

Epiphany

God's Anointed

The Work of Christ as a Threefold Office

Marianne Meye Thompson contrasts the “creedal trajectory” of Father-Son language in the Nicene-Chalcedonian tradition of Christology with the “eschatological trajectory” of the language in its first-century context.³⁷ The latter trajectory has been revisited and increasingly favored among historians of the life of Jesus ever since the “thoroughgoing eschatology” of Albert Schweitzer’s *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*. While we have seen that Jesus’ baptism still poses questions and offers answers to the Chalcedonian creedal tradition, it is at home in the eschatological historical tradition.

While Jesus’ New Testament interpreters (especially Paul and John) do provide the necessary support for the creedal claims of Trinitarian, two-natures Christology, their interests lie elsewhere. They are not opposing Arianism, Nestorianism, or Eutychianism; they are announcing the arrival of the age “when God’s promises to all the people of God are ultimately fulfilled and they enjoy that relationship of trust and love signified by calling on God as Father.”³⁸ They are portraying Jesus as the eschatological redeemer and Lord of Israel.

Thompson is naming a distinction something like that between the premodern two-natures model of Christology and the modern historical model that followed it.³⁹ It corresponds, still more roughly, between the modern distinction between study of the *person* of Christ

³⁷ Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Promise of the Father: Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 155ff.

³⁸ Thompson, 156.

³⁹ Fiorenza and Galvin, 1.251-324. McIntosh delineates between the two-nature, psychological, and revelation models (83-174).

(“Christology”) and study of the *work* of Christ (“soteriology”). While these two discourses inform and depend upon each other, they are pursuing different issues. The former inquires of the *who* of salvation, the latter the *what*. As long as they are compatible and mutually informing (as are the “Christological” Johannine prologue and the “soteriological” narrative it introduces), their differences are not a problem.⁴⁰

Jesus’ baptism is a natural point of transition between the ontological focus of Christology and the economic focus of soteriology. This is not to claim that the Word’s first thirty or so years of earthly life were not salvific! They are an everyday life that well pleases the Father (Luke 3:22, Sunday after Epiphany, Year C). They sanctify all who follow the way of Jesus Christ by heeding God’s call to everyday life. Yet Jesus’ baptism is the moment “when he began his ministry” (Luke 3:23).

Since the patristic age, and blossoming especially in the Reformed tradition, a popular way to understand that ministry characterizes it as a “Threefold Office” (*munus triplex*) of prophet, priest, and king. There is no need to repeat the history of this tradition.⁴¹ The task here is to locate its elements fruitfully in the Church’s annual celebration of Jesus’ messianic career.

Like everything else in Christian teaching, this doctrine has its detractors. Wolfhart Pannenberg criticizes the notion of a threefold office because it does not fit well in a

⁴⁰ In some theology, Christology logically follows soteriology: “What Christ did not assume, he cannot redeem” (Gregory of Nazianzus). In others, soteriology follows Christology: “Why God became a human being” (Anselm of Canterbury). Beginning logically with one category always runs the risk of reducing it to what is commonly appreciated about the other: The patristic rule of Christology, “What the mediatorial work requires, the mediatorial person supplies,” is legitimate and helpful as long as an overall Christological project does not finally make one logically prior to the other. Jesus is no different than any biographical object: We appreciate his character through his story, and his story in view of his character. Christology at its best travels in a hermeneutical circle that moves between Christology and soteriology (just as theology at its best travels through all the *loci* circularly rather than linearly). Postmodernism has rediscovered the benefits (indeed, the indispensability) of this quality of premodern thought: See W.V. Quine and J.S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief* (New York: Random House, 1970).

⁴¹ See Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 97ff, a study on which this chapter draws deeply.

chronological framework.⁴² Is the Threefold Office really compatible with the storied shape of Jesus' life and ministry? Pannenberg prefers to speak of the New Testament witness as a "two-state" Christology of humiliation (this project substitutes the word "humility" as truer to the reflexive *etapeinôsen heauton* of Phil. 2:5-11) and exaltation. This bisection of Jesus' life – one that the structure of the Christian year actually favors – seems to make the Threefold Office incompatible with a Christology through the liturgical year. Does Jesus' work as a prophet only belong to his practice of humility? His kingdom surely belongs to his heavenly exaltation – "it will have no end," says the Nicene Creed, following Luke 1:33 – but it also belongs to his birth (Matt. 2:2, Epiphany, Years A, B, and C).

The Reformed tradition, already aware of the difference in the two approaches, confesses the Threefold Office as operative in both the "estate of humiliation" and the "estate of exaltation" (Westminster Catechism).⁴³ We could thus claim that Christ's threefold office simply transcends chronological events, being manifested throughout Jesus' ministry, and attend to it throughout the year.

We could also adapt each approach to the other. Jonathan Wilson tells the "story of Messiah" by narrating – not merely positing as concepts – the prophetic, priestly, and royal "roles of Christ."⁴⁴ Wainwright centers each office in a particular event in Jesus ministry, while never restricting it to that event. Therefore Jesus' narrative enhances our appreciation of the Threefold Office. "He is Prophet, Priest, and King throughout his history; and it is as Prophet, Priest, and King that we worshipfully receive him and his ministry at every service. Nonetheless,

⁴² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 212-215. See Wainwright 105.

