IS THERE AN AUTHORITY ANALOGY BETWEEN THE TRINITY AND MARRIAGE? UNTANGLING ARGUMENTS OF SUBORDINATION AND ONTOLOGY IN EGALITARIAN-COMPLEMENTARIAN DISCOURSE

PAUL C. MAXWELL[*]

Abstract: Both egalitarian and complementarian positions on gender relations in marriage appeal to the Trinity as evidence for their view, resting on an authority analogy between the Father-Son relationship and the husband-wife relationship (whether to establish the existence of authority, or lack thereof, within both Father-Son and husband-wife relationships). The thesis of this article is that the metaphysical statuses of the Trinitarian relations do not serve as evidence for or against either view, because no such analogy exists. The argument contains three elements: (1) a categorical taxonomy with which to classify the various ways one can predicate metaphysical truths of the Trinitarian relations; (2) an evaluation of test arguments for and against the complementarian appeal to the Trinity, made on the basis of the categorical taxonomy; and (3) the dangers of maintaining an authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage for future work on a theology of gender.

Key Words: Trinity, gender, egalitarianism, complementarianism, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Calvin, queer theology, subordinationism

There is a renewed trend in evangelical theology, and it is to appeal to the Trinity in theological argumentation.[1] This is appropriate, in that the Trinity is arguably *the* indispensable element of Christian orthodoxy. And yet, while the Trinity is certainly significant, along with its popularity comes the problem of its misuse.

[*] Paul Maxwell is a Ph.D. student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2065 Half Day Road, Deerfield, IL 60015. He may be contacted at paulcmaxwell@gmail.com.

[1] For example, the triperspectivalism of John Frame and Vern Poythress appeals most basically to "the absolute tripersonality of biblical theism" as a basis for their model for all of theology, rooted in the transcendental Trinitarian argumentation of Cornelius Van Til (John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010], 9). Cf. Vern S. Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1999); idem, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001); idem, *In the Beginning was the Word: Language—A God-Centered Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009). Even Frame's student Kevin Vanhoozer, arguably his most mainstream mentee, of whom Frame says, "Of all my students, he has probable made the greatest impression in the contemporary theological world," regularly formats his arguments according to the three persons of the Trinity — most famously in his book which has three chapters of critique (according to the three persons), and three chapters of Christian argumentation (in mirror form), *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); Frame's comment in *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015), 546. Even in practical theology, it has taken prominence, e.g. in Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: 2012), Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), and Joe Thorn, *Experiencing the Trinity: The Grace of God for the People of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

Recently, there has arisen a trend to use the Trinity as theological evidence for doctrines that are, at best, indirect in their relationship to the Trinity doctrine. Certainly the Trinity supplies direction for the Christian life in many ways. Yet, in order to protect the integrity, not only of the Trinity doctrine, but of the other doctrines to which it is intimately and directly linked, it is necessary to scrutinize its use as theological evidence (and even more its modification for the sake of its use as evidence).

One recent such questionable usage has occurred in the discourse between egalitarian and complementarian views on marriage. Egalitarianism is a view of gender relationships that rejects all gender-based authority hierarchies, on the basis of rejecting as a heresy the notion that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father according to his person—that any metaphysical insertion of "authority hierarchy" into the distinguishing properties of the Trinitarian persons indicates a decrease in dignity, in the Trinity and in marriage.[2] Complementarianism defends the authority of the husband over the wife, by appeal to the Son's eternal functional subordination to the Father—positing that the two persons are equal in nature and dignity like the husband and wife, yet there exists an authority hierarchy between the two.[3]

So, which is it? Should the wife submit to her husband because the Son eternally submits to the Father? Or should complementarianism be rejected because subordination is not an ontological property of the Son? It may be helpful to ask both questions at once—does the relationship between the Father and the Son prove egalitarianism or complementarianism?

It *is* possible to discern whether there is a prescriptive authority analogy between the Father-Son relationship and the husband-wife relationship. But such a determination must be made on the basis of the categorically appropriate theological evidence.

This article will unfold in three stages. First, we will investigate and organize the basic Trinitarian categories relevant to egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity. Second, appeals to the Trinity will be evaluated in light of those categories. Third, this article will highlight the deficiencies of these kinds of appeals,

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[2] Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002); idem, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006); idem, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012); Millard Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009); Jack and Judith Balswick, "A Trinitarian Model of Marriage," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 325–38; Michael F. Bird and Robert Shillaker, "Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles: A Response to Recent Discussion," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism.*

[3] Bruce A. Ware, "Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homoousios*? A Response to Millard Erickson and Tom McCall," in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 237–38; Wayne Grudem, *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); idem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004); John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006); Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relations, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).

and supply a corrective theological foundation for the authority hierarchy in mar-riage. The thesis of this article is as follows: *the egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity overreach the structural continuities between the Father-Son and husband-wife rela-tionship.* This thesis will be proven first of all in an indirect fashion by articulating a categorical taxonomy for predicating realities of the Trinitarian persons, and sec-ondarily by demonstrating the categorical inconsistencies of both sorts of appeals when measured against the taxonomy. It is on the basis of this taxonomy that the thesis will be demonstrated. The misdirected appeals, if taken to their logical end, create consequently a stratum of proof which is both troublesome and unnecessary for the complementarian position, which the author holds to be true.

Figure 1
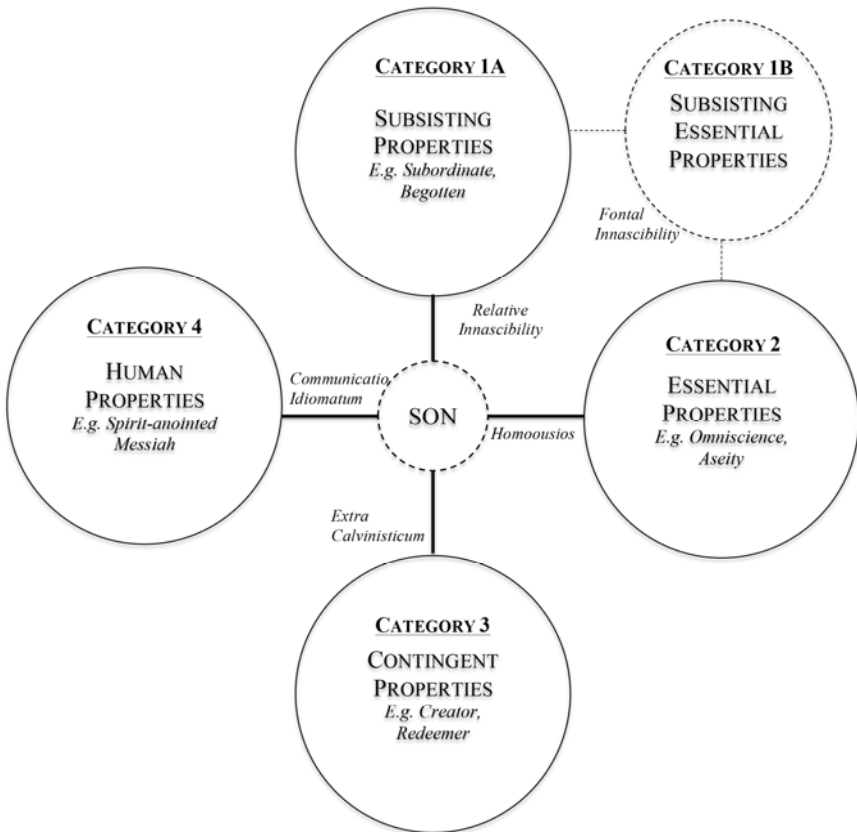
I. FOUR WAYS TO SAY "SON"

Before one is able to make judgments about possible Father-Son/husband-wife analogies, one must first determine the various ways in which it possible to predicate "subordination" of the Son. Only then can one properly assess the sort of

analogy in question between the Trinity and marriage. Most of the heat that comes from the debate between egalitarians and complementarians over whether there is an authority hierarchy in the immanent Trinity boils down to a lack of clarity over which of these four categories—which will be explained below—Scripture requires when calling the second person of the Trinity "Son."

Figure 1 will serve as a visual taxonomy for the relevant Trinitarian categories. This same figure will later serve as a diagnostic tool for classifying and evaluating egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity.

There are four different ways of attributing properties—and derivatively, of attributing subordination—to the Son. By distinguishing the four ways that we can call the second person of the Trinity "Son," we elucidate the four classes of categories in which the term "subordination" could fall, as a personal property of a Trinitarian person. Each *way* of attributing a property to the Son produces a different *category* of property. By "property," I mean "roughly, an attribute, characteristic, feature, trait, or aspect."[4] Each of the four Categories of properties delimits a different genre of attributes, characteristics, features, traits, and aspects of the Son, according to four different Protestant dogmas. By clearly articulating each Category of property, the heresies of subordinationism and Sabellianism, as well as the Trinitarian appeals of egalitarians and complementarians, will be easier to locate and juxtapose.

Before each Category is identified, it is important to mention the dotted circle at the center of Figure 1—"SON"—which is not a Category of property *per se*, but is rather the terminus of the properties. For our purposes, the middle dotted circle functions merely as a locus of property-possibility for all conceivable Christological predicates. In other words, solid line circles represent proposed ways of saying "Son," and the dotted line represents the receptacle of theological hypotheses—i.e. the second person of the Trinity *in theory*, void of metaphysical nuance other than the name "Son."

1. *Subsisting properties (Category 1).* Category 1 delimits the relative properties of the Son—that is, that unique class of properties which ontologically differentiate the Son from the Father, and the Son from the Spirit.

In terms of Category 1, the Son is "Son" as a subsisting relation, who is eternally and immanently begotten of the Father. The "kind" of properties that can be predicated of the Son in Category 1 are "subsisting properties." In other words, whatever it means that the persons of the Trinity exist in their own unique way— let's call that kind of unique existence "subsistence"—those are the unique sorts of truths contained in the umbrella term "subsisting properties."[5] These properties are

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[4] Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 751. A more concrete definition is: properties are "meanings of predicates or abstract singular terms." D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver, "Introduction," in *Properties* (Oxford Readings in Philosophy; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 25.

[5] The Reformed scholastics described the persons as modes that are "minor real distinctions" (*distinctio realis minor*). This is a legitimate and orthodox Trinitarian formulation. This formulation in itself is made to avoid the errors of modalism and Arianism, charges which egalitarian and complementarian opponents make of one another (listen to the debate between Tom McCall and Keith Yandell [egalitari-

truths which have their only rationale in the relationships *among* the persons of the Trinity. No other context grants subsisting properties meaningful theological value than the interrelatedness of the three divine persons, relative to one another. In this category, hypothetical properties exist for the Son such as "generation," "begotten-ness," and "subordination."[6]

The term "Son" is a way of saying that the second person of the Trinity is be-gotten of the Father. Begottenness is the property which distinguishes the Son from the Father. Inversely, the property which distinguishes the Father from the Son is called "innascibility." Innascibility is the incommunicable property of the Father that distinguishes his mode of subsistence from the Son and the Spirit. Spe-cifically, the term "innascibility" means "without source." Richard Muller explains, "Whereas both Son and Spirit are from another, either by begetting or procession, the Father is . . . from none, having nothing by communication."[7] Therefore, Cate-gory 1 contains all the Trinitarian predicates which exist by virtue of the Father's innascibility—whether begottenness, spiration, or subordination.

