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Karl Barth's theology of the Trinity in conversation with Christian theology of religions

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This article attempts to discuss Karl Barth's Trinitarian theology with two Christian theologians of religions, John Hick and Raimundo Panikkar. To acknowledge the presence of other religions, Hick conceived of The Real, a universal God worshiped by all people of all religions. About this concept, Hick considers the Trinity to be nothing more than a penultimate symbol or a conceptual construction for Christians to respond to The Real. Meanwhile, Panikkar abstracts the Trinity into a 'Theandric' structure so that it can be universally accepted by people of other religions. Using the research library method, this article reveals that Barth's Trinitarian theology is still relevant in terms of providing theological inputs to remain faithful to the orthodox trinitarian faith in all the constructive endeavours of Christian theologians of religions.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: For the discipline of systematic theology, especially the doctrine of the Trinity, the conclusion of this article emphasises that any attempt to reconstruct the doctrine of the Trinity in the context of the theology of religions must not abandon the trinitarian grammar, which is in accordance with the testimony of the Bible, as stated by Karl Barth himself.

Keywords: Barth; revelation; Trinity; unity; Threeness; theology of religion.

Introduction

The 20th and early 21st centuries were periods of significant changes in theological direction, with the rediscovery and repositioning of the theology of the Trinity within the Christian faith. Baik (2018) expressed:

> [T]his contemporary rediscovery not only restores the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity from its eclipse but also goes further to approach every theological locus in the perspective of trinitarian theology. (p. 298)

Christoph Schwöbel called this new interest in Trinitarian theology as 'the renaissance or revival of Trinitarian theology' (Baik 2018:298). One of the main issues driving contemporary discussion about the Trinity is the relationship between the theology of the Trinity and the theology of religions. Kärkkäinen (2004:1) reveals that at the turn of the millennium, there were two significant developments in Christian theology at the ecumenical and international levels that continued to shape numerous new publications, conferences, and debates: the revival of the theology of the Trinity and the explosion of research into the theological relations between religions. McDermott and Netland (2014:47) argue that this revival of interest in the Trinity should become normative for future reflections on religion. This new movement is a type of resistance to the view that Trinitarian theology is an impediment to interreligious dialogue. In contrast, Trinitarian theology is currently seen as a theological framework for comprehending religious diversity.

One of the theologians who initiated the revival of the theology of the Trinity was Karl Barth. Barth contributed to rousing the theology of the Trinity from its 'spirit of inactivity' since Immanuel Kant, Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, and Albrecht Ritschl, who all deemed the Trinity not only secondary but also a superfluous addendum to Christian theology (Kärkkäinen 2004:4). Barth claims that what distinguishes Christian theology of God from the gods of other religions is the Trinity. Although Barth is known as a theologian who revitalised the theology of the Trinity, he did not make a specific theological discourse on Christian religious theology. However, this does not imply that Barth made no contribution to the formation of theology of religions in his Trinitarian theology.

This article seeks to demonstrate Barth's theology of the Trinity and its significance for the contemporary development of Christian theology of religions. To achieve this goal, we will first

explain how Karl Barth understands and places the position of Trinity theology in all his theology. In this section, we will discuss two important dimensions, such as the Trinity and Revelation; and on unity, Trinity, and the Triunity. After getting an overview of Barth's Trinitarian theology, in the next section, we will involve Barth's thoughts in the theology of religions, especially with the thoughts of John Hick and Raimundo Panikkar. The focus of this section is on how Barth's theological thinking about the Trinity can contribute to the development of Christian theology of religions. After that, a conclusion at the end of this article will be provided.

The theology of the Trinity in the thought of Karl Barth

Barth explained the theology of the Trinity explicitly in Church Dogmatics I/1. Heltzel and Winn (2011) stated:

> Barth placed the doctrine of the Trinity at the very beginning of the *Church Dogmatics*, arguing that it constituted the internal dynamic of God's speech to humanity and as such functioned as the basic grammar of Christian discourse. (p. 173)

Barth (1957) acknowledges that the doctrine of the Trinity, which is a church formulation based on biblical testimony, cannot be found explicitly in the Bible.