⁴³ Wainwright, 105n.16.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Wilson, *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 41-58, here 41.

a certain concentration of attention may shift throughout the Christian year.”⁴⁵ Wainwright centers the prophetic office on the Christmas cycle, the priestly office on the Lenten and paschal season, and the royal office in Eastertime through Ascension.⁴⁶

The way taken here will match Wilson’s and Wainwright’s proposals at some points, and differ at others. Besides choosing a different center for the prophetic office from Wainwright’s, its greatest point of departure from both is its adoption of *one* liturgical moment as the ground of *all three* offices. That event is the remembrance of Jesus’ baptism. This is the moment at which, in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, Jesus is “anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher ... and our only High Priest ... and our eternal King....”⁴⁷ Or, in the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet, and king.”⁴⁸ Aslanoff’s Orthodox catechism too associates Jesus’ baptismal unction with his role as the anointed David’s successor.⁴⁹ To put it more starkly, this is the moment at which Jesus *becomes* Christ – the anointed one – and begins the work for which he is anointed. On Jesus’ reemergence from the water of the Jordan, the Spirit descends in bodily form (Luke) and remains (Matthew, John) on Jesus. Though Jesus has been divine and “Christ-elect” from eternity, and *theandropos* (“God-human”) since conception, only now is he properly the Christ, God’s anointed prophet, priest,

⁴⁵ Wainwright, 179.

⁴⁶ Wainwright, 179-180: “It is not inappropriate to focus at Christmas on the incarnation of the Word, and to follow – especially in our Gospel lectionaries – through Epiphany and Lent Christ’s ministry of proclamation in word and deed: the prophetic office. In Lent, however, we see him already in the shadow of the cross, and the priestly office reaches its most poignant moment on Good Friday, although its climax comes only with the entry into the heavenly sanctuary, a theme of the ascension. Already a king on the cross, Christ’s majesty was displayed on Easter Day, and the great fifty days up to Pentecost are a royal season.... Thus the liturgical calendar can after all serve to express the threefold office, provided its ‘sequential’ character be firmly held within a comprehensive grasp of the entire mystery of Christ’s person and work.”

⁴⁷ Heidelberg Catechism, question 31, in Philip Schaff et al., eds., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 3.317f, quoted in Wainwright, 100.

⁴⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1994), paragraph 783, quoted in Wainwright, 107.

⁴⁹ Aslanoff, 1.164-166.

and king.⁵⁰ In gaining a title, Jesus gains an office, in which his new relationships with God and with humanity are executed.⁵¹ The gospels offer Jesus' baptism as an early focal point on his Threefold Office to remind readers that every subsequent act is performed in the power of the Holy Spirit, and shared with believers by that same Spirit.⁵²

Each office enjoys a long prehistory in Israel, where its bearers are anointed by oil and God's Spirit. Its fulfillment in Christ is foreshadowed in Luke's Annunciation, where Mary is told her son "will be called holy, the Son of God," and in Matthew's visit of the Magi, who bear gifts for anointing, coronation, and burial. Each office is inaugurated and announced at the Jordan, not only by the Spirit's presence, but by the Father's affirmation: "You are my Son." Each office is tested in the wilderness, unfolds and is transformed in Jesus' subsequent ministry, climaxes at the cross, is vindicated at the tomb, continues at the right hand of the Father, and is complete at Jesus' return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

This generalization already offers an answer to Pannenberg's criticism that the Threefold Office is incompatible with the Bible's two-stage soteriology. In fact, each depends upon and participates in the other. Two-stage soteriology views the work of Christ chronologically, while the Threefold Office views it as a whole. One remembers a mystery unfolding (cf. Phil. 2:5-11 and 1 Tim. 3:16), while the other celebrates a mystery unfolded (cf. Eph. 1:1-10). It is as rewarding as it is difficult to try to see from both perspectives at once. Jesus' humility recapitulates each Old Testament office, transforming it in the course of Jesus' career. Jesus'

⁵⁰ This language offends anti-Adoptionists who worry that Jesus must be predicated Christ from all eternity, or at least from conception, in order to protect his full and true divinity (Barth?). Colin Brown calls Jesus before his baptism the "Christ-elect," since he is only *christos* after the chrism of the Spirit. Luke-Acts offers support for both practices (Luke 2:11, Acts 10:36-38).

⁵¹ Del Colle, 121, following Coffey's appropriation of Heribert Mühlen.

exaltation vindicates his fidelity to each office against the competing visions of his rivals, magnifying it in the work of his ecclesial body.

For a location from which to gain this panoramic perspective on salvation, the gospels offer us the Jordan. It is there that Moses instituted the symbols of remembrance of Israel's past that pointed it toward its future (Deut. 6:1-9, 26:1-11 etc.). It is there that his successor Joshua ("Jesus" in its Greek form) led God's people into the land of promise. From there (to indulge in allegory), in the midst of the Jordan, Jesus of Nazareth built an edifice of twelve men, twelve stones (cf. Matt. 16:18?) to be a new monument (Josh. 4:9), a repaired altar (1 Kings 18:31-32?), a memorial forever to God's faithfulness (cf. Josh. 4:6). The antitype, unlike its type, stands to this day (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 2:20). It is in the river's crossing that YHWH exalts the successor to prove that he is with him as he was with Moses (Josh. 3:7). "On that day YHWH exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life" (Josh. 4:14). (The Orthodox catechism offers the Red Sea, rather than the Jordan, as the type for the feast.)⁵³

Like a wedding, an inauguration, and (of course!) a Christian baptism, Jesus' baptism is at once a typological culmination of a prior process, a sacramental action of profound accomplishment, and an eschatological new beginning (cf. Jer. 1:5, Luke 1:15, Sam. 1:11, etc.).

⁵² "A visible symbol of this sacred anointing was shown in Christ's baptism, when the Spirit hovered over him in the likeness of a dove. It is nothing new, and ought not to seem absurd that the Spirit and his gifts are designated by the word 'anointing'. For it is only in this way that we are invigorated. Especially with regard to heavenly life, there is no drop of vigor in us save what the Holy Spirit instills. For the Spirit has chosen Christ as his seat, that from him might abundantly flow the heavenly riches of which we are in such need" (Calvin, 2.15.5, 1.500).

