

Getting Back to Idolatry Critique: Kingdom, Kin-dom, and the Triune Gift Economy

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Liberation theology has largely ceased to develop critiques of idolatry, especially in the United States. I will argue that the critique is still viable in Christian theology and promising for the future of liberation theology, by way of reformulating Ada María Isasi-Díaz's framework of kin-dom within the triune economy. Ultimately this will mean reconsidering our understanding of and commitment to divinity and each other—in a word, faith.¹

The idea to move liberation theology from theology to other disciplines drives discussion in liberation theology circles, especially in the US, as we talk about the future.² Yet if we turn to, say, social and critical theory as *primary* lenses, can the future of liberation theology still allow for the charge of idolatry that it once maintained? To say yes to idolatry critique seems to require something that other disciplines cannot fully support or sometimes even consider: namely faith as humanity's positive response to both transcendent and immanent divine work.³

1 I want to make a quick note about social location because liberation theology is inherently contextual. Describing my own social location means recognizing that I am not in the US minority in any sense of the term. Indeed, I am a white, heterosexual male and my birth in this country is without dispute. Also, I found myself with the 'camp' described by Christopher Ashley's paper "Liberation and Postliberalism," where previously I was not sure where I might 'fit' in relation to liberation theology. While my own location is important to acknowledge, it is not the social or theological location I mean for this article. Instead, I mean to establish the social location of the main argument: beside the obvious theological reasons noted in the text, I want to make explicit that this argument is made with attention to rising economic sovereignty, even though it has yet to (and may never fully) claim the modern nation state's monopoly on violence, and democratic governance presuming equal relations.

2 For instance, see Ivan Petrella's *The Future of Liberation Theology* (London, England: SCM, 2006) and *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic* (London, England: SCM, 2008). Hereafter *The Future of Liberation Theology* will be cited as *Future* and *Beyond Liberation Theology* will be cited as *Beyond*. I agree with Petrella that the disconnection between theological criticism and a concrete, constructive solution is problematic (*Future*, 39). Indeed, liberation theology today often sounds more like critical theory than an endeavor to construct concrete projects, or as he calls them "historical projects." Theology should certainly work with sociology, and indeed the historical project aspect is crucial, at least in part because divine work is active in human history. It is how theology relates to sociology and historical projects that is the issue here.

3 One could say that the idolatry critique has simply mutated. It is distinctly possible to read the word fetish, when used by liberation theologians, as idolatry (Franz Hinkelammert makes this very connection in "Economic Roots of Idolatry: Entrepreneurial Metaphysics," in *The Idols of Death and the God of Life*, ed. Pablo Richard and trans. Barbara E. Campbell and Bonnie Shepard (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 191). However, I am not convinced that this is without its problems. On what *theological* basis does one measure fetish? Sociology, or perhaps better stated, critical theory, and liberation theology may say similar things as noted by Petrella (*Beyond*, 5-16, 45); however, while liberation theologians have used Marx as a critical tool to counter capitalism, Marxists nevertheless would not

Critical theory's concept of ideology is helpful, but when it flattens the idolatry critique by identifying idolatry as ideology, and thus making them synonymous, ideology ultimately replaces idolatry.⁴ I suspect that ideology here passes for differing positions within sheer immanence, and therefore unable to produce a "rival universality" to global capitalism.⁵ Therefore I worry that the political future will be a facade of sheer immanence dictating action read as competing ideologies—philosophical positions without roots—under the universal market.⁶ Ideology is thus made subject to the market's antibodies, resulting in the market commodifying ideology. The charge of idolatry, however, is rooted in transcendence (and immanence), which is at the very least a rival universality to global capitalism; the critique of idolatry assumes divine transcendence and that the incarnational, constructive project of divine salvation is the map for concrete, historical work, both constructive and critical. This is why, when ideology is the primary, hermeneutical category, I find it rather thin, unconvincing, and unable to go as far as theology.⁷ Also, although sociological work is necessary, I am not sure that it is primary for realizing divine work in history. Yet, theology's constructive vision of "God of Life" is no longer sufficient for some.⁸ In contrast to others who go to sociology to

recognize the theologians as Marxists. The distinction makes all the difference. The point is this: as soon as one uses the theological measuring stick, the entirety of the theological context is at play.

