbolic code in this homiletic framework is church (as distinguished from theological) doctrine. Hütter's description of the movement from doctrine to theology parallels the movement that McClure describes from theosymbolism to semantic encoding. The preacher uses the theosymbolic code as a "community narrator," and the code provides the regulatory structure for the particular

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[98] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 131.

[99] McClure, *Four Codes*, 94-95.

[100] Ibid., 96ff. McClure's organization, for instance, locates Jesus within the actant role of "the subject" and the Holy Spirit as "the helper." However, as we have seen, this does not do justice to the mutually conditioning Christology and pneumatology that has been foundational to this study. From an eschatological or pneumatological perspective, for instance, it is the Holy Spirit that becomes the subject and Jesus' atoning work becomes the means that helps that subject achieve its narrative task. While this perspective change affects only the location of the symbols within the narrative structure, it is conceivable that an entirely different structural arrangement might be more useful to the more complex relationships we have described.

theological interpretation of the preacher.[101] The various actants in the theosymbolic code function as nodes that connect the entire originary narrative (which goes beyond the story of Jesus *per se* to include creation, the story of Israel, etc.) to the sermon by focusing on a particular dimension of the whole. While a preacher may take sermonic focus from a single periscope, the theosymbolic code or doctrine situates that particular textual moment within the entire economy of salvation, even as that text provides the basis – along with the rest of the canon – for doctrine. Theosymbolic coding therefore functions within preaching as Hütter describes doctrine functioning in relationship to academic theology, encapsulating the economy and making it available to faith as a cognizable object for appropriation and reflection.

Because church doctrine is not a universally agreed upon object, it varies somewhat across ecclesial traditions and denominations. While it is true that the main actants that McClure discerns (God, humanity, redemption/eschaton, Christ, Spirit, and sin) are relatively universal in Christian doctrine, the weight that is given to each and their structural arrangement will vary according to both theological tradition and individual interpretation. A preacher operating within the Baptist doctrinal framework will (at least potentially) develop a different theosymbolic structure than a Methodist, who might likewise diverge from a Roman Catholic or Presbyterian.

Nevertheless, based on the premise that a pneumatologically grounded ecclesiology will strive to make the Kingdom of God, one can trace the outlines for a plausible style of theosymbolic coding. McClure describes five styles of encoding the theosymbolic code: low and high negative, low and high positive, and reversal. These correspond to tensive, oppositional, equilibrational, permutational, and iconoclastic

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[101] Ibid., 96.

worldviews, respectively. These styles exist along a continuum describing the degree to which narrative tensions are resolved within the theosymbolic framework. The tensive (low negative) style, which is based on the lack of any form of resolution within the narrative, does not do justice to the way in which the Kingdom of God is made truly present in the world through the work of the Spirit. At the other extreme, the permutational (high positive) view represents the excess of which Zizioulas is sometimes accused – namely, the lack of any notion of lingering sin within a fully realized eschatology.

The incredibly complex relationship between history and the Kingdom of God outlined thus far suggests that no single style of encoding may be sufficient. Through the work of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God is made truly present in history, but in a limited fashion; the experience of the Kingdom is a mixture of presence and absence. Therefore, a combination of high negative (oppositional) and low positive (equilibrational) styles is the most fitting for an eschatological pneumatology in preaching, with elements of the reversal (parabolic) style. The oppositional style takes seriously the partial mediation that is implicit in the fact that the Kingdom is not yet 'complete' because the doxological embodiment of the Kingdom is always temporary or partial, while the equilibrational style emphasizes the reality of the presence of the Kingdom and the possibilities that are contained therein. As Rowan Williams describes this relationship,

> …the Spirit makes real in us what is always and already real in Jesus… The difference made by Jesus Christ is a difference to the whole of creation, but that difference doesn't simply sweep over the world removing all distinctions, all particularities, the realities of relation, negotiation, conversation. It is real in and only in the particular gifts of the Spirit and the community.[102]

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[102] Williams, *A Margin of Silence*, 38-39.

As Hütter argues, 'hope' or "anticipation" is not an adequate category for the Kingdom's relationship to history. An element of reversal is maintained by the fact that the Kingdom remains other-than-history even as it takes concrete form within history. The Kingdom is not identical with history, but enters into history through the agency of the Spirit, destabilizing and transforming reified historical traditions.