⁵³ "The column of fire which parts the sea and protects the people from the attacks of enemies represents the strength of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the water of baptism and enlightens the faithful" (Aslanoff, 1.158). This baptismal imagery is appropriate (it appeals to Paul's "baptized in the cloud and in the sea" of 1 Cor. 10:2), but not if it confuses the waters of the Sea of Reeds with the waters of the Jordan, the Exodus with the Conquest.

It transforms everything that precedes it and informs everything that follows it.⁵⁴ The dialectics of time behind such a typological narrative make it impossible to present Jesus' story (or tell our own Christian stories) in the purely linear scheme so comfortable to modern historiography. Yet this makes the schema of the Threefold Office *more*, not less, relevant to the stages of Christ's career, and to the cycles of the Christian year.

Exercises in Hope and Frustration: Anointed Offices in Israel

Christians tell the stories of Jewish prophethood, Jewish priesthood, and Jewish monarchy as three exercises in hope and frustration. This is not the place for a lengthy presentation on any of the offices, let alone all three.⁵⁵ We will merely introduce themes that will emerge at the Jordan and resurface later in Jesus' career.

Prophethood. In the prophets, God appoints people who speak his will in mighty signs and wonders. These both *foretell* and *forthtell*, reading "the signs of the times" and delivering God's interpretation of them. While the line of YHWH's prophets classically begins with Samuel, the office's archetype is Moses: "If there is a prophet among you, I YHWH make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of YHWH" (Num. 12:6-8).

Poignantly, the prophet's call is to lead people *back* to a Lord they have forsaken: "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth," YHWH tells Jeremiah. "See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow,

⁵⁴ In biographically unpacking the career of Jesus we face the same challenges, and find the same Christic patterns, as in telling our own Christian stories ("When are our lives in Christ begun? When are we mature? How do they end?"). We are accustomed to respecting such interactions as we weave the details of our own lives into narratives ("When did my relationship with my wife Kim begin? What have been its transforming moments? When will it end?").

⁵⁵ Worthy examples include ...

to build and to plant” (Jer.1:9-10). The speech-acts of God’s prophets are the tools of his judgment and salvation of a sinful world: “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry, for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking YHWH. ... Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as YHWH loves the people of Israel” (Hos. 1:2, 3:1).

This means God’s urgent speech-actors offend the powers who resist his will. “Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, of whom the world was not worthy” (Heb. 11:35-38).

This amazing institution is as responsible as any for Israel’s continued life as God’s people in exile, when temple and throne are mere memories. Yet even there, it never lives up to its early promise. Though the archetype himself prophesies the coming of “a prophet like me from among you, him shall you heed” (Deut. 18:15), his epitaph, which is the Torah’s last word, tells the story differently:

There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom YHWH knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders which YHWH sent him to do in the land to Egypt ... and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel (Deut. 34:10-12).

It thus falls on an anointed successor to assume the mantle of Moses and his revivalist Elijah (Mal. 3-4). Moreover, this messianic prophet’s message will go out even beyond the confines of Israel: “I have made him a witness to the peoples, I have given him as a leader and

commander” (Isa. 55:4). “When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things,” says the Samaritan woman (John 4:25).⁵⁶

Priesthood. The next exercise in hope and frustration is the priesthood. Moses institutes the priesthood as well. Yet for all his extraordinary intercessory work on Israel’s behalf, even twisting YHWH’s arm to keep Israel alive after they worship the golden calf (Ex. 32:11-14), it is Aaron, not Moses, who personifies the role. He is chosen, dressed, and anointed (Ex. 29:1-9) as the patriarch of a people who will go between sinful Israel and its holy God. The priesthood is charged with keeping Israel holy, set apart from all the peoples of the world as one that walks in God’s ways. Priestly work is to cleanse and declare clean, a sort of Israelite public health authority.

Such an awesome task demands *sacrifice*. This is accomplished both *by* the priests and *in* the priests who, as “God’s firstborn,” embody what they practice:

You [Moses] shall cause the Levites to attend Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to YHWH. Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. ... For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel; instead of all that open the womb, the first-born of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself. ... [O]n the day that I slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself.... And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel in case the people should come near the sanctuary (Num. 8:13-19).

Sacrifice comes in many forms, but the currency of sacrifice for sin is blood, where the life is (Lev. 17:10-14). The constant butchery in Jerusalem’s temple is a graphic reminder that sin kills (Lev. 16, Heb. 10:3). Yet, even when sacrifice is practiced ethically (1 Sam. 2:27-36), a sense accompanies it that the blood even of unblemished animals does not, cannot, take away sin (Isa. 1:11, Heb. 10:4). All the blood spilled in Jerusalem does not finally maintain the holiness of

⁵⁶ Both noted in Calvin, 1.495.

Israel, which repeatedly slips away from the wholehearted love of God to which it is called. Furthermore, temple practice faces constant competition from other cults, the most powerful of which is concupiscence itself. It is not enough for Aaron to stop sacrificing to golden calves (Ex. 32:1-6), or even for Israelites to stop their own cultic adulteries (Hos. 4:13), for Israel's holiness only returns when it practices *mercy*, not sacrifice (cf. Hos. 6:6). The same arguments can be advanced against the efficacy of grain offerings (Num. 28-29). Surely the only appropriate sacrifice is human sacrifice, and living sacrifice at that (Rom. 12:1). A faithful priest will indeed go before God's anointed forever (1 Sam. 2:35, Heb. 2:17); yet Aaron's line cannot help but dash the expectations laid on it (Heb. 7-10). The new bread and blood of atonement must surpass the old.