To know God in Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Bible, according to Barth, is to know God as he is. The form and content of revelation, according to Barth (1975:390), are inextricably linked: the biblically verified life history of Jesus and his status as the incarnate Word. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the fundamental assumption that underpins the New Testament proclamation of Christ's divinity: Jesus Christ is the Son solely on the grounds that He is the Son. This must not be attributed to any particular attribute or deed that we perceive Him to be, but rather on the grounds that He is God. Based on this assumption, all contemplation regarding Jesus, which simultaneously encompasses all contemplation regarding God, must commence and conclude with (Molnar 2020:24):

Barth (1975) made a firm statement:

> The doctrine of the Trinity is what basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian, and therefore what already distinguishes the Christian concept of revelation as Christian, in contrast to all other possible doctrines of God or concepts of revelation. (p. 301)

This statement shows the priority of Trinitarian theology in Barth's theology. Barth (1975) explained:

> In giving this doctrine a place of prominence our concern cannot be merely that it have this place externally but rather that its content be decisive and controlling for the whole of dogmatics. (p. 303)

Johnson (2011:27) stated, based on Barth's assertion, that Barth's interest was not merely chronological, but that the theology of the Trinity must shape all theological reflections.

The Trinity and revelation

In relation to the theology of revelation, Barth constructed his theology of the Trinity. According to Grenz (2001:35), Barth provides what could be described as overarching theological revelationism. This has two implications. Barth contends, on the one hand, that we can only know the Triune God through God's self-revelation in Christ and nowhere else. On the other hand, it also situates the study of the Trinity in systematic theology within the context of revelation theology (Kärkkäinen 2007:63).

Barth (1975:304) refers to Scripture to explain that 'the Christian concept of revelation already includes within it the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity'. Therefore, we cannot talk about revelation properly without discussing the doctrine of the Trinity from the very beginning:

> God's Word is God Himself in His revelation. For God reveals Himself as Lord. This key assertion contains the seeds of trinitarian doctrine within itself. It refers to God Himself in unimpaired unity yet also in unimpaired distinction as Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness. (Barth 1975:295)

God is subject, action, and goal. As Barth (1975:296) explains, 'God reveals Himself [as the Father, *supra nos*]. He reveals Himself *through Himself* [as the Son, *extra nos*]. He reveals *Himself* [as the Holy Spirit, *in nobis*]'.

According to Barth, the Triune God stands behind in the actual events of revelation. That is, the revelation of God and God are identical. God is a revealed God (Grenz 2001:35). Three questions are raised by Barth: Who is the God who reveals himself? How did the revelation happen? And what is the result of revelation? For Barth, the answer to these three questions is 'God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself through Himself. He reveals Himself' (Barth 1975:296). This means that God's self-revelation is 'the root of Trinitarian theology', in other words: God is the Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness (Kärkkäinen 2017:192). For Barth, God is *the subject* of revelation, *the act* of revelation, and *the object* of revelation. God as a subject who opens Himself and gives Himself to be known by humans, and the mediation of this process of presenting Himself is Himself. Himawan (2016) explained this further:

> God is the subject of revelation (i.e. the initiator and agent of the process of revelation), and He is also the object or content of that revelation (what is revealed and what is presented to mankind is not mere information about Himself but is Himself). And at the same time, He is the medium of this revelation (the medium of this revelation is not a natural instrument, but is Himself, namely God who became man). (p. 133)

The revelation of God is founded on God's existence. God is actually present in the revelation; therefore, it is God who discloses, God who is revealed, and God who is the result of the revelation (Heltzel & Winn 2011:175). Barth synthesises the revelation events and the Trinity doctrine by associating the three kinds of revelation with the three individuals of the Trinity: God the Father is the revealed one, the Son is the

revelation, and the Holy Spirit is the revealed one. The triadic conception of God as Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness represents the patristic notion that revelation is thought to originate from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Heltzel & Winn 2011:176). Each person of the Trinity plays an active role in the process of the revelation of God's Love to all of His creation.

Trinitarian theology, according to Barth, is an attempt to analyse and decipher truths that are Biblically derived about 'God reveals Himself as the Lord'. The revelation of God's lordship (i.e. Kingdom of God) is related specifically to Jesus Christ (Heltzel & Winn 2011:175). Barth's argument begins with a theo-epistemic concern about what it means for God to claim to be God. It is very important for Barth to emphasise that where we meet, or are found, in revelation is none other than God, that there is no God behind God's back who presents Himself in Jesus Christ (Heltzel & Winn 2011:175).