2. *Essential properties (Category 2).* Category 2 contains all Christological predi-cates which the Son has by virtue of his divine essence. Category 2 properties are truths necessarily predicated about the Son because he is God. In the same way that Category 1 properties are all those truths predicated about the Son relative to the Father's innascibility, Category 2 properties are predicated of the Son by virtue of his *homoousios*—his shared essence—with the Father.[8] Properties in this category include communicable and incommunicable attributes such as omnipotence, om-niscience, aseity, and all other divine attributes common among the divine persons because of their shared essence. Category 2 properties are truths predicated of the single essence of God, and because it is the selfsame essence of the Father, Son, and Spirit, they are properties predicated of all three persons equally. When we say "Son" in a Category 2 sense, we say it with an eye on his divine attributes, inten-

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ans] and Bruce Ware and Wayne Grudem [complementarians] at http://henrycenter.tiu.edu /resource/do-relations-of-authority-and-submission-exist-eternally-among-the-persons-of-the-godhead). Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 4:192–93. Muller distinguishes between five "modes" conceived in scholastic thought: (1) rational; (2) formal; (3) virtual; (4) real; and (5) personal (4 and 5 are likely the same). It was the fourth mode, *realiter*, which was utilized to avoid pitfalls of Sabellianism and tritheism. However, a sub-distinction was required between a major real distinction (*distinctio realis maior*) and a minor real distinction (*distinctio realis minor*) in order to avoid attributing separate essences to the persons. See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1 (ed. James T. Dennison; trans. George Musgrave Giger; Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992), 3.7.1.

[6] It is in this category especially that significant problems arise in egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity. It will therefore be discussed more in its own section below.

[7] Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 29 (s.v. "agennēsia (ἀγεννησία)"). The Greek term for innascibility elucidates its semantic contribution to the Trinitarian formula—ἀγεννησία, or "unbegotten," in contrast to John's term for the distinguishing personal property of the Son: μονογενὴς, or "only begotten" (John 1:14).

[8] Richard Muller explains that *homoousios* means "*of the same substance, consubstantial*…. It ultimately in-dicates the numerical unity of essence in the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, against the Arian contention of three distinct substances." Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 139 (s.v. "homoousios").

tionally contrasted with the divine personal property which distinguishes him from the Father and the Spirit—"*God*, the Son."

3. *Contingent properties (Category 3).* Category 3 delimits properties of the Son which are true because he freely determined to act relative to creation. These properties are exclusively divine, yet they are not in any way necessary properties of the Son. For example, the Son freely decided (with the Father and the Spirit) to take on properties such as "Creator" and "Redeemer."[9] Category 3 properties are truths about the Son which are unique to the Son *as God*, which are not necessary to his divine essence, nor necessary to distinguish him from the Father and the Spirit.

These properties are predicated by virtue of a doctrine called the *extra calvinisticum*. The *extra calvinisticum* is a theological convention used to communicate this truth: "The finite humanity of Christ is incapable of receiving or grasping finite attributes such as omnipresence, omnipotence, or omniscience."[10]

The *extra calvinisticum* makes theological space for properties to be predicated of the Son, which are neither necessary to his divinity, nor attributed to his humanity. These are uniquely and contingently realized necessary properties, which are a product of their being actualized, not by divine necessity, but by divine freedom. Therefore, God's being Creator and Redeemer are non-necessary (nevertheless divine) properties, which are actualizations of his necessary properties (omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.) relative to a created terminus. The *extra calvinisticum* was not originally used for this purpose, but it is a theological makeshift home for Category 3 properties. In terms of Category 3, we say "Son" to refer to

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[9] Dolf te Velde summarizes Antonie Vos's timely insights for the issue of contingent properties: "The claim that all divine properties are *essential*, causes difficulties in the case of *relational* properties. If God has a relation *R* to *b* and if this is an essential property of God, the result is that b exists necessarily in all possible worlds (since God exists in all possible worlds, together with God's essential properties). The denial of accidental (relational) properties in God here leads to the consequence of a strictly necessary world. The other extreme position, stating that God has only accidental properties, is equally false." Dolf te Velde, *The Doctrine of God in Reformed Orthodoxy, Karl Barth, and the Utrecht School* (Studies in Reformed Theology 25; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 568. This is a correct but suspicious statement. The hallmark of open theism is the insistence of accidental, and therefore mutable, properties of God. But the need for the doctrine of God is not to classify God's necessary attributes as accidental (as open theists do), but rather to delimit a class of (perhaps accidental) properties to categorize realities only contingently true of God. For example, Ronald Nash comments, "A property is essential to some being if and only if the loss of property entails that that being ceases to exist." Ronald Nash, *Concept of God: An Exploration of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 16. While God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and therefore cannot cease to be that which he has contingently promised to be, he nevertheless was not less than God before he entered into relationship with creation and made those promises (as Creator, Redeemer, etc.). Therefore, a tentative notion of accidental properties may be the closest metaphysical category to Category 3 in the taxis presented in this paper. In summary, the danger of introducing accidental properties into theology proper is only present when the divine essence becomes open accidental classification, at which point the entire project of God-talk is compromised. It is therefore important to state that accidentality is helpful only to classify properties which are unique to God, but which are nonetheless communicable and freely assumed. For a survey of various treatments of this issue, see Michael L. Chiavone, *The One God: A Critically Developed Doctrine of Trinitarian Unity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009).

[10] Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 111.

his Lordship over creation irrespective of his raised lordship, which is not a necessary divine attribute, but a contingent one.

The most concrete way to think about this concept is to conceive of the second person of the Trinity's sovereignly, but genuinely, ruling over the contingent realities of the created order in the OT. Category 3 represents those properties which the Son can have precisely because he is simultaneously divine and condescended, but which are necessarily predicated neither of his deity nor of his humanity.

4. *Human properties (Category 4).* Category 4 delimits properties true of the Son by virtue of his human nature. In terms of Category 4, the Son is the "Son of God" in the same sense that Adam is declared to be the son of God in Luke 3:38—he is Son of God as the second Adam, as the human representative head of humanity, and as the one of whom the Father says in Mark 3:17, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." He is the exalted and enthroned Son of God in glorified human body, and his obedience is classified accordingly (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).[11] All properties predicated of the Son by virtue of his human body, whether in a state of humiliation or exaltation, are Category 4 properties.

The doctrine by which Category 4 properties are predicated is the *communicatio idiomatum.* The *commmunicatio idiomatum* is the doctrine that properties are predicates of the Son according to each nature (divine and human), yet while maintaining a strict respect for the distinction between those natures.[12] David E. Wilhite provides a straightforward summary of the doctrine: "Things pertaining to Jesus's human nature can also, via the incarnation, be spoken about 'God' and vice versa."[13]

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[11] The notion that Jesus's intercessory ministry is a proof of his subordination to the Father in the immanent Trinity overreaches the available biblical evidence. Jesus's intercession in the case of both Rom 8:34 and Heb 7:25 is relative to his priestly ministry as the raised and glorified second Adam, an activity which could conceivably still take place even if the Son was not subordinate to the Father in the immanent Trinity. See Richard Gaffin, "Redemption and Resurrection: An Exercise in Biblical-Systematic Theology," *Them* 27 (2002): 16–31. One of Gaffin's exegetical hallmarks is to prevent using the economic as definitive proof for the ontological without clear permission from the text. Cf. Wayne Grudem, who uses Rom 8:34 and Heb 7:25 as proof texts for the Son's immanent subordination in "Doctrinal Deviations in Evangelical-Feminist Arguments about the Trinity," in *One God in Three Persons*, 17–45. This will be addressed further below.

[12] This notion follows the Chalcedonian Creed, which dictates that the Son is "one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in the one Person and Subsistence, not parted or divided into to persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ." Ingolf U. Dalferth highlights the Chalcedonian grammar of the *communicatio idiomatum*: the Son is "both the subject component of christological statements (Jesus Christ) and the predicate component (divinity and humanity) as well as their link (Jesus Christ is *vere homo et vere deus*)." Ingolf U. Dalferth, *Crucified and Resurrected: Restructuring the Grammar of Christology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 147.

[13] David E. Wilhite, *The Gospel According to Heretics: Discovering Orthodoxy through Early Christological Conflicts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 162. Wilhite continues: "While God the Son is eternal, immutable, impassible, and immortal, he (not another subject or person) assumed human nature and aged, changed, suffered, and died in that human nature (though not in the divine)." Wilhite later argues that without the *communicatio idiomatum*, there is nothing to hold a Christology back from Nestorianism (p. 164). For the historic background for much of this debate, see Andrew Louth, "Christology in the East from the

One practical way of demonstrating this doctrine is by contrasting two verses of Scripture. In a Category 4 sense, we affirm what Jesus says about his own lack of knowledge about the day of his return: "Concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32). Yet, in a Category 3 sense,[14] we affirm that the Son does indeed know the day of his return, because even as the incarnate Son, he does not cease to retain Category 2 and 3 predicates: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'" (Isa 46:9–10). So, the *communicatio idiomatum* allows us to predicate of the Son Category 2 and 3 properties, along with Category 4 properties, simultaneously: the Son does, and does not, know the day of his return—his lack of knowledge relative to his human nature, and his omniscience relative to his divine nature.

This entire fourfold categorical taxis is in a sense an extension of the theological grammar provided by the *communicatio idiomatum*. Ingolf Dalferth rightly assesses that "the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* does indeed explicate the truth conditions of true communication concerning Jesus Christ."[15] And it is on the basis of this taxonomy that we may now proceed into the deeper Trinitarian waters that will help us to parse and evaluate the various gender-related appeals to the Trinity.

II. "GOD OF GOD": FINDING SPACE IN THE TRINITY FOR SUBORDINATION

Category 1 is an especially difficult category of properties, because it is here that the heresies of modalism, subordinationism, and tritheism easily come into play. By better understanding the nature of Category 1 Christological properties, egalitarians and complementarians will have a better grasp on what sort of subordination is (or isn't) allowable to be predicated of the Son.

As mentioned above, the operative theological doctrine for this category is the innascibility of the Father—the doctrine that the Father is uniquely without source. It is necessary, in order to distinguish between the kinds of claims being

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Council of Chalcedon to John Damascene," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology* (ed. Francesca Aran Murphy; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 139–53; Brian Lugioyo, "Martin Luther's Eucharistic Christology," in *Oxford Handbook of Christology*, 267–83; Mark W. Elliott, "Christology in the Seventeenth Century," in *Oxford Handbook of Christology*, 297–314.

[14] Because the Son's omniscience about creation terminates on creation, and not himself, that omniscience technically falls under Category 3, because it is not necessary for the Son to know creation in order for him to be God, because it is not necessary for creation to exist at all in order for him to be God. We would also say that God is omniscient in the Category 2 sense, indicating that God has exhaustive knowledge of himself (1 Cor. 2:10), which is necessary to his being God.