Monarchy. Even so, no office is more of a disappointment than Israel's monarchy, which the Deuteronomist narrates as a colossal Israelite failure to trust God's leadership. The monarchy is born in Samuel's failure to appoint upright judges for the land. In response, Israel's elders request a king, "to govern us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:1-5). The one most disappointed is God himself. These people, he tells Samuel bitterly, "have rejected me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). Israel's spurned and jealous God grants their request, with the added promise that one day his enslaved nation "will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but YHWH will not answer you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:18).

Yet after a rocky start in Saul, Israel gets a king that forever captures its imagination. For all his many failings, it David the last son of Jesse whom Israel remembers as having a heart perfect with God (1 Kings 11:4), as going "fully after God" (1 Kings 11:5), even to the point of making himself a laughingstock (2 Sam. 6:14-23).

Still, David's story is a soap opera, and Solomon's is a Shakespearean tragedy. Soon the kingdom divides, and pagans overrun the court. Despite a respite for righteousness under Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-23:30), the old ways return, the surrounding empires regroup, and the royal line is lost. Even when Israel returns from exile, its pathetic "kings" are a hindrance rather than a help. The Herodians are foreign puppets who just add insult to injury.

Nevertheless, something is achieved in Israel's kings. From the beginning, it has been clear that God does not want Israel to be kingless. God wants *God* to be Israel's king. With David's demise, "his" royal psalms become psalms about his successor, a messiah-king, in whom God will restore his eternal throne (Ps. 89:4, 132:11). The royal office helps awaken the dream that someday the kingdom of David will become the kingdom of God, enticing even the nations to make YHWH their king (Amos 9:11-12, Jer. 12:15-17, Isa. 45:20-25, in Acts 15:16-18).

Thus Israel's hopes are also Israel's frustration. Every anointed office is a pneumatic grace born of the needs brought on by human sin: Prophethood in ignorance, priesthood in corruption, monarchy in rebellion, all in disobedience. Each has its family resemblances with demonic counterfeits, whose lust pushes them beyond love of YHWH. Moses has the wonder-workers of Pharaoh's court. Aaron has the cults of Egypt, his successors the cults of Canaan. David's predecessor and successors, and sometimes David himself, play by the rules of the nations' monarchies.

The story of these weaknesses and rivalries is at once depressing and tantalizing. Israel's charismatically anointed judges fail to lead God's people in a godly way (Judges 21:25, 1 Sam. 8:1-5). Its priesthood yields to corruption's temptations (1 Sam. 2:12-17), ushering in the first of Moses' prophetic successors, Samuel. Its kings, from the beginning a divine judgment against

Israel's failure to be holy, turn it into just another realm of power politics, then to political powerlessness as a captive people (2 Kings 25). While true prophets lead through the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:11-13), false prophets lead astray with a spirit of harlotry (Hos. 4:12). Both royal and vigilante priesthods sacrifice to other gods on other mountains than YHWH on Zion (Hos. 4:13). Each role's abuse threatens Israel's continuing existence as surely as its use preserves it.

This is not a supersessionist observation, let alone an "anti-Semitic" one. For nineteen hundred years, rabbinic Judaism has survived and prospered even without staff, temple, or throne. Yet the hope of Israel's prophetic, priestly, and royal lines refuses to be satisfied with the office of the teacher, in the twenty-first century as well as the first. Israel (some of Israel, anyway) still longs for their messianic restoration, not their replacement. Nor is the answer to its dilemma to be found in the nations' answers of world empire, Jacobin collectivism, Zionism, American checks and balances, or UN- and EU-style transnational progressivism.

Israel's legacy of pneumatic frustration and hope brings us to the gospels' moment of restoration.

The Offices at the Jordan

Readers of each gospel already know that divine sonship is messianic (Matt. 1:1, Mark 1:1, Luke 2:11, John 1:17-18). All four gospels develop this claim by linking Jesus' baptism to the affirmation of Jesus as God's Son.⁵⁷

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16-17 NRSV).

⁵⁷ In John, the testimony comes from the Baptist, then from Nathanael, rather than from heaven.

In all three synoptics, the baptismal Jesus is clearly the divine Son of Psalm 2, the *anointed one* against whom the kings of the earth set themselves. Let us explore the connection between the divine words and Jesus' anointing to all three pneumatic offices.

Monarchy. The Gentiles' conspiracy is in vain, assures a mocking, furious YHWH in the royal psalm: "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' ... He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you.'" The son is promised the nations to the end of the earth, either to bless for their fealty, or destroy for their insurrection. He is the heir to David's throne. YHWH's anointed is king on Zion, king of kings. The Holy Spirit is the seal of God's favor and the power of his throne.

All four gospels draw on the imagery. Mark follows the scene almost immediately with a synopsis of Jesus' subsequent ministry: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the gospel'" (Mark 1:14-15). The reign of David has been reconciled with the reign of God. It centers on Zion and stretches to the ends of the earth. Herod and Pilate take counsel against it, trying to sunder the bonds between Father and Son, and between them and their peoples. But, as Matthew stresses, for those who take refuge in YHWH the coronation is a blessing, the reign beatific (Matt. 5:1-12). Jesus is king of the Jews, and ruler of all creation. He exercises an authority like no other (Matt. 28:18, Mark 2:10, Luke 4:36, John 17:2).

What kind of kingdom must this be? The Spirit answers in resting upon him, and the Father answers in the second half of his baptismal affirmation. The former echoes Isa. 11:1-4: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse.... And the Spirit of YHWH shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of YHWH. ... With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide

with equity for the meek of the earth.”⁵⁸ The latter echoes Isa. 42:1-2: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.” The servant in Isaiah 40-66 is a *suffering* servant. The newly anointed king is a servant king. The setting of his coronation, an altar call in the river Jordan, is no embarrassment to his subjects, but a sign of his reign.⁵⁹ Jesus’ baptism is the undoing of Samuel’s royal curse.