For our purposes, the particular style that the theosymbolic encoding may adopt is less important than its *role* in preaching. Doctrine provides the mediation for the *promissiones* of God that are narratively embodied in Scripture, making them available for appropriation in faith through theological reflection. The theosymbolic code functions as the subject of the predication that occurs through semantic encoding. It is not an isolatable element of preaching, but rather is always presented or communicated in relationship to other semantic or linguistic fields. As the subject of the conversation that is the semantic code and theological *discurrere*, the theosymbolic coding of doctrine, along with the Scripture from which it is ultimately derived and to which it stands in service, establishes the *pathos* of preaching; it is the object which is given or the "about which" of theological/homiletical dialogic. This subject status, however, does not constitute an unmediated identity. Instead, the *promissiones* that doctrine mediates are always directed toward an historical context and situation; the Gospel is *pro nobis* in our historical concreteness and specific contexts. The theosymbolic code is inseparable from the semantic code that communicates its significance in various contexts even as it anchors the semantic code in the reality of the divine promises that it mediates.

The final code which we will examine in this study is perhaps the most controversial one in regard to this project, namely the *cultural* code. The cultural code

consists of "every reference within a sermon to the broader culture in which the congregation lives its daily life."[103] The use of this code is particularly important to the postliberal homiletic, precisely because the postliberal homiletic understands the church as a cultural-linguistic entity. Hütter's work does not dissolve that central insight, but rather gives it additional pneumatological force. The cultural code, therefore, becomes a defining issue for postliberal preaching because the way in which this code is used will affect the church's status as a unique public or cultural-linguistic entity by regulating its interactions with other cultural-linguistic fields. McClure describes four styles within this code: identification, in which the culture is an extension of the Gospel; dialectic, in which there is a *partial* identification of culture and gospel, either through synthesis or through conversion; dualism, which stresses the difference between the gospel and culture; and sectarianism which sees culture not only as different from but as *opposed to* the gospel. The logic of the Spirit's work does not fit perfectly with any of these styles, but comes closest to the dialectical conversionist approach with a secondary sectarian moment. In an *ad hoc* correlational model influenced by a rich pneumatology, one can find similarities with Paul DeHart's analysis of Neibuhr's influence on Frei:

> So rather than choose between a theology exclusively ruled either by generalized meanings [e.g., McClure's identification style] or by particularized (Christological) ones [e.g., the dualist style], a thinker like Niebuhr combines them in a theology witnessing to the particular meanings of the Christ by means of the general meanings which are available.[104]

What this statement does not draw out, however, is the fundamental distinction that DeHart draws between the salvific work of the Spirit and the particular semantic

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[103] McClure, *Four Codes*, 136.
[104] DeHart, 266.

rendering of that activity within the church.[105] The eschatological/doxological *telos* of the church, however, forces us to qualify that distinction. If the eschatological *telos* of the church *is* a particular "semantic" activity (doxology), then we must say that while the Spirit is certainly active outside that semantic space, it is active in order to bring what is outside of it into the ecclesial/liturgical space in which that semantic activity takes place. This follows the language of "assumption" utilized above. While preaching may use "general meanings" to point to the particular meaning of Christ, to do so is to change the *telos* of the terms involved. There is, then, a certain Barthian element retained, albeit within a pneumatological (rather than christological) perspective.[106]

Also in line with this apocalyptic flavor of eschatological theology, we must also acknowledge that there is a element of lingering sectarianism in this approach, as well. Postliberal theologians and homileticians have often been accused of sectarianism because they define the church as a particular cultural-linguistic space that is distinct from other such spaces. Our analysis of Hütter's pneumatological ecclesiology does not undo that insight but moderates possible isolationist tendencies. The Spirit works to bring creation into the doxological space of the Kingdom, whose presence is mediated within history by the church. There may, however, be elements of the surrounding culture that simply *cannot* be converted toward this eschatological *telos*. In that case, part of the Christian embodiment of God's Kingdom in history will certainly be the development of alternatives such as *alternative* economies or communities that practice alternative forms of justice from the broader culture.[107] This sectarian effort, however, is

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[105] Ibid., 243.
[106] Ibid., 255.
[107] One might point, in this regard, to "base communities" in Latin American liberation theology, which become a sectarian witness even in the midst of oppressive regimes.

secondary to the converting work that is at the heart of the Spirit's reconciliation of all things within Christ and the Kingdom. That the church is called to be in, but not of, the world is not a license for a sectarian abandonment of the larger socio-political context.