[15] Dalferth, *Crucified and Resurrected*, 148. Muller defines the *communicatio idiomatum* this way: "*communication of proper qualities;* a term used in Christology to describe the way in which the properties, or *idiomata*, of each nature are communicated to or interchanged in the unity of the person…. [It indicates] a communication of proper qualities by synecdoche. Since synecdoche is a figure by which the whole is named for one of its parts, this *communio* is not merely a human invention but a *praedicatio vera*, a true predication of attributes, but of the person only and not between the natures." Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 72, 74.

made by egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity, to understand the distinction between two *kinds* of innascibility—relative innascibility and fontal innascibility. Thomas Aquinas represents the category of relative innascibility, which corresponds to Category 1A in Figure 1, while Bonaventure represents fontal innascibility, which corresponds to Category 1B.

1. *Category 1A: Subsisting properties (relative innascibility).* The doctrine of innascibility is intended to clarify the relationship between Father and Son. Athanasius says, "The Father is the source (αρχή) of the Son and his begetter."[16] The Christian tradition has distinguished between *having* an αρχή (as the Son), or *being ἀναρχή* (which means "without beginning," or "without a principle of divinity").

Thomas Aquinas renders to the "innascibility" of the Father as a purely negative category, to indicate that "the Father is not generated."[17] Put more strongly, "For Thomas . . . innascibility contributes nothing to the constitution of the Father, even at the level of conceptualization."[18]

2. *Category 1B: Subsisting essential properties (fontal innascibility).* On the other hand, for Bonaventure, innascibility indicates not only the Father's unbegottenness, but his headship in the very Godhead itself *before* and *over* the Son. Bonaventure asks "Whether the term 'unborn' or 'innascibility' is used substantially or relatively."[19] This is where we coin the term "subsisting essential properties" in Figure 1 for the purposes of this paper.[20] Bonaventure integrates the personal divine properties (i.e.

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[16] Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.14. Athanasius again: "For the Word, being Son of the One God, is referred to Him of whom also He is; so that Father and the Son are two, yet the Monad of the Godhead is indivisible and inseparable. And thus too we preserve one Beginning [*arche*] of the Godhead and not two Beginnings [*archai*], whence there is strictly a Monarchy [*monarchia*]. And of this very Beginning [*arche*] the Word is by nature Son, not as if another beginning [*arche*], subsisting by Himself" (Athanasius, "Discourse Against the Arians"). And Cyril of Jerusalem: "Divine generation is spiritual … time does not come into the begetting of the Son from the Father … for what he is now; that has he been timelessly begotten from the beginning" (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses Illuminandorum* 11.7). Augustine: The Father is the "beginning of the whole divinity" (*On the Trinity* 4.29). John of Damascus: the Father is the "cause of the Son" (*The Orthodox Faith* 1.8). Aquinas: The Father is "the principle of the Son" (*Summa Theologica*, I.33.1). Richard Hooker: the Father is the "Fountain of deity" (*Polity*, 5.54). Several citations originally found in Steven D. Boyet, "Articulating Order: Trinitarian Discourse in an Egalitarian Age," *ProEccl* 18 (2009): 255–72. Patristic references taken from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (ed. Philip Schaff and H. Wace; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

[17] Gilles Emery, "The Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook to Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 422. Russell Friedman further explains: "Aquinas viewed the property of innascibility—the Father's not being from another—as being predominantly negative in significance. Innascibility indicated what the Father was not, and it indicated nothing further." Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250–1350*, vol. 1 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 81. Friedman cites Aquinas, I *Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, aa. 1–2.

[18] Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University*, 82.

[19] Bonaventure, *Commentarium, lectio* I, *distinctio* 28, a. 1, *titulus*.

[20] This is not Bonaventure's term, but we are here building a typology which serves the systematic question of eternal functional subordination. This term does not indicate that Bonaventure considers the personal properties as qualitatively identical with essential properties such as aseity and holiness. Yet, "subsisting essential properties" merely indicates a more distinguished metaphysical classification of the persons, with a greater impact on a proper understanding of the divine essence, in contrast with Aquinas, who employs a minimalist metaphysic for the Trinitarian personal properties.

the properties of subsisting relation) into the essence of God himself. For Bona-
venture, "the very nature of God in itself is relational. Were one to exclude any and
all relational aspects from God, the theology of a trinitarian God would be mean-
ingless."[21] As a result, Bonaventure posits that the there is a logical ordering of the
divine essence itself, according to the three persons of the Trinity.[22] This ordering
renders the term "innascibility" as a synonym for "primitas," such that the Father is
the *plentitudo fontalis*, from whom the Son receives his divinity.[23]

Standing on this reading of the Father's innascibility as the Trinitarian opera-
tion of the divine essence, Bonaventure states, "The Father is the principle of the
whole divinity because from no one."[24] For Bonaventure, innascibility was only
proper to the Father, "in whom is the plentitude of fontality to the production of
the Son and the Holy Spirit."[25] In other words, while the Son is no less divine than
the Father, divinity is less proper to the Son than the Father.[26]

3. *Comparing Aquinas (Category 1A) and Bonaventure (Category 1B) on innascibility.*
Matthew Levering helpfully summarizes the contrast between Aquinas and Bona-
venture on the Father's innascibility:

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[21] Kenan B. Osborne, "The Trinity in Bonaventure," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* (ed.
Peter C. Phan; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 116.

[22] Bonaventure's difference from Aquinas is found in distinguishing each person by virtue of their
suppositum, as opposed to mere subsistence. *Suppositum* can be defined as "the essential contents of indi-
vidually existing things … not in its generality but with regard to its content." Leo J. Elders, *The Meta-
physics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas: In a Historical Perspective* (New York: Brill, 1993), 171. Jacques Mari-
tain distinguishes suppositum from essence this way: "Essence is *that which* a thing is; suppositum is *that
which* has an essence, *that which* exercises existence and action—*actiones sunt suppositorum*—*that which* sub-
sists." Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 62. *Suppositum* indicates an
essence with special focus on the content which individuates that particular essence, in contrast with
subsistence, which indicates the existing thing *per se*: "*suppositum* means that which has *per se esse*." Richard
Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University
Press, 2002), 264.

[23] For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to note that both Aquinas and Bonaventure would buck at
the idea of attributing headship to the Father and subordination to the Son. Yet, we are here only mak-
ing metaphysical space in Trinitarian theory to explore whether there is a legitimate room within ortho-
doxy to make such predications. For Scotus, the relations of origin are "*non-quidditative*." "For Scotus,
relation is a thing—a special kind of thing, a *res relativa*; nevertheless relation has a quiddity of its own.
Thus, on Scotus' theory of relation, divine relations constitutive of relative persons would necessarily
compromise divine simplicity: it would be a quiddity added to a quiddity." Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions
at the Medieval University*, 369. Thus for Bonaventure, origin (as opposed to relation) is the metaphysical
category which makes sense of the personal distinctions in the Trinity.

[24] Bonaventure, I *Sent.*, d. 27, p. 1, art. Un., q. 2, ad 3.

[25] Bonaventure, *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 8, ad. 7.

[26] We should also recognize that "Bonaventure" and "Scotus" are typologies—names, by which we
call certain general concepts—and constructive theology is dependent on these sorts of historically
reductionistic typologies for the sake of synthesizing concepts, otherwise the entire dialogue about the
metaphysics of the Trinity is hindered to the degree that the full historically accurate picture of "Bona-
venture" and "Scotus" require constant readjustment. While good systematic theology will be in conver-
sation with the history of Christian theology, systematic theology should not be at the direct mercy of
the discipline of historical theology. For that purpose we, by academic convention, must endorse and
assume a degree of historical reductionism.

For Aquinas, the properties constitutive of the divine Persons are strictly relational properties, grounded in relations of opposition in the order of origin. Bonaventure accepts the role of relational properties, but he emphasizes the distinct way that each Person emanates: the Father is unemanated, the Son emanates as generated by the Father ('by way of nature'), and the Holy Spirit emanates as freely spirated by the Father and the Son ('by way of will'). . . . The difference between Aquinas and Bonaventure is encapsulated by the fact that the latter holds that the Father is Father because he generates (generation constitutes the distinct relation, "Father"), whereas the former considers that the Father generates because he is Father (the distinct relation, "Father," is the ground of generation).[27]

In other words, Aquinas would respond to Bonaventure's notion of "subsisting essential properties" by arguing that "with paternity removed, 'ungenerated' (*ingenitum*) would remain in God, not as a property or a notion of some person, but as an attribute of essence, like 'immense' and 'uncreated.'"[28]

For Aquinas, innascibility considered as a Category 1 property is only a relative way of differentiating two metaphysically equal divine persons, and should otherwise be considered a Category 2 property. For Bonaventure, innascibility is a way of indicating a logical hierarchy of the properness of divinity among the divine persons. Thus, for Aquinas, the Son is as much the principle of the Father as the Father is the principle of the Son—in order for the Father to have the property of *paternitas*, there must be a Son who is begotten.[29] Conversely, for Bonaventure, the Father is *primitas paternitas*, and on that basis, the Son is logically and consequently divine and begotten.[30]

Therefore, once again, Aquinas's notion of innascibility will therefore be called "relative innascibility" and corresponds to Category 1A, and Bonaventure's notion is called "fontal innascibility," and corresponds to Category 1B.

4. *Calvin makes space in innascibility for subordination.* This distinction between Aquinas (Category 1A) and Bonaventure (Category 1B) resurfaces in the life of John Calvin. Calvin takes issue with construals of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds which support fontal innascibility. "Calvin has clarified the logic of Trinitarian theology in the wake of Nicea and Chalcedon by affirming that the eternally

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[27] Matthew Levering, review of Russell Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham,* in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 49 (2011): 374–75.

[28] Aquinas, I *Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3. Translation found in Durand, "A Theology of God the Father," 378.

[29] Bonaventure was merely attempting to do good Augustinian theology (J. Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure* (trans. Jose de Vinck; Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1964), 15–16. Yet, from a historical perspective, it seems that he failed, since Augustine held a view closer to Aquinas's—that innascibility is simply a negative concept, indicating that "the Father is he who does not proceed form another (*ingenitus*)." Emmanuel Durand, "A Theology of God the Father" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 378. See Augustine, *Trin.* 5.6.7 to 5.7.8.

[30] For a summary of these issues, see John P. Dourley, *Paul Tillich and Bonaventure: An Evaluation of Tillich's Claim to Stand in the Augustinian-Franciscan Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 120–23.

begotten Son is also *autotheos*, 'very God' or 'perfect God'."[31] Calvin's "autotheos" languages was intended to clearly articulate, without compromise, the aseity of the Son, considered as a Category 2 property. This had implications for how the Reformers predicated Category 1 properties, such that Calvin was charged with Arianism. The logic of this charge for Calvin's critics was that "autotheos" was a denial that the Son's divinity was received from the Father, which therefore required a separate essence from the Father, denying *homoousios*. For Calvin, the doctrine of the *autotheos* of the Son entails that the Son's essence can in no way be secondary, or received, thereby protecting his divinity.