Gentile monarchy is an exercise in Lordship *over* others (Mark 10:42). The world’s kings are exalted over against their peoples. The result is a cycle of resentment, repression, and rebellion that Jesus must enter as a deposed victim in order to overturn as a conqueror: “This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours” (Mark 12:6-8). The baptismal kingdom is an exercise in servanthood (Mark 10:45).

Therefore this reign is shared rather than hoarded, in a fellowship of suffering servanthood (Mark 10:33-34). Lordship *for* others implies lordship *with* others. “With the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized” (Mark 10:39). Jesus’ disciples are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided they suffer with him (Rom. 8:17). “Behold, I have given you authority” (Luke 10:19; cf. Matt. 10:1, Mark 6:7). The gospels and epistles draw straight lines from Jesus’ baptism unto Spirit-anointed servanthood, to Christian baptism unto Spirit-anointed servanthood.⁶⁰ Or, in theological shorthand, soteriology is ecclesiology.

⁵⁸ See Calvin, 2.15.5, 1.499-500.

⁵⁹ Colin Brown calls Jesus’ baptism a coronation, noting from the Mishnah’s Tractate on the Red Heifer that the dirty waters of the Jordan were considered ritually impure. This makes John’s baptism something other than the cleansing it is normally taken to be (for instance, in Aslanoff 1.158-160). Brown speculates that Jesus’ baptism may be a reenactment of Joshua’s crossing of the Jordan as the leader of a restored Israel. Colin Brown, “Systematic Theology: Christology and Soteriology” (lectures delivered at Fuller Theological Seminary, winter 1993). This reinforces the prominent linkages in the gospels between Jesus’ career and both exodus from Egypt and return from Babylon.

⁶⁰ Liturgy follows them: See for instance Aslanoff, 1.168-171.

Priesthood. The connection with priesthood is more subtle. Some interpreters deny it outright.⁶¹ But we can appeal to the connections already developed in Luke between the water and fire Jordan and the water and fire of Mt. Carmel. Jesus is the perfect penitent, the acceptable sacrifice. In the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist makes the same point, but with different imagery: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ... I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. ... And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:29-34). This testimony allows Simon to confess early in this gospel what he confesses later on in the others: “We have found the Anointed” (John 1:41).

Furthermore, it should also be remembered that God’s firstborn ones (*prôtotokoi*), those he has taken to himself, are the priesthood (Num. 8), the sacrificial line through whom God reconciles sinners to himself and makes peace (cf. Micah 6:7, Col.1:15, 20). To be God’s heir is to be a ruler (Ps. 88:28, Zech. 12:10), but *also* to be an intercessor whose life is on the line (Mark 12:6-7). Perhaps the writer to the Hebrews has these connections in mind in developing Jesus’ priesthood according to his sonship (Heb. 4:14). Crucial to his case is that Jesus’ priestly office is appointed, not volunteered or inherited: “One does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’” (Heb. 5:4-5). At the Jordan, John is commanding sacrifices of contrite hearts, not interviewing royal candidates. That day God *accepts* and *appoints* Jesus as intercessor and intercession.

The distinction is important. With respect to royalty, Jesus inherits the kingdom both as son of David and as Word of the Father. But with respect to priesthood, Jesus’ Davidic pedigree is irrelevant. As a son of Judah rather than Levi, Jesus must be appointed in a new line, “called

⁶¹ De la Potterie affirms only that the Jordan’s anointing is an anointing to prophethood and not to priesthood. On

by God, just as Aaron was,” or better, just as Melchizedek was (Ps. 110:4 in Heb. 5:6-10). In this sense, the son of Judah *is* adopted by the Father – as the founder of a new priestly order of “firstborn” who are not subject to the limitations of the Aaronic line (Heb. 7:11-28).⁶² Hebrews offers the job description in terms that obviously echo the cross, but also happen to fit the *Vorklang* of John’s baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins:

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:7-10).

Priesthood is the giving of a people *both* to God and to the people. The baptismal Jesus is God’s gift, both to the Father and to the world. “The law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever” (Heb. 7:28).

So it is also with the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5-9) who are baptized into Christ. They too are gifts both to God and to all humanity (Rev. 1:5-6, cf. Ex. 19:5-6, Isa. 61:6). Sharing his Holy Spirit, they share both his mission and his power to forgive or retain sins (John 20:21-24). This passage terrifies many of my students, who imagine five centuries of Protestants have somehow overlooked it. Yet “Christ plays the priestly role,” says Calvin, “also to receive us as his companions in this great office. For we who are defiled in ourselves, yet are priests in him, offer ourselves and our will to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary.”⁶³ The basic distinction is that the Catholic embodiment of fellowship resembles a kingdom *with* priests, whereas the Protestant (and especially the free church) resembles a kingdom *of* priests.

this basis, de la Potterie rejects the association of baptismal “anointing theology” with the Threefold Office.

⁶² More speculatively, we might ask whether Matthew’s son from Egypt (Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15) is the Ephraim (Hos. 11:8) who is God’s firstborn in Jer. 31:9. The connections are as natural to the liturgical mind as they are offensive to critical biblical scholarship.

Prophethood. “I will tell of the decree of YHWH,” says the baptized psalmist (Ps. 2:7a). The one anointed Son proclaims his own sonship. “Therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth” (Ps. 2:10). We have already seen Mark’s newly baptized Jesus proclaiming God’s kingdom in the shadow of John’s arrest (Mark 1:14-15). Luke drives the point home more explicitly. Returning from the wilderness, the Lukan Jesus goes to his synagogue and proclaims Isaiah 61. “‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ ... ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’” (Isa. 61:1-2 in Luke 3:18-19, 21). The congregants still don’t get it, Jesus tells them, because “no prophet is acceptable in his own country” (Luke 3:24). At his next preaching stop, his hearers “were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority” (Luke 3:32). John makes the same point: “The one whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit” (John 3:34).