The theology of the Trinity in Barth's thought is integrally connected with Jesus Christ, the Word. Barth (1975) revealed:

> The Word is the one Lord. The Word is spoken by the Father before all time. The Word is light of light, very God of very God. The Word is spoken by God, not made. Alongside the statement that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal Father one may thus put the statement that He is the eternal Word of the Father who speaks from all eternity, or the eternal thought of the Father who thinks from all eternity, the Word in which God thinks Himself or expresses Himself by Himself. (p. 436)

Jesus Christ as God's self-revelation is identical with God. Kärkkäinen (2003:177) quotes Barth, 'the reality of Jesus Christ is that God Himself in person is actively present in the flesh. God Himself in person is the Subject of real human being and acting'. Christ plays the role of mediator between the fully transcendent God and humanity. According to Barth, Christ is the agent of revelation and reconciliation (Kärkkäinen 2003:177). In His divinity Christ represented God to man, and in His humanity Christ represented man to God. In His incarnation, Christ made it possible for humans to share in the covenant that God has made. In that covenant, God acts on our behalf through and in Christ (Kärkkäinen 2003:177).

What about the position of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity? According to Kärkkäinen (2007:70), Barth emphasised that the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son who works *ad extra* and for us, but that He exists forever, the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. Barth's way of introducing the Holy Spirit is by emphasising that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Quoting Barth, Kärkkäinen (2007) says:

> [I]ts intention was to recognize the fact that in God's revelation the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that he cannot be separated from him, that He is only the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (p. 70)

Barth's way of trying to unite the Spirit and Christ in revelation is by addressing both the subjective and objective realities of God's revelation. The Incarnation of the Son is an objective reality and in this sense is independent of human appropriation (Kärkkäinen 2007:71). The Holy Spirit, nevertheless, is a subjective reality that enables mankind to experience God's revelation in Christ. In other words, according to Barth, revelation in Christ cannot be acknowledged or received by people apart from the Holy Spirit's intervention. Hart (1993) clearly illustrates this point:

> [P]recisely because revelation is an event, a relationship that 'straddles objectivity and subjectivity' and in which we are effectively drawn into the triune life of God, knowing the Father through the Son in that koinonia which is created by the Spirit. (p. 135)

The revelation of the Trinity cannot be grasped or controlled by human minds. 'We know only as we are in turn known by a God who draws us into relationship with himself' (Hart 1993:135). Hart (1993) stated, according to Barth:

> [T]he truth of God is known only from within what he describes as 'a self-enclosed circle,' namely, the triune circle of God's self-knowing, into which humans are drawn in the event of revelation. (p. 135)

Continued Hart (1993):

> [T]his revelation, therefore, is not universally known or knowable, and humans have no natural aptitude for it. It is an act of sovereign grace on part of God himself when anyone finds himself drawn into it. (p. 135)

Unity, Threeness, and Triunity

Barth argues that God is singular. Baptism is performed in the One name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and not in His three names. This demonstrates that the Christian faith does not recognise three objects, or three Gods, but only one (Torrance 2000:80).

Barth (1980:205) rejects any kind of tritheism, insisting that the early church refused to place any value on tritheism, 'three different personalities, three self-existent individuals with their own special selfconsciousness, cognition, volition, activity, effects, revelation and name'. In this regard, Barth (1975:355) famously prefers to talk about 'modes [ways] of being' (*Seinsweisen*) in God, by which he meant to convey what Augustine did when Augustine used the term 'person' for lack of a better term to speak of the three persons in God, namely Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without falling into tritheism or modalism.

Because he consistently asserts that God is eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in and of Himself, this terminology does not imply that he supports modalism. A Triune God who loves freely would exist, notwithstanding His lack of activity as a creator, reconciler, or redeemer. According to Barth, the triune nature of God in history, which is a modalistic concept, is not the only reason for the existence of the living and eternal God; the distinctions within the Trinity are vital to this end. For Barth (1975:382), 'modalism finally entails a denial of God'.