As a work of *ad hoc* catechesis, preaching will take the situation of listeners seriously, yet retain a sense of the ultimate horizon of Christian praxis in the economy of salvation and its eschatological *telos*. Preaching will follow the logic of the Holy Spirit in choosing the shape of its general rhetoric: entering into particular contexts in order to redeem them by making them sites for doxological praxis. Culture must be taken seriously, because culture provides the tools which may be used for this doxological praxis, even though those concepts and material goods may be fundamentally transformed by the change of their *telos*.

CONCLUSION

To take the work of the Holy Spirit seriously in preaching means far more than treating it as an afterthought to the work of Christ. Such a reorientation requires, in the first place, the development of a more robust pneumatology in which a greater parity is established between the Holy Spirit and the Son/Word. The postliberal homiletic articulated by Campbell but also endorsed in various ways by Brueggemann, Willimon, Pasquarello, et al, proceeds from the logic that the Spirit's task is subordinated to the work of Christ. The church is the community that follows the pattern of Jesus which is given in the biblical narratives and applied as a schema that organizes the church's life and ministry. The Spirit is the energizing force that empowers the community to follow that pattern. Preaching in this model is the representation of Jesus' narrative character so that the congregation can "re-script" its identity and live according to the new organizational scheme. In contrast to this (admittedly early) postliberal model, I have suggested that the work of the Spirit is best understood in terms of its eschatological agency. The Spirit is the one who brings the eschaton into history. Christology and pneumatology are mutually conditioning, with the Spirit defining the *telos* of salvation and Christ's atoning work constituting the space within which that *telos* is achieved or embodied.

This pneumatological shift means a shift in preaching's focus from a narrative christocentrism to an eschatology that gives the Christ event universal and eternal significance. Preaching is an act of formation, but that formation is now understood not as learning a new script that is divorced from history, but as the shaping of a community

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that will iconically mediate the Kingdom of God within history itself. A concomitant shift takes place in the understanding of doctrine and Christian practices, which are described by analogy to the hypostatic union in Christ. In doctrine and practices, the Spirit takes on concrete form and mediated within the life of the chruch. Doctrine is the means by which the Spirit represents the eschatological promises of God in Christ, while practices, are now understood according to a logic derived from the sacraments as doxological exchanges of glory.

Within this pneumatologically grounded ecclesiology, preaching functions as the paradigmatic instance of theology, regulating the exchange between doctrine and practices. Preaching shapes communities for eschatological/doxological practices by unfolding the promises of God in the economy of salvation discursively, performing acts of theological hermeneutics and judgment, and engaging in *ad hoc* catechesis that relates doctrine and practices rhetorically within history. The Spirit is an additional agency at work in preaching through its appropriation of the *discurrere* as the unfolding of the economy of salvation. It is also the object of preaching as theological judgment, through which preaching engages in theological hermeneutics. Finally, the Spirit's work provides the model for preaching's rhetoric as preaching gathers the world into the doxology of the Kingdom.

Preaching in the Spirit does not mean replacing an extreme christocentrism with an extreme pneumatocentrism; rather, it means that preaching takes seriously both Word and Spirit, as well as the complex relationship between the Christ who becomes history and the Kingdom that remains history's "other." Ultimately, preaching in the Spirit means that the church takes Scripture *and* history seriously. Scripture provides the

horizon for Christian praxis by mediating God's eschatological promises: communion

with God is made possible through Jesus Christ. But it is *history* that is invited to enter

into that communion through doxology and praise. These two elements – horizon and

history – meet in the church through its preaching, which brings together doctrine and

practices to make the kingdom present, even in the midst of a fallen world, and to invite

all creation to fulfill its original purpose and eschatological *telos* of glorifying God.

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