Calvin's critics were primarily a Roman Catholic apologist (Robert Bellarmine) and a Protestant pastor named Peter Caroli, a former professor at the Sorbonne (where Thomas Aquinas taught in the 13th century), who incidentally defected from Protestantism several times.[32]

Caroli insisted that Calvin sign the Athanasian creed's statement that the Son is "God of God" (*theos ek theou*; *Deum de Deo*).[33] Aquinas admits at one point that one cannot affirm Athanasius's "God of God" statement if, by it, you mean "essence begets essence."[34] Calvin made the same argument. Calvin insisted that the only way the Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds could be affirmed is if

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[31] R. Michael Allen, "The Perfect Priest: Calvin on the Christ of Hebrews," in *Christology, Hermeneutics and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation* (ed. Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier; LNTS 423; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 130. Allen continues: "Calvin explicitly affirms the Nicene terminology for the Son's personal derivation from the Father, even as he insists that this in no way implies that the Son's divine essence is secondary and, thus, lesser." This point is crucial because, with respect to the pro-Nicene tradition, the creed and its proponents are ambiguous enough to deserve pointed and critical clarification on the distinction between relative innascibility (Category 1A) and fontal innascibility (Category 1B).

[32] Bellarmine was reluctant to call Calvin a heretic because he sensed the technical maneuvers that Calvin was making in order to respect orthodox Trinitarian formulations. See Bellarmine, "Secunda controversia generalis de Christo," in *Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei adversus haereticos* (Rome: Typographia Bonarum Artium, 1832), 1:307–308 (originally cited in Allen, "The Perfect Priest," 130). Yet, Bellarmine held to a Bonaventuran (Category 1B) theology of personal properties. He put it this strongly: "As the Son is God of God and origin from origin, so 'he is able to be called the fount of essence from the fount of essence.'" Bellarmine, *De Christo*, in *Disputationes de controversiis* 1:217 (2.19). Cited in Brannon Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 144 n. 30. For more on Bellarmine's critique of Calvin and an investigation into the nature of Nicene "speculation," read B. B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *The Princeton Theological Review* 7.4 (1909): 553–652.

[33] Brannon Ellis summarizes the affair: "Caroli first denounced the Genevans as being Arians during a discussion at Lausanne between the Genevan ministers and Caroli, with a disputation from Bern present. Calvin 'rose up immediately and brought forward the confession in our Catechism,' after which Caroli responded that he would continue to hold them in suspicion until they should ascribe to the Athanasian Creed. Calvin refused, Caroli balked, and the deputation expressed the need for a synod to resolve the conflict. Caroli's accusation gained a surprisingly wide hearing among Swiss and German Protestants, and Calvin spent the next several months trying to clear Geneva's pastors of suspicion. This conflict was (temporarily) resolved, at Calvin's urgent request, by two synods in Lausanne in 1537." Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son*, 40. See also Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin's Controversies," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 188–205.

[34] Calvin makes this point, whether intentionally or not, in agreement with Thomas Aquinas *ST* I.39.5 arg. 1–4.

by signing, one understood that the Son's origin is "from the Father with respect to [his] person," and not his essence. Again, but more clearly, Calvin insists: "Thus according to essence the Word [i.e. the Son] [is considered] to be God without origin, but in regard to the person of the Son, to have his origin from the Father."[35] Thus, Calvin's *autotheos* Christology crystalized the profound distinction between Category 1A and Category 1B.[36]

Calvin's distinct theology of the Son's aseity sets a crucial precedent for discussions about subordination in the immanent Trinity.

5. *Innascibility and subordination.* In a sense, even though Category 1B is the category that causes trouble, it highlights an unresolved tension in Western Trinitarian theology, which is the tension between the Son's *aseity* and the Father's innascibility. The term aseity comes from the Latin *aseitas*, a morpheme of the bisyllabic phrase *a se*—"of itself."[37] The very etymology of its term appears, *prima facie*, to require innascibility for the Son as well as the Father. To be *a se* is to be distinctly and definitively not *ens ab alio* ("from something outside itself").[38] Thus, we are faced with the seemingly impossible question: Is the Son of himself (*a se*) or of another (*ens ab alio*)?[39]

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[35] John Calvin, *Impietas Valentini Gentilis: Detecta Et Palam Traducta, Qui Christum non Sine Sacrilega Blasphemia Deum Essentiatum Ese Fingit* (1561) in *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Edardus Reuss (59 vols; Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1870 [1863–1900]), 9:365–384 praefatio. Translated by Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son*, 57 n. 94. K. Scott Oliphint explains the theology behind this controversy: "The reason that Calvin 'drew back' from the doctrine of eternal generation as it was expounded by the Nicene Fathers was not because Calvin was rejecting or calling into question the doctrine of eternal generation *per se*. Rather, Calvin's concern, in light of his own Trinitarian controversies in the sixteenth century, was that the traditional notion, as inherited from Nicaea, unduly tied the notion of the Son's eternal generation to his (communicated) essence, such that the only way to affirm the Son's begottenness was to affirm as well his essential derivation from the Father. What Calvin was not prepared to do—and he was not prepared to do this even in the face of charges of Arianism and Sabellianism—was to agree that the Nicene notion of 'God of God' applied *both* to the Son's essence *and* to his person." K. Scott Oliphint, "Review of Kevin Giles, The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology," *WTJ* 76 (2014): 252–53.

[36] B. A. Bosserman notes, "Supposing that Calvin could not remain consistent with such a paradoxical position, his opponents hoped to push him to consistency in the direction either of Sabellianism or Tri-theism. If the three divine persons are equally self-existent without an ontological order between them, then they must either be one and the same person, or three different deities. Yet, Calvin repudiated both extremes, designing his doctrine to instigate 'in his readers a sense of the mystery of the divine modes of existence' that speculative doctrines diminished." B. A. Bosserman, *The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 17.

[37] Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 132.

[38] Aseity is "the quality in virtue of which a being exists of and from itself alone. Acc[ording] to Christian teaching, it is realized solely in God and distinguishes Him from all created beings, whose existence, as it issues ultimately from Him, is derivative from something outside itself (*ens ab alto*)." F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., "Aseity," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 114.

[39] Oliphint again: "What is 'constitutive' of trinitarian doctrine, therefore, for Calvin was the *absolute* and underived deity of the three persons, so that in our confession of God as triune, we confess that whatever is true of God *essentially* is true of the three persons, *absolute* aseity included. Specifically, it was

The question is this: does the Father's innascibility come into conflict with the Son's ownership of the Category 2 property of aseity (which *means* "self-sourced")? Taken as a Category 1B property, the Father's (fontal) innascibility and the Son's aseity do in fact conflict, which is why Bellarmine and Caroli charged Calvin with heresy. Yet, Category 1A, relative innascibility, merely indicates the Father's unbegottenness whose essence is innascible, who begets the begotten Son (who is innascible according to his selfsame divine essence). In other words, the Father's innascibility and the Son's aseity are incompatible on the Category 1B account, but not on the Category 1A account.

So, is the Son who is *a se*, and *autotheos*—who is *of himself*, and *God himself*—able to be immanently subordinate to the Father? If subordination is not predicated as a Category 1B property, and the "begottenness" of the Son is the principal of the Father's "paternity" every bit as much as the Father is the principle of the Son, then yes. Subordination, at the very least, fits as a viable subsisting property, predicated within the confines of orthodoxy, within a specific metaphysical construal of the Trinity in line with Aquinas and Calvin.

The very term "subordination," on a charitable read, may simply be a semantic specification of the term "Son" which, when spoken in a way that does not make "Son" a substantial property (that is, Category 1A vs. Category 1B), evades the heresy of subordinationism. Whether or not subordination is a true and biblical predication of the Son is another question entirely. The point that has been clarified by a taxonomical nuancing of the doctrine of innascibility is this: the subordination of the Son is a theologically non-heretical Category 1A predicate. In other words, it does not so far appear to entail the denial of *homoousios*.

With these categories in hand, we can now intelligently venture into egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity.

III. DISMANTLING AND DEFENDING COMPLEMENTARIAN APPEALS TO THE TRINITY

The proponents for each view—egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity—are well known, and the distinction between each claim is clear. For instance, Wayne Grudem comments, "The differences in authority among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the only interpersonal differences that the Bible indicates that exist eternally among the members of the Godhead."[40] This is a clear

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the Son's absolute deity that Calvin asserted, and his eventual agreement with Nicaea's 'God of God' language included the fact that such could be affirmed of the Son *only* as Son, but not as God. In other words, the Son's deity was *a se*, not derived from the Father, whereas his person *as Son* was so derived." K. Scott Oliphint, "Review of Kevin Giles," 253.

[40] *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 429. Even more boldly, Grudem elsewhere claims, "If the Son is not eternally subordinate to the Father in role, then the Father is not eternally 'Father' and the Son is not eternally 'Son.' This would mean that the Trinity has not eternally existed." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 251. This, of course, presupposes that the term "Son" is semantically co-extensive with the word "subordinate," and the word "Father" semantically co-extensive with the word "authoritative head," neither of which are necessarily true.

Trinitarian foundation of the complementarian position. Kevin Giles, an egalitarian, worries that "differentiating the three divine persons on [the basis of authority] is to be rejected . . . because it leads to the errors of both tritheism and subordinationism."[41]

It would be overambitious to claim to refute every possible egalitarian and complementarian appeal to the Trinity. Therefore, in this section, I hope to dismantle the complementarian appeal considered as a *type* of appeal at a categorical level, as well as the typical egalitarian appeal to defend it as a legitimate theological possibility within the bounds of orthodoxy.

1. *Dismantling a typical complementarian appeal to the Trinity*. First, it is necessary to analyze a typical complementarian appeal to the Trinity. The most common proof text for this view (and proof texts are good things) is 1 Cor 11:3:

> "But I want you to understand that
> the head of every man is Christ,
> the head of a wife is her husband,
> and the head of Christ is God."

The obvious relevant question for this passage is: When Paul says "the head of Christ is God," which of the four Categories does "head" fall into? What sort of property is Paul predicating of the Father here? In a recent compilation of complementarian appeals to the Trinity edited by John Starke and Bruce Ware, *One God in Three Persons*, Kyle Claunch takes an entire chapter to answer this very question.

Claunch comments on 1 Cor 11:3: "The relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity is such that it is reasonable to conclude, by good and necessary inference, that the statement 'God is the head of Christ' pertains to the immanent Trinity *indirectly*."[42]

That is, of course, the claim in question. Claunch later insists: "*The one eternal will of God is so ordered that it finds analogical expression in a created relationship of authority and submission: the incarnate Son submits to the will of his Father.*"[43] Claunch then proceeds to use the incarnation as his test case for demonstrating that God's eternal immanent will is ordered by an authority hierarchy, when the Trinity decrees to send the Son to become incarnate. Claunch's ultimate claim is that "1 Corinthians 11:3 does indeed ground gender complementarity in the immanent Trinity, albeit indirectly."[44]

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[41] Kevin Giles, *Eternal Generation*, 235. Echoes of Calvin and Caroli clearly resound in Giles's critique, which does not necessarily validate his critique, but reinforce the notion that the distinction between relative innascibility (Category 1A) and fontal innascibility (Category 1B) is crucial for negotiating and classifying egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity. It should also be notes that while Giles is careful not to make appeals to egalitarianism in *Eternal Generation*, he makes the appeal in *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002).