All these passages portray Jesus not merely as *a* prophet – even the Baptist is more than that (Matt. 11:9, Luke 7:26) – but as the *fulfillment* of prophethood. In Matthew, we need only note the five blocks of teaching material that make Jesus a new Moses, renewer of Torah.

As if we needed further attestation, God provides it, in the scene of Jesus’ transfiguration. There the baptismal scene is nearly re-created, now on a mountain with Elijah (in case we missed the prior Mt. Carmel imagery). But the image is doubled: The mountain is also Sinai. (Mark strikingly puts Elijah first, a move Matthew and Luke reverse: Matt. 17:3, Mark 9:4, Luke 9:30.) The Holy Spirit is (for some) a bright cloud rather than a dove.⁶⁴ The voice from heaven

⁶³ Calvin, *Institutes* II.15.6.

⁶⁴ So the Transfiguration is commonly interpreted in liturgical settings.

reiterates its baptismal decree: “This is my beloved Son [with whom I am well pleased, Matt. 17:5],” adding an affirmation of his prophetic authority: “listen to him!”

On the mount of transfiguration, the fickle crowds are gone, replaced by an inner circle of three disciples. One of them will report those heavenly words in Solomon’s Portico. Jesus is the long-awaited prophet like Moses, Peter claims: “You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you” (Acts 3:22-23, cf. Deut. 18:19).

Yet Peter and his fellow disciples are more than the biographers of the new Moses. It was Peter’s own prophetic sign that has drawn the crowd in Jerusalem. Now he too is a prophet like Moses, one who does signs and wonders by the same Spirit of Jesus (Acts 3:6-7, cf. Luke 4:33-41), one who has seen God face to face, who has beheld the glory of the Lord (Luke 9:29), with whom Jesus speaks clearly and not in parables (Luke 8:9-15, cf. Num. 12:6-8; also John 16:29, Mark 4:10-20, Matt. 13:10-23). With the shared baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit comes the shared gift of Christian prophethood. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

Reclaiming Jesus’ Baptism in the Christian Year

The baptism of Jesus is a turning point in the gospel narratives. The threat of adoptionism notwithstanding, it is not to the Church’s credit that it has ignored the event in its creeds and domesticated it in its annual remembrance of Jesus’ life. Richer use could be made of Jesus’ baptism at Theophany and Epiphany, and richer use could be made of Theophany and Epiphany in the Christian year.

Baptism’s place in Theophany. First, the interdependence of Spirit- and Word-Christology suggests themes for Theophany and Epiphany to pursue as they reflect on Jesus’ baptism. Both East and West often treat Jesus’ baptism as no more than a divine affirmation of

his divinity. In the Catholic tradition, celebrants during the Baptism of Our Lord “celebrate the manifestation of Your newborn Son” (Prayer over the Gifts, The Baptism of our Lord, *Catholic Missal*), as if Jesus were baptized as an infant! In the Armenian tradition, remembrance of Jesus’ baptism *coincides with* that of his birth, together on Jan. 6.⁶⁵ In the Orthodox, Jesus’ baptism is held separate, and highlighted, “because on this day God reveals himself fully: he is one in three persons. Nothing can be added to this vision.”⁶⁶ In all three traditions, Theophany is effectively captured by Christmas. The birth of the Son in Gal. 4:4-5 *becomes* the sending of the Spirit in Gal. 4:6-7 (Christmas, Year B). The connection between Jesus and his disciples then becomes divinization: “for your only-begotten Son restored our human nature by the new light of His immortality when He appeared in the substance of man’s mortal nature” (preface of the Epiphany [Jan. 6] and of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ [Jan. 13], *Catholic Missal*). The Spirit is put off until Pentecost.

Liturgies still find the associations between baptism and the christening of both Jesus and his disciples irresistible (Aslanoff, for instance, visits many of the themes we have developed here). But Word-Christology’s hegemony has robbed them of the vocabularies to articulate what they know to be true. *Why*, if the restoration of human nature is a function of incarnation, is the Holy Spirit important to salvation? Should not Jesus be enough? *Why*, if baptism is no more than a manifestation of what is already true in Jesus’ career, should it be so significant for disciples? Should not confession be enough? Liturgies and catechisms must return to the bold language of Spirit-Christology on the occasions when they reclaim the connection between the baptismal

⁶⁵ Aslanoff, 1.151.

⁶⁶ Aslanoff, 1.155.

anointing of Jesus and the baptismal empowering of his disciples.⁶⁷ Theology can make the transition much more natural, and the conversation between these two modes of celebration more constructive.

Likewise, incarnation's capture of Jesus' baptism has cut the temptation narratives free from their baptismal orbit in the synoptic gospels, and pushed them into Lent. We will respect that decision, viewing it as an opportunity to pursue what thus looks like more of a "Johannine" vision of Jesus' career (see Ordinary, below), and visit Jesus' wilderness experience under the heading of Lent – but not without first wishing we could visit it here.

Allowed to stand on its own, Theophany becomes a feast of the inauguration of God's reign. It anticipates the next thrilling stage in the revolution begun in Advent and Annunciation. As a prophet, Jesus proclaims God's kingdom. As a priest, he serves it. As a king, he rules it.

The limitations of prophethood, priesthood, and monarchy can only be resolved by one in whom both divine relations and human relations concur. But the relations of the swaddled babe are not identical to those of the fully grown man. We have already claimed that in Jesus' baptism, Jesus' human relationships change. Both the initial (incarnational) *and* the baptismal (ministerial) relations of Christ are instrumental to the resolution of the dilemmas intrinsic to the Jewish institutions of prophethood, priesthood, and monarchy.