Barth emphasised the unity of the Trinity, but he did not neglect the Threeness of the Trinity. Alan Torrance (2000:80) cites a statement by Barth, 'far from being abrogated by the "threeness" of the persons, the unity of the essence of God consists in the Threeness of the persons'. Regarding the discussion for the term 'person', Barth raises a point that is both interesting and controversial. For Barth, God can only have one personality. According to Barth, if Jesus Christ is another personality distinct from the Father, He cannot be the personal revelation of the Father (Grenz 2001:37). This consideration made Barth reject the term 'person' to refer to members of the Trinity, because in modern eras the word must imply 'personality'. Furthermore, he also does not regard God as a threefold subject, as this would incline to Tritheism (Grenz 2001:37).

The modern concept of the person as the centre of self-consciousness obscures it even further, for Barth sees in this that, when applied to the Trinity, it can be a recipe for Tritheism, with three separate beings, each as an 'I' (Letham 2004:276). Because of this, Barth chose the German term *Seinsweisen*, which translates in English as 'mode of being' (Letham 2004:276). This term was favoured by Barth to translate the word hypostasis, the term used to describe the three 'persons' of the Trinity. With the term, he hoped to express the same thing as 'person' in classical Trinitarianism, while avoiding the problems posed by modern usage. Because of the use of the term 'mode of being', Barth was accused of being an adherent of modalism (Letham 2004:275). Barth (1975) shows the use of the term:

> [T]hus to the same God who in unimpaired unity is the Revealer, the revelation and the revealedness, there is also ascribed in unimpaired differentiation within Himself this threefold mode of being. (p. 299)

McCormack (2012:97) asserts that Barth's fundamental understanding of the Trinity is that God is a single subject with three modes of existence. God is the one subject three times – not 'three divine I's', but the 'one divine I' three times. Barth (1975) stated:

> The name of Father, Son and Spirit means that God is the one God in threefold repetition, and this in such a way that the repetition itself is grounded in His Godhead, so that it implies no alteration in His Godhead, and yet in such a way also that He is the one God only in this repetition, so that His one Godhead stands or falls with the fact that He is God in this repetition, but for that very reason He is the one God in each repetition. (p. 350)

The term 'repetition' (Wiederholung) that Barth meant is a metaphorical term. The names Father, Son and Spirit mean that God is one God in three repetitions and He is one God in every repetition (Torrance 2000:80). Torrance (2000:81) stated, 'This "repetition" is what he terms an "eternal repetition" that exists from all eternity; that is, it implies no alteration or change in the Godhead'. McCormack argues that the term 'repetition' aims to secure the 'substantial equality' of the three persons of the Trinity. This was Barth's way of ensuring that no subordinationism could creep in. The concept of 'repetition', in other words, performs the same function as the traditional concept of *homoousios* (McCormack 2012:98).

The point regarding the 'mode of being' is further elaborated by Barth by discussing the concept of perichoresis. Barth (1975) said:

> [T]he communion of the three modes of being along the lines of the doctrine of 'perichoresis,' according to which all three, without forfeiture or mutual dissolution of independence, reciprocally interpenetrate each other and inexist in one another. (p. 396)

God is a communion of love in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in their indwelling relationship with one another. Therefore, God's existence is relational, and perichoresis is an abbreviation for 'dialectical union and distinction' of the one God who in intimate communion is irreducibly triple (Heltzel & Winn 2011:176). Barth (1975) refers to perichoresis as:

> [T]he final sum of the two factors under discussion, namely, the doctrine of *unitas in trinitate* and *trinitas in unitate*. It must in fact be regarded as an important form of the dialectic needed to work out the concept of 'triunity'. (p. 370)

Regarding the concept of the Triunity, Barth (1975) says:

> The triunity of God obviously implies, then, the unity of Father, Son and Spirit among themselves. God's essence is indeed one, and even the different relations of origin do not entail separations. They rather imply-for where there is difference there is also fellowship-a definite participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being, and indeed, since the modes of being are in fact identical with the relations of origin, a complete participation of each mode of being in the other modes of being. Just as in revelation, according to the biblical witness, the one God may be known only in the Three and the Three only as the one God, so none of the Three may be known without the other Two but each of the Three only with the other Two. (p. 370)