[42] Kyle Claunch, "God is the Head of Christ: Does 1 Corinthians 11:3 Ground Gender Complementarity in the Immanent Trinity?," in *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (ed. Bruce A. Ware and John Starke; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 65–94.

[43] Ibid., 91 (italics original).

[44] Ibid., 93.

There are two categorical problems with this argument.

First, this argument makes a promised conclusion to which the evidence does not categorically correspond, which we will see below. Claunch's test case for demonstrating the immanent subordination of the Son to the Father *is a contingent act of divine willing*. Claunch uses a Category 3 property (the sending of the Son) that terminates as a Category 4 reality (the incarnation of the Son) to prove that a Category 2 attribute of God (the single divine will) proves a Category 1 subordination of the Son. In other words, Claunch uses two contingent realities (Category 3 and 4) to make definitive immanent pronouncements (Category 1 and 2) with no account of such entailment other than "good and necessary inference." The evidence, and even the hypotheticals, which Claunch conscripts to prove the Category 1 complementarian thesis, in fact, gives no indication that subordination is a distinctive property of the Son's immanent procession from the Father.

The dilemma which Claunch's line of argumentation perpetuates for the present conversation is simply this: the argument is irrelevant to the egalitarian-complementarian debate. Egalitarians will gladly admit that the Son is contingently subordinate to God, which are the only premises that Claunch uses in his article. Category 1 subordination only comes within the purview of logical entailment when the evidence contains Category 1 evidence.[45] Egalitarians, whether right or wrong about egalitarianism, would be right to dismiss Claunch's argument here. Claunch baits a Category 1 promise, but delivers a Category 3 argument. In other words, Claunch's case study uses a Category 3 example to prove a Category 1 reality, which takes for granted the entire question at hand.

Second, Claunch's proposed theology of the immanent relations is fairly unclear. To give Claunch some credit, he does appeal to Augustine to make the point that the economic Trinity reveals the immanent Trinity, opening the possibility for importing Category 4 properties into Category 1.[46] Claunch argues that there is "a fixed and irreversible *taxis* of the one divine will. . . . The one essence of the Godhead subsists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[47] Yet, the most Claunch does is make a little space within orthodoxy for the complementarian appeal to the Trinity, a notion with which we will deal below. The least that Claunch does is prove that, if the immanent subordination of the Son were taught elsewhere in Scripture, 1 Cor 11:3 would likely be a consistent economic reflection of that reality.

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[45] Tom McCall, a critic of the complementarian appeals to the Trinity, himself holds to this view (but in his arguments is also careful not to make any appeals to the Trinity as the basis for gender roles): "In the economy of salvation the Son 'humbles' himself for us and our salvation (Phil. 2:5–11); the fully divine Son of God, without in any way or for any time ceasing to be divine, is able to truthfully and freely say 'the Father is greater than I' (John 14:28)." *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?*, 176. McCall refers to this as "soft eternal functional subordination (EFS)." McCall is here referring merely to Christ's incarnate ministry—a Category 4 property, yet because McCall mentions "the economy of salvation," it is reasonable to think that Category 3 properties fit within the scope of McCall's "Soft EFS," which he finds theologically and historically agreeable.

[46] Claunch appeals to Augustine, *Trin.* 4.5.29.

[47] Claunch, "God is the Head of Christ," 91.

Claunch appeals to the notion of an "ordered will" in God, but seems to be utilizing, not a Category 1A understanding of the hypostatic ordering, but a Category 1B understanding of the ordering. Claunch comments, "The begetting and spirating [of the Son and Spirit] occur within the being of God so that each of the differentiated Trinitarian persons fully possess the eternal being of God."[48] While Claunch's Trinitarian expression here is not only orthodox, but simply *is* the historic Christian majority report on the Trinitarian processions, Calvin's doctrine of *autotheos* would perk up with suspicion at notions of (1) processions occurring "within" the being of God; and (2) such processions being the guarantor of divinity for the Son and the Spirit ("so that"). This would not be such a problem, except that Claunch seems to be arguing for subordination as a "subsisting essential property" (Category 1B), instead of merely a "subsisting property" (Category 1A). Due to this categorical difference, contradictions appear in how Claunch refers to the divine will—in one place, he denounces the need to hold to three wills in God,[49] and in another claims, "This model of a three-willed Trinity then provides the basis for the conviction that structures of authority and submission actually serve as one of the means of differentiating the divine persons."[50]

This certainly is an odd wavering, and it is one that I attribute not to Claunch's lack of care for his argument, but more to the fact that he is arguing for the truthfulness of a claim which is not actually true. Similar wavering occurs elsewhere. It seems common for complementarians to speak in macro-economic categories about the Trinity, as though they were immanent. This sort of language, which confuses Category 3 and Category 1 predicates, exists even in Thomas Schreiner.

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[48] Ibid., 89. Steven D. Boyer comments on this sort of claim: "I would prefer to stipulate a distinction between 'substantial subordination,' by which we would designate the Arian error, and 'hypostatic subordination' (or, for those who still respond viscerally to 'subordination' language of any kind, 'hypostatic order'), by which we would mean an orthodox, non-Arian asymmetry. I do not find this option to be particularly elegant, for we are being forced to make an arbitrary distinction between adjectives that are etymologically synonymous. But since both kinds of order—both the Arian kind that is denied and the orthodox kind that is affirmed—are genuinely ontological, a certain arbitrariness might be unavoidable." Steven D. Boyer, "Articulating Order: Trinitarian Discourse in an Egalitarian Age," *ProEccl* 18 (2009): 271. Boyer's analysis is helpful, especially in refusing to avoid acknowledging the fact that any subordination predicated of the Son at the Trinitarian level is "ontological." Commonly, complementarians will use "immanent" language to refer to the Son's subordination, perhaps to sound less Arian, but the cards should be on the table: the complementarian claim is that the Son is ontologically subordinate to the Father, in so far as the distinctions between the persons in the Trinity are ontologically real. That much is inescapable.

[49] "Although many gender complementarians have opted for a view of the Trinity that entails three distinct wills, thus making the authority and submission of gender complementarity a *direct* reflection of the immanent Trinity, this social model of the Trinity is not necessary to make the connection." Claunch, "God is the Head of Christ," 91.

[50] Claunch, "God is the Head of Christ," 88. Claunch clearly is not advocating a tritheletic view of the immanent divine will. "Willed" is therefore likely not an adjective, but a passive verb. Yet Claunch's use of the personal properties as subsisting essential properties (Category 1B) forces his description of the ontological Trinity to conscript that sort of language.

Schreiner, in arguing for an authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage, relegates the significance of 1 Cor 11:3 to the level of God's economy, not his ontology. He says: "The Son willingly submits Himself to the Father's authority. The difference between the members of the Trinity is a functional one and not an essential one."[51] Again, he says: "What the Nicene fathers called a subordination of order is another way of saying that they saw a subordination in role, or a subordination in the economic Trinity."[52] Now, Schreiner *does* hold to the immanent subordination of the Son to the Father, as he cites stronger immanent statements in support of his view from Hodge and Berkhof, who sound quite a bit like Grudem.[53] We thus observe these technical nuances about God's Trinitarian ontology (Category 1) slipping into "economic Trinity" language (Category 3) which, if genuine and accurate, nullifies the foundational disagreements of the complementarian and egalitarian appeals. Yet, perhaps the best explanation for these categorical inconsistencies among both Claunch and Schreiner is that they are defending a certain kind of authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage which simply does not exist, and therefore requires these inconsistencies of speech in order to properly formulate.[54]

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[51] Thomas Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 128.

[52] Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity," 129.

[53] Hodge: "The creeds are nothing more than a well-ordered arrangement of the facts of Scripture which concern the doctrine of the Trinity. They assert the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit; their mutual relation as expressed by those terms; their absolute unity as to substance or essence, and their consequent perfect equality; and the subordination of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, as to the mode of subsistence and operation. These are Scriptural facts, to which the creeds in question add nothing; and it is in this sense they have been accepted by the Church universal" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 462). Berkhof: "There can be no subordination as to essential being of the one person of the Godhead to the other, and therefore no difference in personal dignity…. The only subordination of which we can speak, is a subordination in respect to order and relationship" (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941], 88).

[54] It is worth making one lengthy parenthetical note on the translation of κεφαλὴ. Whether κεφαλὴ means "head" or "source" is irrelevant to the present debate. If κεφαλὴ means "source," then the text would provide a Category 1A claim coordinating the Father's innascibility with the Son's generation. If κεφαλή means "head," then we are left to discern what Category of property that headship is.

Although κεφαλή almost certainly seems to mean "head" in 1 Corinthians 11, the purpose is heavily covenantal. The husband-wife relationship is covenantal—and in this covenant that husband is the head; the Christ-husband relationship is covenantal—and in this covenant Christ is the head. It would follow that the Christ-God relationship is covenantal—referring either to the *pactum salutis*, the covenant of redemption, in which God is the head of Christ, making 1 Cor 11:3 a Category 3 kind of "headship," or perhaps the covenant of works between God and Jesus as the second Adam, making 1 Cor 11:3 teach a Category 4 property. The furthest Category back this argumentation allows, in terms of predicating properties of the Son, is Category 4 and Category 3.

Complementarian sources on this issue: see Peter Bolt, "Three Heads in the Divine Order: The Early Church Fathers and 1 Corinthians 11:3," *RTR* 64 (2005): 147–61; Maria-Fotini Polidoulis Kapsalis, "St. John Chrysostom's Interpretation of Κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11:3–16," *GOTR* 49 (2004): 321–56; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "*Kephalē* in I Corinthians 11:3," *Int* 47 (1993): 52–59; Wayne Grudem, "Does Κεφαλή ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples," *TrinJ* 6 (1995): 38–59; idem, "The Meaning of Κεφαλή ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies," *TrinJ* 11 (1990): 3–72.

Thus, while Claunch establishes that subordination may be an allowable sub-sisting property of the Son at a conceptual level, when the biblical foundations for making subordination a Category 1A judgment are probed, they dissolve into cate-gorical equivocation, since the evidence that 1 Cor 11:3 provides is not categorically homogenous with the complementarian position's desired conclusion. First Corin-thians 11:3 provides evidence for an economic authority relationship between the Father and Son (as Schreiner and Claunch admit), and the extrapolation of that authority relationship back into the immanent Trinity is merely speculative (a methodological assumption that does not receive satisfactory interrogation).

2. *Defending a typical complementarian appeal to the Trinity.* While the complemen-tarian appeal to the Trinity is categorically speculative at best, and categorically in-consistent at worst, it is not categorically *heretical* (as egalitarian critics claim). It is now essential to deal with two typical criticisms of the complementarian position, both of which make the charge that the complementarian appeal to the Trinity is heretical.