4 This concern over immanence and transcendence influencing idolatry and ideology is informed by Charles Taylor's work on "closed world structures" and "immanent frame." Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 551-592. The concern over distinction between ideology and faith is also informed by Gary Dorrien's analysis of James Cone, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Juan Segundo in *Reconstructing the Common Good: Theology and the Social Order* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 115-124. It is important to note that Dorrien explicitly deals with Segundo's work on the tension between ideology and idolatry. The concern over distinguishing between the two is not my own.

5 John Milbank, "The Politics of Time: Community, Gift and Liturgy," *Telos* 113 (Fall 1998): 53. I use Milbank here knowing that there is disagreement between, say, Petrella and Milbank over the larger issue of relating sociology and theology. I do not intend my use of Milbank to indicate that I 'side' with Milbank, but rather simply that I agree with some of his worries concerning the nature of capitalism and the necessity of thick transcendence along with immanence.

6 Of course competing ideologies is far from an original conclusion. Here I am drawing from Louis Althusser's famous "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 85-126.

7 For instance, Petrella uses Agamben to note that liberation theology's critique of idolatry has seen "more deeply into our objectification than all of North Atlantic thought" (*Beyond*, 43). I certainly agree with this. Giorgio Agamben's work on bare life is helpful, as is his related work on exception and sovereignty, but he certainly does not go as far as liberation theology.

8 Petrella, *Future*, 10-11. The argument I am making throughout this article could be read as recovering the idolatry critique by bringing Gutiérrez's *God of Life* (trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991)) and Isasi-Díaz's kin-dom framework together within a trinitarian economy. Interestingly, Petrella uses the phrase "God of life," but does so through Sung, rather than Gutiérrez (*Future*, 37, fn. 44, and *Beyond*, 14). For more on Sung's God of life, see Jung Mo Sung, *Desire, Market and Religion* (London, England: SCM Press, 2007), 9. My statements above concerning idolatry and ideology may or may not be in conflict with Sung's construal of Segundo on idolatry within ideology (*Desire, Market and Religion*, 98). It certainly complicates my quote of Sung, in a later footnote, about faith as an epistemological revolution, but if we want something less vague than God of life, it is my position that letting ideology be the meta-category will not get us there. Furthermore, I

differentiate liberation theology's God of life from the simulacra of the status quo, I turn first to theology.⁹ I find the triune economy thick and incarnational, and it thereby provides a specific map for the concrete, historical work for a facet of divine salvation called liberation. The triune economy attends to the concerns of liberation theology, if it is not actually the heart of liberation theology's constructive vision (orthopraxy), and therefore grounds idolatry critique.¹⁰

However, establishing the vision and recovering the idolatry critique is not without its difficulties. The critique of idolatry—the rejection of the “worship of the false gods of the system of oppression”—has been one of the hallmarks of liberation theology.¹¹ Indeed, the critique of placing a created thing in the position of divinity was crucial to early liberation theology. Yet, on the whole, the critique

has seen little development in liberation theology for nearly three decades.¹² This seems difficult to imagine, especially because the oppressive structures are still present and powerful as ever. It was liberation theology that changed; we now tend to call something evil or oppressive, but not an idol. Over the course of the 1980s and 90s, liberation theology's development moved beyond the first wave and new voices began a transition to new, alternative frameworks that seemed to assume, but did not make use of or develop the idolatry critique.

One such framework was Ada María Isasi-Díaz's “kin-dom.”¹³ She skillfully argued that the gracious, salvific work of God, through love of the neighbor, entails solidarity characterized by interconnectivity—namely commonality and mutuality. This establishes a true dialogical relationship between oppressor and oppressed, as opposed to charity which is “a one-sided giving, a donation, almost always, of what we have in abundance.”¹⁴ Yet, rather than describe solidarity as God's ‘kingdom,’ a term that Isasi-Díaz names as sexist and is in the contemporary context “hierarchical and elitist,” she instead uses the term “kin-dom” to emphasize that the eschatological community will be a family: “kin to each other.”¹⁵

find it interesting that even those who embrace a closed system, and themselves are atheists, nevertheless turn to religion—specifically the intersection of transcendence and immanence—to characterize or give as the preeminent example of transcendence within immanence (e.g. for Alain Badiou, Saint Paul on the road to Damascus and his work afterward is *the* in-breaking event of immanence represented as containing the possibility of the infinite. See *St. Paul: The Foundations of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003)).