In Jesus alone, the Spirit brings a Word to one who is the Word himself. Only the anointed Jesus can be both the proclaimer and the proclamation (Isa. 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19). From Moses can come only law; from the Son, grace and truth (John 1:17-18, Heb. 8:6-13). Other prophets point beyond themselves to the truth. But God's definitive self-revelation points

⁶⁷ For instance, Aslanoff 1.168: "New newly baptized are called Christians (Acts 11:26), because they are anointed by the Holy Spirit, *just like their Lord and Master*. On the day of our baptism, each of us is anointed with the Holy Spirit *like Christ in the Jordan*" (emphasis added).

to himself (John 14:6), for the Spirit is his without measure (John 3:39). God's other prophets cannot compare to the Son (John 1:21). And those christened with the Holy One know the truth of the Son and his Father from the lies of the antichristened (1 John 2:20), for the christening abides in them too (1 John 2:27).

In Jesus alone, the Spirit immolates a sacrifice worthy of the Father. Other priests have their own sins to atone for (Heb. 5:3, 7:27), and death prevents them from continuing their work (Heb. 7:23). From Aaron's line can come only a river of blood; from Jesus', the living sacrifice of a holy people (Heb. 7:18-19). Upon the immortal Jesus, the Spirit *remains* (John 1:32, Second Sunday after Epiphany, Year A). Thus Jesus can baptize others with the same Spirit (John 1:33). Only Jesus, whose body is the new Temple (John 2:21, Rev. 21:22), can be the cornerstone of a Church whose people are themselves a temple (1 Cor. 3:16). In the Spirit, we are both God's household, and God's house (Eph. 2:19-22).

In Jesus alone, the kingdom of David can truly be the kingdom of God. The Spirit of holiness has designated Jesus the fleshly son of David as Son of God in power (Rom. 1:4). All who came before are robbers and thieves (John 10:8); Jesus is the righteous branch of David (Jer. 23:1-6, Christ the King, Year C). God reigns in the Spirit. From Israel's other royal houses, so often divided against themselves, come wars and intrigue; from Jesus' house comes a reign of peace (Luke 19:38, Heb. 7:2).⁶⁸ Like a conquering king, the baptized Jesus has bound the strong man and now plunders his house (Matt. 12:29). But in him the king's rod of iron (Ps. 2:9) is the good shepherd's staff (Ps. 23:4, Ez. 34:23-24, Christ the King, Year A; cf. John 10:11-18). The one on whom the Spirit remains (Matt. 3:16, Isa. 11:2) is the shoot from the stump of Jesse (Isa. 11:1). So to criticize the work of David's son (Matt. 12:23-24) is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit

⁶⁸ Wainwright finds here the Church's soteriological obligation to pursue ecumenical unity, 166.

(12:31-32), for it is by the Spirit of God that the kingdom comes (12:28). “The kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy *in the Holy Spirit*,” says Paul in one of his rare references to the kingdom (Rom. 14:17). The same Spirit now bears witness that we are fellow heirs with our king, for *all* who are led by God’s Spirit of God are God’s sons and daughters (Rom. 8:14-17).⁶⁹

Far from these liturgical themes detracting from Theophany as a manifestation of the Trinity, they confirm it. Jesus’ baptism is much more than a cameo appearance of each divine person in order to prove to us that they really are all there. Its manifestation is an unveiling of the mystery of God’s will, an unfolding of God’s plan in Christ to unite all things (Eph. 1:9-10). There is – there must be – a deeply Trinitarian dimension to the Threefold Office itself, as Calvin himself understands.⁷⁰ In the Son’s prophesying the Father gives the Spirit.⁷¹ The Father sends the Spirit to accept the Son’s priestly self-gift.⁷² The royal Son inherits the Spirit from the Father.⁷³ Locating the Threefold Office in the work of the triune God brings clarity to the role of each office in the entirety of the salvation Jesus brings. We are not tempted to make modalistic or tritheistic distinctions among the Father’s, Son’s, and Spirit’s involvement in the world.

We may, however, think of each office in terms of a particular relationship among Father, Son, Spirit, and people. To simplify: sovereigns reign *over* people, priests intercede *on behalf of* people, and prophets proclaim *to* people.⁷⁴ The Spirit is *upon* the prophetic Son to take the word he has *from* the Father and declare it *to* people (Isa. 61:-2, John 16:15). *Through* the eternal Spirit, the priestly Son *offers* himself *on behalf of* people *before* the Father (Heb. 9:14). The

⁶⁹ See Calvin, 15.2.4, 1.499.

⁷⁰ Butin, 65-66.

⁷¹ Cf. Butin, 60.

⁷² Cf. Butin, 196-197n.47.

⁷³ Cf. Butin, 65, 82.

⁷⁴ The relationships are actually more complex: For instance, Jeremiah is set over peoples and kingdoms [Jer. 1:10].)

royal Son *inherits* the reign of the *Father*, to rule *with* the Spirit *under* and *alongside* him *over* all peoples (Ps. 2:6-8, 1 Cor. 15:24-28). These relations cannot be called *constitutive* of the divine persons, for that would make the Triunity of God an effect of God's work in the created order. Rather, they *express* the constitutive personal relations in the divine economy of salvation in ways that demonstrate the intrinsically Triune character of both creation and redemption. Each anointed office demands that Jesus be the divine and human Son in a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

However, human personhood *is* primally constituted through the same relationships, then eschatologically transformed in the light of incarnation. Humanity radically owes its original and ultimate character to the Triunity of God. God's human images are children of God's adoption, audiences of God's prophethood, beneficiaries of God's priesthood, and subjects of God's reign. Through divine grace, the various relations effect an "order of salvation" by which the creating, renewing, indwelling Spirit conforms his chosen to the image of the Spirit-baptized Son. Both Rom. 8:29-30's chain of salvation and Acts 2:38's series of Pentecostal blessings describe the Anointed as well as his followers: The confronting Spirit comes upon his chosen with the Prophet who *calls* them to faith. The sovereign Spirit declares their relationship with God *justified* under the King of righteousness. The infilling Spirit *glorifies* them through the High Priest of purity, making them his earthly temple and bearing fruit through their ministry and mission. "Holy! Holy! Holy is YHWH of Hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).