First is the critique that Tom McCall issues in his book *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?* He argues that a complementarian appeal to the Trinity, "understood along the lines of complementary essentialism, flatly entails the denial of *homoousion*, and with it an unfortunate departure from creedal orthodoxy."[55] McCall charges

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Egalitarian sources on this issue: Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 117–39; Andrew C. Perriman, "The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of Kephalē in 1 Cor 11:3," *JTS* 45 (1994): 602–22; Lynn Cohick, "Tyr-anny, Authority, Service: Leadership and Headship in the New Testament," *ExAud* 28 (2012): 74–89; Janet Everts Powers, "Recovering a Woman's Head with Prophetic Authority: A Pentecostal Interpreta-tion of 1 Corinthians 11.3–16," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10 (2001): 11–37; Alan Johnson, "A Review of the Scholarly Debate on the Meaning of 'Head' (κεφαλή) in Paul's Writings," *Ashland Theological Jour-nal* 41 (2009): 35–57. Gordon Fee comments. "The final clause, 'God is the *kephalē* of Christ,' is not a christological statement in the ontological sense; that is, Paul is hardly thinking of the 'eternal genera-tion' of the Son from the Father. Rather, it refers to the incarnational work of Christ." *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 505 (in a footnote, Fee contrasts his view with Grudem's). Kevin Giles, while egalitarian, maintains that κεφαλή is best translated "head," which demonstrates the insignificance of this debate for our purposes. But the significance of this bibliography for our purposes is to highlight the evidence for whether there is an authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage lies in an answer to a different question. Kevin Giles, unpublished lecture notes, cited in Johnson, "Review of the Scholarly Debate," 53–54.

Relatively even-handed sources on this issue: Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 812–22; J. David Miller, "Translating Paul's Words about Women," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 12 (2009): 61–71; G. W. Trompf argues that Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 11:3 are not authentic to Paul, but are indeed chauvinistic, "On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3–16 and Its Context," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 196–215.

[55] McCall, *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?*, 188. It is now pertinent to note that McCall published a response to Starke and Ware's *One God in Three Persons*, in which he makes three contributions relevant to this article. (1) McCall distinguishes between kind-essences (the sufficient set of properties for an object to be included as the same "kind" as certain other objects) and individual-essences (the necessary set of properties an object has in every possible world in order for that object to remain the same object), as the root of his critique of the complementarian appeal to the Trinity on the basis of his conception of "essence." While McCall's making the distinction is relevant, it is not clear how this saves his argument from equivocation. It would seem, rather, that making this distinction between kind-essences and indi-

that the complementarian appeal to the Trinity "does not merely tend toward a denial of *homoousion*. . . . it simply entails the direct denial of the *homoousion*, and thus should be resisted by Christians who hold to creedal orthodoxy."[56]

McCall's argument is as follows:

(1) If the Son is eternally functionally subordinate to the Father, then the Son has the property *being functionally subordinate in all time segments in all possible worlds*.

(2) If the Son has this property in every possible world, then the Son has this property necessarily. Furthermore, the Son has this property with *de re* rather than *de dicto* necessity.

(3) If the Son has the property necessarily (*de re*), then the Son has it essentially.

(4) If the Son is eternally functionally subordinate to the Father, then the Son has this property essentially while the Father does not.

(5) If the Son has this property essentially and the Father does not, then the Son is of a difference essence than the Father. Thus the Son is *heteroousios* rather than *homoousios*.[57]

One of the many definitions of "essential" that McCall cites comes from E. J. Lowe is: "an essential property of an object is a property which that object always possesses and which it could not have failed to possess—in other words, in the language of possible worlds, it is a property which that object possesses at all times in every possible world in which it exists."[58]

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vidual-essences only makes the equivocation all the more clear. (2) McCall notes that both Augustine and Aquinas route *all* "subordination" language through Christ's human nature—that is, "in his human nature, and not by diversity of supposita" (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III.1.20, a.2). However, it is not essential to the complementarian appeal to the Trinity that there be a precedent in the *tradition* of Christian orthodoxy for predicating subordination to the Son *qua* his suppositum. The point in question, rather, is whether there is metaphysical space within said tradition for such a predication to be made. Critics of the complementarian appeal to the Trinity consistently point out the novelty of this appeal in Christian thought, even though complementarians regularly admit the novelty of their view. Of course the church fathers would be uncomfortable predicating subordination of the Son as a personal property. That proves neither that the view is unbiblical or heterodox. (3) McCall says: "I have not meant to accuse anyone of heresy. Nor have I actually done so." And he apologizes for possibly implying any accusation. While McCall does say that the complementarian appeal "flatly entails the denial of *homoousion*," and is "an unfortunate departure from creedal orthodoxy," and "does not merely tend toward a denial of the *homoousion*, nor does it merely 'smack of' it … [but] simply entails the direct denial of the *homoousion*, and thus should be resisted by Christians who hold to creedal orthodoxy," charity should be granted that these statements were not intended to issue a charge of heresy. And yet, there clearly remains a need to answer the question of whether the complementarian appeal to the Trinity can coherently exist within historic orthodox Trinitarianism. Thomas H. McCall, "Gender and the Trinity Once More: A Review Article," *TrinJ* 36 (2015): 263–80.

[56] McCall, *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?*, 188.

[57] Bruce Ware, "Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homoousios*? A Response to Millard Erickson and Tom McCall," in *One God in Three Persons*, 244. Argument summarized by Ware from McCall's *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?*, 179; cf. 176, 180, 188.

[58] E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 96. It is perhaps insignificant, but not uninteresting, to note that this definition which McCall employs is only one of

McCall here seems, in his use of Lowe's definition, to be equivocating on the term "essential" that here, as he moves from premises (3) and (4) to premise (5). In premises (3) and (4), surely McCall and Ware both agree that, following Lowe's definition, the Son's derivation from the Father according to his person is "essential" to the Son *as Son*, while not being a property of the Divine essence (in other words, premise (3) provides a Category 1 predicate, not a Category 2 predicate).[59]

To say that "the Son has a property essentially while the Father does not" is merely to say that the Son could never cease to exist as Son in any possible world, and the Father could never be the Son in the same way that the Son is the Son in any possible world. This much is true, according to all formulations of the Trinity (perhaps even Sabellian formulations). Then, in premise (5), McCall, in a way not so different from Claunch, makes a categorical bait-and-switch. McCall's argumentative payoff is to claim that Ware's complementarian appeal to the Trinity compromises Category 2 shared "essence" between the Father and Son (which is the technical sense it is often used when speaking of God's "essence"), when all along he has been arguing in terms of a Category 1 "essential property."

In other words, because McCall has defined "essential property" according to Lowe's definition, and was required by using that definition to equivocate on the term "essential property" when moving from premises (3) and (4) to premise (5), all McCall has demonstrated is the inadequacy of possible world semantics to provide an adequate account of the *sui generis* metaphysical distinctions that exist between the divine essence and persons, as well as among the three divine persons themselves.

Ware expresses serious frustration with McCall's critique.[60] McCall, in his critique of Ware, does not reveal a weakness in complementarian appeal to the Trinity,

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Lowe's definitions of "essential property"—the first denoting the temporally intrinsic quality of a property to a thing, the second its counterfactually intrinsic quality; in other words: the difference between the indispensable role of a property in the consideration of Object *O qua O*, and the indispensable role of a property in its determination of *O* in relation to other objects. McCall employs the second sense, which Lowe calls "stronger than the first" (p. 97). This merely serves to highlight that there is no commonsense definition of "essential property" (if any) which dictates exactly how the metaphysical mechanics of the Trinitarian relations must function.

[59] McCall's view seems to cohere with Trinitarian theologians like Gilles Emery, who says, "when we speak of 'paternity' in God, we *signify* the reference of the Father to the Son but we do not pinpoint 'anything other' than God himself. In our language and in our thinking, relation remains a mode of attribution which is distinct from substance, but without naming anything which could be distinct from the divine substance." Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (trans. Francesca Aran Murphy; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 95. Emery's language has an apparent stench of Sabellianism, yet due to his strict orthodoxy, it is unlikely that Emery would endorse McCall's line of argumentation. For instance, one Thomist formulates the Trinity in a way that seems quite agreeable with a complementarian appeal to the Trinity: "The Persons are equal in every way except according to relations of opposition" (Timothy Smith, *Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology: A Study in Theological Method* [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003], 29).

[60] Ware expresses understandable grief in his essay in Crossway's recent volume: "The charge brought … by Erickson and McCall—that attributing to the Son a property that is *essential* to him as Son but not also shared with the Father entails that the Son has a *different essence* than the Father, and hence the Son cannot be *homoousios* with the Father—is misguided and should be withdrawn. Especially understanding the gravity of the charge—one that implicitly charges advocates of [complementarian appeals

but in his own view, and the view held by the West standing on the shoulders of Thomas Aquinas since the Middle Ages, which we have already pointed out in this paper. In response to McCall's critique, Ware issues the rebuttal we might all have guessed—that the property of subordination is predicated of the Son according to his person, not his essence. Ware claims in his defense against McCall, that subordination "is a property of the person of the Son, and it is a property that could exist only in relation to another person."[61]

In other words, it appears that McCall uncharitably treats the complementarian appeal as though every personal property predicated of the Son is necessarily a Category 2 predicate. But Ware's defense is that, if his own view is taken charitably as predicated within an orthodox framework—that subordination is a Category 1 predicate—then he sidesteps the compromise of *homoousios*. What's even more odd in McCall's critique is that he seems to defend Ware's same position (about personal properties) in the very same book in which he critiques the complementarian appeal to the Trinity. McCall claims, "Just as the Son is who he is only in relation to the Father, so also the Father is who he is only in relation to the Son. . . . Indeed, for the tradition the Father is everything that the Son is *except Son*, and the Son is all that the Father is *except Father*."[62] Ware makes this same claim, albeit predicating subordination where McCall does not. Yet, McCall's critique of Ware is regarding Ware's Trinitarian metaphysics, which appear to be identical to McCall's.

Perhaps McCall's critique is made on the basis of assuming that Ware, Grudem, et al. are claiming to do anything more than further explain what McCall describes as traditional Christianity. The complementarian appeal to the Trinity does not seek to add further properties beyond begottenness to the Son, but seek merely to explain what "Son" is, at a Category 1 level.[63]

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to the Trinity] with heresy—I would humbly request both Millard Erickson and Tom McCall to retract this charge." Bruce A. Ware, "Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homoousios*?," in *One God in Three Persons*, 247.

[61] Ware, "Does Affirming an Eternal Authority-Submission Relationship in the Trinity Entail a Denial of *Homoousios*?," 244.

[62] McCall, *Whose Trinity? Which Monotheism?*, 212.

