

Title: On Zizioulas and Social Trinitarianism

Zizioulas widely regarded as prominent advocate of a social trinity, and his work has been influential for the development of social trinitarianism. In recent critiques of social trinitarianism, Zizioulas is criticised for appearing to advocate a social analogy of the trinity in theology of the Church and the human person. This is a significant obstacle for the future reception of Zizioulas' work, especially as those who argue for a non-communion ecclesiology attribute to Zizioulas the problems identified with social trinitarianism. This paper argues that Zizioulas has been misrepresented in the debate between social Trinitarianism and its critics. Although Zizioulas engaged in dialogue with the advocates of a social trinity, Zizioulas did not construct his theology of the human person and the Church on the basis of a social analogy of the Trinity. This paper therefore seeks to correct this misinterpretation of Zizioulas' work through a critical re-evaluation of Zizioulas' ecclesiology and his account of human personhood. This paper argues that, for Zizioulas, the Eucharist and the Church participate in the hypostasis of Christ, and that human personhood is realised ontologically through participation in Christ's filial communion with God the Father. Consequently, Zizioulas' treatment of theosis precludes the possibility of constructing human personhood as a social analogy of the trinity. For Zizioulas, theosis involves an ontological transformation of human personhood through incorporation in the hypostasis of Christ, this reality cannot be adequately addressed through embodying a social analogy of the trinity.

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