So the relationship between human beings and the one God is not uniform. It is neither a mere "I-thou" or a mere collective "we-thou." It is a rich set of relationships, each itself multiform, with the divine persons.

Seldom has this richness been explored more meticulously than in the Wesleyan, Holiness, and Pentecostal traditions. While these have been known to get carried away in listing varieties of grace and sequences of blessings, their efforts reflect the appropriate conviction that God's grace meets our many human needs and capacities in many different ways. Wesley's systematizers enumerate varieties of prevenient, justifying, regenerating, and sanctifying grace.⁷⁵ The Pentecostal tradition followed the Holiness movement in unpacking the order of salvation in terms of a fourfold office of Christ as Savior, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Coming King.⁷⁶ Pentecostals also followed the Holiness movement in finding a sequence of blessings of Son and Spirit: justification, regeneration, sanctification, and empowerment to service,⁷⁷ though they specified different sequences and found different significance in the steps. Sometimes this sequence is even enumerated in terms of relationships with the divine persons. For instance, David du Plessis distinguishes between the "fire" of Spirit-anointing *upon* God's people and the "water" of Spirit-filling *in* God's people.⁷⁸

Battles among Wesleyans over categorizations, sequences, and relations sometimes obscure the tradition's fundamental insight that the variety is displayed in the divine persons, Israel's history of salvation, the narrative of Jesus, and the narratives of his eschatological disciples. When the last is disconnected from the others and isolated into a systematic topic of its own – "microsoteriology" – it ironically grows convoluted, arbitrary, and divisive. Clarity on the bewildering array of relationships between the Triune God and fallen and restored humanity comes by radically reconnecting the topics of Trinity, Christ, Church, and salvation. The intimidated and the fatigued need only look on the Spirit-anointed, incarnate Son of the Father,

⁷⁵ See, for instance, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1996), 43.

⁷⁶ See Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1987), 19-21.

⁷⁷ Dayton, 37.

in whose career they are determinatively displayed and decisively accomplished.⁷⁹ An especially opportune time to do this will be the last week of Jesus' life (below).⁸⁰

Epiphany's place in the Christian year. Second, if greater attention to Spirit-Christology returns Theophany and Epiphany (hereafter simply labeled "Epiphany") from behind Christmas' shadow, these days can strengthen the seasons that both precede and follow them.

By paying adequate attention to the transformative nature of Jesus' anointing, Epiphany throws new light on the character of incarnation. If Jesus' signs and wonders are pneumatically accomplished, then the swaddled babe *really is* weak, dependent, humble, *human*, not just in childhood but throughout his career, even now and forever. "He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger." Antioch's orthodoxy truly protects us from Alexandria's heresies, just as Alexandria's orthodoxy protects us from Antioch's heresies.

Jesus' baptism is the overture of Jesus' career. Epiphany transitions the Church from the glow of Christmastime to the long, hard work of Ordinary (below). It frames the weeks in which Christians remember Jesus' itinerant ministry, just as in each gospel Jesus' baptism frames the chapters of signs and wonders that follow it. We need Epiphany to understand Ordinary.

As an overture, Jesus' baptism looks forward to the cross more than it looks back to the manger. It brings the Paraclete who comes alongside the Son, through whom he offers himself to the Father (Heb. 9:14). This means that the paschal cycle needs Epiphany even more than Christmas does.

Epiphany connects Jesus' baptismal anointing to those of his disciples. As we remember our Savior's humility, we look forward to his exaltation, and the gift he sends us when he returns

⁷⁸ See David du Plessis, *Simple and Profound* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete, 1986), 16.

⁷⁹ Grenz?

⁸⁰ [Threefold Office as relations with Christ in the Spirit displayed in the Passion?]

to the Father's right hand (Luke 24:49, John 16:7, Acts 2:33). Restoring Jesus' baptism to its proper place strengthens the connections the Church desperately needs to see between Jesus' anointing to ministry and its own. We need Epiphany to understand Ascension and Pentecost. And we need the joy of Jesus' exaltation in order to bear the pain of his humility (John 16:20-22). When Christmas captures Epiphany, Lent captures the imitation of Christ. We review the temptations, forgetting that Jesus conquered them soon after his baptism, "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1-2). When the vital role of the Holy Spirit in walking alongside us toward Jerusalem is neglected, we are left bearing our crosses on our own strength, struggling to do the impossible.

In restoring Spirit-Christology alongside Word Christology, in reclaiming the Threefold Office under the occasion of the Baptism of Our Lord, we should strive to meet one of Wainwright's concluding exhortations:

On the structural basis of Sunday worship ... and with the festal coloring of the Christian year ... it should be possible to use language that expresses, sometimes directly, sometimes more subtly, the threefold office of Christ. We shall call him Prophet, Priest, and King, but not use those words in isolation, as though throwing them at him or at the congregation in order to make a point. Much rather, they will have their rich scriptural and traditional content restored to them through their association with the biblical readings, the broader language of praise and prayer, the liturgical structures and rites, the unfolding of the Christian festivals – and insofar as the terms and the offices need direct exposition and interpretation, it will be done, at least in the context of the worship assembly, primarily in a kerygmatic way, and only secondarily in a doctrinal way.⁸¹

⁸¹ Wainwright, 180.