[63] Perhaps the disagreement is merely mereological—that McCall believes any explanation of the term "Son" requires the addition of properties, where Ware does not hold that assumption. It is necessary at this point, for the sake of historical and conceptual fidelity, to note the distinction between a "property" and a "notion" in Thomas Aquinas. Technically, according to Aquinas's Trinitarian metaphysics, "property" refers to the "personal property" which is the central quality of each subsisting relation (i.e. the *name* by which we call each relation: Paternity, Begottenness, etc.), whereas "notion" refers to those properties that are predicated of each person, but are not that after which the relation is named (i.e. innascibility). Because this metaphysical nuance is relevant, it is necessary to make note of it. However, in this author's view, the property/notion distinction does not resolve any tensions that arise between the competing views about Trinitarian metaphysics (in Thomas's own terms, all properties are notions, but he really distinguishes between "notional acts" and "notional properties." One might say that subordination is a "notion" of the Son in the complementarian appeal, but the basic disagreements between the views seem to be less about the metaphysical status of the personal properties for the Trinity's "three-ness" (although that does seem to be a source of confusion on McCall's and Erickson's part), and more about the entailments for the Trinity's "oneness" of applying the predicate "subordinate" to the Son. For reference, Aquinas explains: "In thus indicating the order between the notional acts and the notional properties, we do not mean to imply that the notional acts differ from the personal properties

Second, Millard Erickson charges Ware with compromising *homoousios* because, Erickson argues, by attributing subordination to the Son, Ware violates the necessary metaphysical categories which make orthodox Trinitarian theology possible. Erickson argues:

> If authority over the Son is an essential, not an accidental, attribute of the Father, and subordination to the Father is an essential, not an accidental, attribute of the Son, then something significant follows. Authority is part of the Father's essence, and subordination is part of the Son's essence, and each attribute is not part of the essence of the other person. That means that the essence of the Son is different from the essence of the Father. The Father's essence includes omnipresence, omniscience, love, etc., and authority over the Son. The Son's essence includes omnipresence, omniscience, love, etc., and submission to the Father. But that is equivalent to saying that they are not *homoousios* with one another.[64]

Erickson's critique is built on the basic assumption that the only two metaphysical options to classify Trinitarian relations are essential properties and accidental properties. Surely the Trinity requires an openness to a third kind—a metaphysical *tertium quid* that makes space for real, non-essential distinctions between

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in objective reality, for they are distinct only according to the manner of conceiving…. The Father's act of begetting is the begetting Father, although the modes of signifying are different. Likewise, although one divine person may have several notions, there is no composition in Him. Innascibility cannot cause any composition, since it is a negative property." Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* (trans. Richard J. Regan; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52. It is by virtue of the concept of notions that Thomas is able to say, "Three properties belong to the Father" when, by "properties," he means "notions." Ibid., 46. Ceslaus Velecky comments in an edition of the *Summa*, "The word '*notio*' cannot be translated 'notion' which means a general concept under which particular things may be classified, for by contrast *notio* in the theology of the Trinity means a proper concept peculiar to only one thing. The translator must choose between leaving the word untranslated, or using it with a new technical meaning, or finding a synonym. The last possibility seems the best and so '*notio*' in this volume becomes 'characteristic'…. The whole unvaried substance of God is identical with the whole unvaried existence of each Person. But when a Person is objectively presented to us, we see the manner in which the identical common substance is presented as that Person's individuality. Thus each Person has an individual characteristic, ἰδίωμα (from ἴδιος one's own, personal, private)." Ceslaus Velecky, "Appendix 9: Characteristics or 'Notions,'" in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices, and Glossaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 151. It is interesting that Marian Hillar translates *ratio* the way that Velecky translates *notio*—as "specific character," thus signifying the synonymous function of *ratio* and *notio* in Aquinas's theology. The semantic range of each, essentially, means "a facet," or "a property that is distinguished in concept, but not in reality." See Marian Hillar, "Thomas Aquinas and the Accepted Concept of the Trinity" in her monograph, *From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 249–72. Hillar translates *propria ratio* as "specific character," a functional equivalent of "notion" or "nuance," about which she says: "The specific character (*propria ratio*) of each one of them [the subsisting relations] is distinguished according to their specific meanings, which are signified by their names" (253). Hillar is teasing out in Aquinas this concept of a derivative property (i.e. "notion" or "characteristic"), which does not have the same metaphysical status as the personal properties which distinguish each subsisting relation from the others, but are the semantic contents which one would find by conceptually unpacking the personal properties. I owe a debt of gratitude to Deryck Barson for introducing me to the notion of "notions."

[64] Millard Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 172.

the persons of the Trinity. Erickson treats the persons of the Trinity as reified essences—as thing, upon thing, upon thing. The only way for Erickson to make this charge stick—that subordination *per se* as a personal property compromises *homoousios*—is if he assumes that the Father and the Son are not *homoousios* already. Erickson must assume that Ware metaphysically classifies the Trinitarian relations in a way beyond the Christian tradition (which Ware claims he does not do), or demonstrate why the property of subordination is incompatible with the notion of sonship at a *de facto* or *de dicto* level.

Again, it is odd that Erickson requires proponents of complementarianism to choose between "essential" and "accidental" properties. This is metaphysically reductionistic, and mirrors the sort of ambiguously broad employment of the term "essential" by McCall. It is reductionistic, because Erickson reduces the metaphysical options for classifying the divine persons down to "essential" and "accidental." Yet, if those are the only two allowable categories for classifying the Trinitarian relations, then all of historic Christian orthodoxy lacks the necessary tools to maintain *homoousios*, since those two categories alone are insufficient. But complementarian appeals to the Trinity consistently classify the distinguishing properties of the divine persons, not as accidental properties, but as relative properties, and in so doing fall squarely within the orthodox tradition.[65]

Any confusion about the heretical implications of the complementarian appeal to the Trinity, which we will get to below, can be addressed by indicating that subordination as a property of the Son is not predicated in the Category 1B sense, in which the Son's principal of divinity—his begetter relationally with reference to his person, and also logically with reference to his divinity—is also his authority. Such Bonaventurian theology is clearly on the road to Arianism. Yet this does not seem to be the view of Bruce Ware, Wayne Grudem, and company. The distinction between Category 1A and Category 1B solves the reductionism of essential and accidental properties, and distinguishes between two historic construals of the mysterious metaphysical category "subsisting relation," avoiding an entailed denial of *homoousios*, and thereby making sufficient space within orthodoxy for a complementarian appeal to the Trinity.

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[65] For evidence of the orthodoxy of this view, see Wesley Hill, "Divine Persons and Their 'Reduction' to Relations: A Plea for Conceptual Clarity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 14 (2012): 148–60; idem, "The Trinity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15 (2013): 469–75; James Dolezal, "Trinity, Simplicity, and the Status of God's Personal Relations," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16 (2014): 79–98; Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:192–93. As noted above, Muller and the Reformed scholastics refer to these personal properties of relation as *distinctio realis minor*—genuinely distinct, yet not metaphysically independent. Divine personal properties are a metaphysical *sui generis*, and therefore do not fall prey to the misdirected *reductio ad absurdum* argumentation applied by Erickson here. When classifying the personal properties of the divine persons, the orthodox have never been forced to choose between "essential property" and "accidental property." However, Claunch seems to wander from these formulations in his Category 1B construal of the personal properties.

IV. THE QUAGMIRES OF AN AUTHORITY ANALOGY
BETWEEN THE TRINITY AND MARRIAGE

Is there an authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage? Of course there is. As Gilles Emery states, "We cannot understand creation well without receiving knowledge of the Trinitarian mystery."[66] This is as true of marriage as it is of love and logic and all knowledge and beauty available to creatures created in God's image. But is there an authority analogy among the Trinitarian relations that is archetypally prescriptive for the marriage relationship? No. Any analogy is limited, generic, and imagined. There are not sufficient reasons or resources to appeal to the Trinity to support a particular view on gender relations in marriage. In fact, such appeals are both misleading and misinforming. They are misleading in that the Father and Son, while resembling certain authority dynamics between husband and wife, do not provide a structural foundation and precedent for the husband-wife relationship. These appeals are misinforming in that they lead those less savvy about Trinitarian conversations to believe that they must predicate submission as a subsisting property of the Son in order to hold a complementarian position, when this is in fact an inaccurate predication. Ware is correct to insist that the complementarian appeal to the Trinity is not heresy. Yet, all things being equal, the view is simply untrue, because no such authority analogy exists between the Trinity and marriage.

The egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity selectively display depictive correlations (equality and subordination, respectively) between the Father-Son relationship and the husband-wife relationship, and declare them to be prescriptive. Even if there were a Category 1A authority hierarchy between the Father and Son, Scripture doesn't mandate a complementary theology of marriage on those grounds. Yet, likewise, if there were a perfectly egalitarian relationship between the Father and the Son, there still remains large biblical precedent for a complementarian theology of marriage. In fact, once the Trinity is removed as a direct ground for appeal in egalitarian-complementarian discourse, the Bible seems more likely to favor complementarianism.

Consequently, it will be helpful to briefly trace three reasons why appealing to the Trinity confuses a theological understanding of gender roles, rather than clarifies it.

1. *The potential applications of the authority analogy are arbitrary.* The debate between egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity rests solely on defending an *authority* analogy between the Trinity and marriage. Yet, once the analogy is assumed, there remain a vast number of conceptual discontinuities which seem to mitigate against the notion of systematic analogical correspondence. The application to marriage in this way seems arbitrary. Paul does not make his arguments for complementarity based on subsisting ontological relations, at the very least because he doesn't need to. More than that, egalitarian and complementarian appeals to the Trinity only pick facets of Trinitarian metaphysics to make one sliver of analogical

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[66] Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 8.

correspondence work, when the rest of the Trinity and marriage carry flat disconti-
nuities.

D. Glenn Butner argues:

> I see very little reason to advocate the use of the word 'submission' of the way
> the Son possesses the divine will, particularly as a purported image of the sub-
> mission given by a wife to a husband. The latter would entail freedom to act dif-
> ferently on the part of the husband and wife, different desires of the wills of
> husband and wife, and a temporal process in which the wife would yield her
> numerically distinct will to that of her husband. It would not, however, indicate
> that the wife received her faculty of willing from the husband, as the notion of
> eternal generation suggests of the Father-Son relationship. There simply is no
> correlation here.[67]

Furthermore, the "analogy" between Father-Son and husband-wife does not
exactly fit (in even more ways than Butner notes). The minimalistic dynamics of
oneness and sameness among the relative persons do not carry over into marriage.
The claim that there is an analogy between the Trinity and marriage emerges as a
more seriously strange concept the more the specifics of the claim are considered.
Egalitarians and complementarians are not trying to prove the innascibility of the
husband, or the *homoousios* of the wife with the husband, even as they are trying to
prove a corresponding authority analogy. The line of analogical continuity and dis-
continuity is drawn in such a convenient place that it should put the clear lack of
evidence, combined with the sheer hermeneutical gymnastics these appeals require,
in a light of theological suspicion. There is radical discontinuity intertwined with
the very terms claimed to have continuity in these sorts of appeals, which should at
the very least give both camps pause to reflect on whether their appeals are biblical.

2. *The potential sexualization of the Trinity is eccentric.* It is worth noting that, while
particular conversation about gender analogies in the Trinity at hand is staunchly
evangelical, it occurs outside of evangelicalism as well. At the center of that conver-
sation is Hans Urs von Balthasar, a 20th-century Roman Catholic theologian who
wrote that the foundation for sexual difference between husband and wife should
be located in the ontological relationship (reflected appropriately in their missions)
between the Father and the Son.[68]

The significance of Balthasar for this discussion is that his theology of the
Trinity and sexual difference is the most commonly cited work defending a com-
plementarian authority analogy in modern theology. It is helpful for theologians to
know the direction his Trinitarian theology has driven gender conversations.

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[67] D. Glenn Butner Jr., "Eternal Functional Subordination and the Problem of the Divine Will,"
JETS 58 (2015): 147–48.