Barth's Trinitarian theology and Christian theology of religions

The important emphasis of the theology of the Trinity in Barth's thought is 'the doctrine of the Trinity is what basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian'. This belief is a fundamental starting point for starting a theology of Christian religions. Kärkkäinen (2005:166) said, 'for Barth the doctrine of the Trinity served as a criterion for distinguishing the God of the Bible from other gods'. Trinitarian Christian theology that builds on the parameters of biblical and classical theology maintains that talks about the Father, Son, and Spirit are the only possible ways of identifying the God of the Bible. This means that the only way to speak of God is to refer to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. If so, then the vague 'mythological' talk about God is problematic (Kärkkäinen 2005:166).

When opposed to the prevalent pluralistic perspective on religion, which asserts that all religions are essentially different ways of worshipping the same God, the distinctiveness of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity becomes apparent. Similar

perspectives can be found in John Hick's thinking. According to Hick, all religions should be considered as culturally and historically conditioned human responses to:

[A]n ultimate ineffable Reality which is the source and ground of everything, and which is such that in so far as the religious traditions are in soteriological alignment with it they are contexts of salvation/liberation. (McDermott & Netland 2014:48)

According to Hick, religion is an understanding of the universe, including a way of life consistent with that understanding, which involves reference, beyond the natural world, to God or to gods or to the absolute or to some transcendent order or some transcendent process (Hick 1973:33).

Hick believes it is more appropriate to refer to God as the Real, because the term the Real is not laden with theistic connotations and, consequently, the concept is not the exclusive domain of any particular religious tradition, despite the fact that every religious tradition is familiar with the concept (Hick 1989:10–11). The Real is so beyond human comprehension that all religions are inadequate in relation to it. Consequently, a religion is merely an experience with God that is constrained by the cultural conditions of human geography (Hick 1973:101). According to Hick, this form of religious experience is described as 'experiencing-as'. In other words, our experience of the world is also 'experiencing-as'. Therefore, according to Hick, all religions cannot be completely true; perhaps none are completely true, and perhaps they are all partially true. Religious experience, according to Hick, is a valid basis for religious belief. Hick (1995:50) states, 'an ultimate divine reality which is being differently conceived, and therefore differently experienced, from within the different religio-cultural ways of human being'.

'The Real' is John Hick's term for referring to the ultimate reality in religions (McDermott & Netland 2014:49). For Muslims, the highest ontological is Allah; for Christians, it is God the Most Holy Trinity; Hindus speak of Brahman; Buddhists refer to Emptiness or Nirvana; among others. According to Hick, these terms are actually *penultimate symbols* or conceptual constructions through which various religions respond to The Real, in which various religious languages such as Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, each refer to divine phenomena or configurations of divine phenomena (McDermott & Netland 2014:49). From Barth's perspective, Hick's thesis is so inconsistent that it doesn't even reflect what the Bible says about the Trinity. According to Barth, the Trinity is God who makes Himself known to humanity. When Barth refers to God as a Trinity – Father, Son, and Spirit – he implies that the Trinity God is the highest ontological self-disclosure, and not only a symbol or concept, as Hick suggests.

Most theologians of religions are reluctant to use the Trinity in their assessments of other religions. They prefer to use abstract concepts derived from the Trinity and not the Trinity itself. One of them is Raimundo Panikkar, who provides a very clear example of this. Panikkar writes that the Trinity is the Christian word for a 'theandric' structure of reality

'permeates all realms of being and consciousness' (McDermott & Netland 2014:77). These represent three ways of thinking about the ultimate union between the divine and the human. The first way is 'iconolatry', whereby the divine is translated in human form; the second is 'personalism', where a personal love relationship is placed between the two; the third is Advaita mysticism, where one contemplates the Absolute as the basis of all things (McDermott & Netland 2014:77). In other words, it can be said that the Father represents nihilism and apatheticism, the Son represents theism, and the Soul stands for monism. For Pannikar, the Trinity is a symbol for a deeper ontological pattern of non-duality (the idea that there is no ultimate difference) (McDermott & Netland 2014:77). Furthermore, according to Panikkar, the Trinity is 'the junction where the authentic spiritual dimensions of all religions meet' (Kärkkäinen 2003:305). Panikkar firmly believes that the idea of the Trinity is not exclusively Christian, but can be found in all religions, though in various forms (Kärkkäinen 2003:305).