[68] Balthasar is only mentioned once in the Ware and Starke volume *One God in Three Persons*, and it is
in Claunch's article (p. 91 n. 54). Claunch merely says that Balthasar's work on the analogy between the
Trinity and gender "would have to be the subject of further research." It is odd that Balthasar was not
discussed more in this volume, since Balthasar's work, as we will see, is renowned as some of the best
work in history on the very analogy in question.

For Balthasar, the Trinity is "the transcendent origin of what we see realized in the world of creations: the form and actualization of love and its fruitfulness in sexuality."[69] Explained in detail,

> Although the Trinity is eternal, the Father is the Origin and therefore, in Balthasar's theology, supra-male (*über-männlich*). The Son, who receives from and obeys the Father (*der Geschehenlassende*), is disponible, obedient, and receptive in relation to the Father, and therefore the Son is supra-feminine (*über-weiblich*) in relation to the Father. The Son characteristically "lets be" (a distinctly feminine quality for Balthasar), co-operating in his begetting by *letting* himself be begotten."[70]

On the basis of this established analogy between the Trinity and marriage, modern theologians "note ambiguity or fluidity within Balthasar's theology that . . . give his theology potential for constructive development perhaps even beyond his own intentions."[71] For example, Gavin D'Costa argues on the basis of the analogy between the Trinity and human gender relations that "queer relationships are at the ontological heart of the Trinity."[72]

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[69] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol 5: *The Last Act* (trans. Graham Harrison; San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998), 91. In this same sentence, Balthasar rejects sexualizing the Trinity. But in painting such a strong ontological analogy between human sexual difference and the Trinitarian relations, Balthasar may have opened an analogical door which he cannot shut. Corrine Crammer explains: "Although Balthasar is at pains to reject sexuality or sexual difference as we know it in the Trinity, nevertheless, his description of divine activities at times sounds vividly reminiscent of sexual reproduction: the divine Persons penetrate each other. The Holy Spirit is the fruit of the love between the Father and the Son, who together generate the Spirit in an act of communal love. Christ's giving away of himself in the Eucharist is compared to a man having intercourse, and in the act of procreation, a man 'represents only a distant analogy to this trinitarian and christological event' of the generation of the Son (*NE* [*New Elucidations* (trans. Mary Theresilde Skerry [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986])], 217). God's kenotic love empties itself out into Mary's womb as an infinitesimally small seed in order to let the God-bearer ripen it and bring it into the world." Corrine Crammer, "One Sex or Two? Balthasar's Theology of the Sexes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (ed. Edward T. Oakes and David Moss; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101.

[70] Corrine Crammer, "One Sex or Two? Balthasar's Theology of the Sexes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 101. See also Robert A. Pesarchick, *The Trinitarian Foundation of Human Sexuality as Revealed by Christ according to Hans Urs von Balthasar: The Revelatory Significance of the Male Christ and the Male Ministerial Priesthood* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 2000), 176.

[71] Barbara K. Sain, "Through a Different Lens: Rethinking the Role of Sexual Difference in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Modern Theology* 25 (2009): 72.

[72] Gavin D'Costa, "Queer Trinity," in *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body* (ed. Gerard Loughlin; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 272–79. See also Kathy Rudy, "Where Two or More Are Gathered: Using Gay Communities as a Model for Christian Sexual Ethics," *Theology and Sexuality* 2 (March 1996): 81–99; and Robert E. Goss, "Proleptic Sexual Love: God's Promiscuity Reflected in Christian Polyamory," in *Theology and Sexuality* 11 (2004): 52–63. Goss comments, for instance, "When the church is understood as a collective of countless men and women, married and unmarried, with a variety of sexual orientations and gender expressions, then Christ becomes the multi-partnered bridegroom to countless Christian men and women…. Christ is polyamorous in countless couplings and other erotic configurations…. The lover is a sexual outlaw, not a bridegroom as the sanitized Jewish and Christians read the text" (p. 61). This may be a door that crossing wires between the Trinity and the sexual may open, which need not be opened.

D'Costa evaluates Balthasar's analogical argument for sexual difference on the basis of the Trinity:

> I want to call this move into question, as a single instance of Balthasar's more widespread failure to be queer/analogical enough in the symbolizing/staging of trinitarian life. But I do not want to argue that Balthasar's theology is redundant because of this. On the contrary, I want to suggest that his trinitarian symbolizing, however inadequate, actually opens up many important avenues whereby "gender" is recast in a number of ways. It is possible to see how the divine life is capable of being represented in multi-gender terms, even if in Balthasar these terms are rather thinly developed. It is possible to see how the divine life is capable of being represented in gay, lesbian and heterosexual self-giving, faithful and fruitful love, even if Balthasar's Trinity enacts a *form* of exclusive misogynist homosexual erotics that is predicated upon the exclusion of the feminine/woman.[73]

D'Costa's analysis of Balthasar as excluding the feminine is on its face a poor reading of Balthasar,[74] but his logical analysis of the possible implications of Balthasar's gendered reflections on the Trinitarian relations are perhaps insights on the dangerous possible appropriations of an established authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage.[75] In a sense, it is difficult to refute D'Costa's basic Trinitarian point: that if the Trinity is an archetype for sexual difference (i.e. gender distinctions), and if at its very heart is a male-male relationship between a Father and Son, then there seems to be a closer one-to-one analogy between a homosexual relationship than a heterosexual one.

The point here is merely that an established authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage opens the door to granting an uncomfortable amount of theological legitimacy for queer theology. D'Costa is simply one example of where an established traditional authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage is taken decades after it is developed.[76] And the appropriations of such an analogy are un-

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[73] D'Costa, "Queer Trinity," 271. Italics original.

[74] While proponents of third-wave feminism and queer theology would be quick to both critique and appropriate Balthasar's development of an authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage, Barbara Sain provides a helpful historical corrective: "Applying the categories of sex and gender as they have been developed in recent scholarship to Balthasar's ideas without such a precise discussion would misrepresent the complexity of the role sexual difference plays in his thought." Sain, "Through a Different Lens," 94 n. 7.

[75] For theologians who utilize Balthasar's Trinitarian theology of sexual difference as a foundation for arguing a position that precludes complementarianism, see Sarah Coakley, "The Woman at the Altar: Cosmological Disturbance or Gender Subversion?," *ATR* 86 (2004): 75–93; Michelle A. Gonzalez, "Hans Urs von Balthasar and Contemporary Feminist Theology," *TS* 65 (2004): 566–95; Kristen Kingfield Kearns, "Love from Above: Analogy and Sexual Difference in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2003); Rachel Muers, "A Question of Two Answers: Difference and Determination in Barth and von Balthasar," *HeyJ* 40 (1999): 265–79; Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Person, *Kenosis* and Abuse: Hans Urs von Balthasar and Feminist Theologies in Conversation," *Modern Theology* 19 (2003): 41–65.

[76] E.g. Linn Tonstad comments: "Sexual difference images trinitarian difference…. The relation focuses on the person of Christ, whose erotic relations encompass both [God and world]…. Sexual difference signifies (analogizes or allegorizes) trinitarian and ontological difference: sexual difference has

derstandably difficult to regulate, most basically because, in this author's view, the analogy (as the basis of an appeal for gender roles) does not exist to begin with.

3. *The potential compromise of complementarianism is risky.* A final reason it seems unintuitive to root a complementarian view of marriage in the Trinity is that it forces the clear certainty of the complementarian position to walk the plank of Trinitarian mystery. Emery comments that the Trinity "contains the entire Christian mystery."[77] Why complicate the obvious authority analogy between Christ-church and husband-wife (Eph 5:22–34) with parsing the various forms of paternal innascibility, which seems close to unsolvable?[78] Gender role debates that allow appeals to the Trinity import evidence that actually grants more theological legitimacy to egalitarianism than it truly possesses. By appealing to the Trinity out of a desire to ground the doctrine of complementarianism in the heart of Christianity, complementarians actually sacrifice a degree of theological certainty to which the Bible entitles them.[79] Why confuse a practical and biblical certainty with a theoretical mystery? Paul takes the mystery back only so far—"'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:31–32).

V. CONCLUSION

The Trinitarian theologies used to support egalitarian and complementarian gender views are both creedally allowable within the confines of historic Christian orthodoxy as an elaboration on that orthodoxy, but they are analogically untenable when placed under biblical and logical scrutiny. It is undeniable that there are some

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theological significance because it is 'about' the trinity and participates in the trinity's establishment of difference." *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (Gender, Theology, and Spirituality 17; New York: Routledge, 2015), 76.

[77] Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 335.

[78] Those who take Paul to be teaching an authority hierarchy between a wife and her husband in Ephesians 5:22–24 (for good or ill) include Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 728–32 ("Though Paul states in 5:21 that all believers are to be submissive to one another, we see in the household code that specific roles of submission are related to certain lines of authority," 732); F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 384 ("Christian wives' submission to their husbands is one aspect of their obedience to the Lord"); Clint E. Arnold, *Ephesians* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 382–83 ("The repetition of the injunction to submit … should not escape the reader's notice since it strongly emphasized how important it is for the wife to assume this role in marriage"); Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 386 ("The wife is to be subject to her husband as to the Lord. Her subordination is called for not just because it is the role society has allotted her but because this is the way she can serve her Lord"); Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 415 ("Paul has been urging wives to be submissive to their husbands. The reason for this turns on the headship of the husband").

[79] Jamin Hübner rightly insists that we cannot use the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture as direct evidence for any theological view derived from Scripture. Yet, the immediate point here is not that, on principle, complementarianism is more clearly true than egalitarianism, but that the texts which speak about the nuanced metaphysical statuses of the Trinitarian relations at the level of authority and submission are less clear (and less common) than the passages which speak about the authority hierarchy in marriage. See Jamin Hübner, "Revisiting the Clarity of Scripture in 1 Timothy 2:12," *JETS* 59 (2016): 99–117.

shared relational realities among the persons of the Trinity and participants in marriage ("As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you"; John 15:9). And yet, when nuanced, it also becomes clear that there are discontinuities as well. For instance, the love shared between the Father and the Son exists within a nebulous authority structure (since it is debated), whereas the love shared between the Son and the church is located within a clear God-creature authority structure, which both egalitarians and complementarians admit. Thus, this paper concludes with this proposal: that the Christ-church relationship appears to be a more lucid, basic, and biblical analogue of the marriage relationship than the Trinitarian relationships, an analogy which seems to bring about theological tensions which create more problems than solutions.[80] Tentatively then, if the Trinity-marriage authority analogy is rejected, complementarianism would seem to follow necessarily on the basis of the remaining theological evidence.[81]

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[80] I find myself in basic agreement with Bird and Shillaker, who contend that "we ought not to use the Trinity to argue for either complementarianism or egalitarianism." Moreover: "We find ourselves in essential agreement with the view that the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father is consistent with both the biblical materials and historical orthodoxy. The eternal functional subordination of the Son, although it may sound like Arianism to some, is in fact to be differentiated from Arianism…. those who are using Trinitarian relationships as a rationale for complementarianism are barking up the wrong tree. The analogy does not work and, in fact, if construed differently, Trinitarian relations could potentially prove the opposite conclusion." Michael F. Bird and Robert Shillaker, "Subordination in the Trinity and Gender Roles: A Response to Recent Discussion," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* (ed. Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 307–308.