Panikkar (1978:2) calls what he experienced an 'existential adventure', a 'human pilgrimage' whose difficulty is reflected in what he says, 'I "left" as a Christian, I "found" myself a Hindu and I "returned" a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian'. Panikkar discusses his religious consciousness not as monistic or dualistic but cosmotheandric. The 'cosmo-the-andric' religious experience encompasses the World, God, and Man in a unity. This is also called advaitic. In his book, Panikkar (2004:33) says 'Neither monism nor dualism, reality is advitiyan, non dualist'.

Panikkar proposes, through the lens of the Trinity, a theological paradigm of religions. Cosmotheandric places himself at the centre of his Trinity and religious pluralism-related reasoning. According to Panikkar (1993:60), the divine, the human, and the world, regardless of what we refer to them as, are three irreducible dimensions that comprise the real, extant reality. For Panikkar (1996:276), there is no God without man and the world. There is no man without God and the world. No world without God and man.

Panikkar employs the term perichoresis, which is traditionally used to characterise the intra-Trinity (immanent) relationship, because the three elements are intricately interconnected and interdependent. Panikkar coined the term to describe his cosmotheandric vision, in which the world (cosmos), God (theos), and man (aner) constitute the overall structure of reality. He believes that Christianity or the Divine cannot monopolise the Trinity. Every aspect of reality bears the imprint of the Trinity (Panikkar 1982:128). Panikkar (1996:276) interprets and transcends the traditional language of Trinitarian perichoresis through his cosmotheandric lens.

Meanwhile, Barth's firmly believed that the Christian God can only be recognised as Father, Son, and Spirit, contrary to popular thinking. The biblical God cannot be understood apart from historical events and time as an abstraction. The only way to know the Triune God who became one of us

in the Incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth and who poured out His Spirit, the Spirit who raised the Son from the dead, is via His actions in history and time (Kärkkäinen 2005:162).

Still related to Panikkar's thoughts, Johnson provides a sharp analysis of Panikkar's thoughts. According to Johnson (2011), Panikkar reinterprets Trinitarian theology in the light of non-Christian religious experience:

> First, he identifies three spiritualities that are said to arise purely from an 'empirical assessment' of religious experience (independent of any particular religious tradition). Then he offers a novel interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity, on the basis of these spiritualities, as constitutive ground for them. By reinterpreting the doctrine on the basis of non-Christian religious experience, Panikkar violates the basic theological grammar of the vestige tradition that involves reading the 'book of the world' in light of the 'book of Scripture'. (p. 167)

In this case, Johnson sees Barth's thinking as helping to explain Panikkar's trinitarian grammatical problems, 'Barth insists that the root of the doctrine of the Trinity is 'the threefold yet single lordship of God as Father, Son, and Spirit' (the biblical concept of revelation) (Johnson 2011:167). Barth (1975) said:

> When we say that the doctrine of the Trinity grows from this root we are saying critically and polemically that it does not stem from any other root. It is the fact that it does not stem from any other root which we must now consider specifically. (p. 334)

Based on Barth's language, Panikkar implicitly puts forward the second root of the theology of the Trinity (non-Christian religious experience), which ultimately shallows the real root (God's self-revelation in the Scriptures) (Johnson 2011:168). If so, all talk about God is about the 'alien God'. To garner support for his theology of religious experience, Panikkar subtly replaces the persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) with a trinity of transcendence (or emptiness, relationality, and immanence) (Johnson 2011:182).

Conclusion

Based on what has been written in the previous sections, we can see that Barth's Theology of the Trinity makes a real contribution to the contemporary Christian theological discussion of religion. This theological framework offers a means of critically evaluating Christian theological endeavours aimed at redefining the concept of the Trinity within the context of interreligious cooperation. Barth asserts that the Trinity serves as a distinctive attribute of the Christian deity, setting it apart from the notion of divinity found in other religious traditions. Barth's theological perspective on the Trinity prompts a re-evaluation of Christian theology, emphasising the necessity of adhering to trinitarian linguistic structures that align with the biblical witness.

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