9 This is what marks the major difference between Petrella's work (*Future*, 10-11, 37) and my argument here. “The real question comes after the critique of idolatry: what do we do instead?” (*Future*, 11). My answer is in part this article. The idolatry critique is indeed negative, but it is based on something much deeper and specific than life—the triune life that redeems humanity through the divine economy. If concepts, like God of life, are too vague or distant from life, historical projects will not fix what appears to some to be sophisticated theological platitudes. (This is directly contrary to Petrella (*Future*, 38) inasmuch as he seems to think enough theology has been done.) After all, “[f]aith in the resurrection of Jesus is an ‘epistemological revolution’—a revolution in the way of knowing—which allows us to discover the true image of God and the human being” (Sung, *Desire, Market and Religion*, 25). If we do more rigorous, theological reflection—that more strongly teases out the political implications in theology—then we can distinguish the necessary shape and more specific direction of the historical projects, rather than assert a morality via historical projects defined by sociology or critical theory. I believe here that I am following the basic notion of orthopraxy, rather than assuming history will define vague ideals. And so I am sympathetic to the form and content unity that Petrella seems to assume: “The construction of historical projects, therefore, is not merely the application of theological concepts to the social realm but part and parcel of the definition of the concepts themselves” (*Future*, 37 and addressed again on 39). Christianity says this about Jesus when it emphasizes the particularity of Jesus, never mind the fact that theology is inherently political when it affirms that the incarnation of the theology is part of its definition.

10 The constructive vision is salvation from social oppression into the beloved community by acting on bringing humanity into a life together (solidarity) through love and care defined by divinity (in the Christian case, Jesus). In other words, conditions of intelligibility and orthopraxy.

11 “Introduction,” Pablo Richard, ed. *The Idols of Death and the God of Life*, 1.

12 I was initially alerted to this by Fr. Bryan Massingale at Marquette University during his course on Catholic social thought (Spring 2009). The two last major works in liberation theology focused on developing idolatry critique and translated into English are Pablo Richard, ed. *The Idols of Death and the God of Life*; and Franz Hinkelammert, *The Ideological Weapons of Death: A Theological Critique of Capitalism*, trans. Philip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986). In Spanish, it is worth noting the work of Hugo Assmann, especially, *La idolatría del Mercado* (San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones, 1997); and Jung Mo Sung, especially *La Idolatría del Capital y la Merte de los Pobres* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1991). Sung also has work in English, like *Desire, Market and Religion*, see particularly pages 21-29, 72, 96-98; and has collaborated with Néstor Míguez and Joerg Rieger in *Beyond the Spirit of Empire: Theology and Politics in a New Key* (London, England: SCM, 2009). In some respect I would also count Ivan Petrella's *Beyond*, which starts with a chapter on idolatry and life, and then turns the idolatry critique back on liberation theology to bring it out of its lost state. Despite that, I am unsure if Petrella is using idolatry in the full theological sense; Petrella certainly wants the prophetic force and clarity of liberation theology, but it seems that Petrella does not desire the robust theological ground that defines the term idolatry. However, without more constructive theology, the other option—immanent historical projects—is all that is left..

13 Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century,” in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, eds. Susan Brooks Thistlewaite and Mary Potter Engel (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 30-39. The first edition was printed in 1990 and the expanded addition in 1998. The chapter is also reprinted in other volumes, like *Mujerista Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996) but I will be using *Lift Every Voice* for citation purposes concerning this chapter.

14 Isasi-Díaz, *Lift Every Voice*, 31.

15 Isasi-Díaz, *Lift Every Voice*, 32, fn. 8.

Today the kin-dom framework seems obvious, which is a testament to its influence. While we do need to challenge sexist language and social hierarchy that leads to oppression, *today* the framework is not without its problems. As a *framework*, it seems to have undercut the basis for idolatry critique for two reasons. First, because the charge of idolatry is predicated on kingdom theology, idolatry critique exited with the lack of focus on the kingdom of God that Isasi-Díaz critiqued.¹⁶ Second, I am not convinced that the rising generation has the same key assumptions as Isasi-Díaz, but we still employ her notion of solidarity as a framework, although only as social solidarity in immanence so that orthopraxis has become a moral praxis.¹⁷

In kin-dom, Isasi-Díaz rejected the modern sovereign as the image of God, and rightly so. The combination of problematic nominalist/voluntarist theology—the hidden, distant, and unintelligible God of sheer power (*potentia absoluta* rather than *potentia ordinata*)—and recovering patriarchal Roman law (*patria potestas*) during the late middle ages became the basic structure used by Hobbes to create

16 Of course there are exceptions—some indeed still maintain kingdom. I noted earlier that Petrella might be read in part this way, and Jon Sobrino's recent *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (multiple translators (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008)) is an exception on both counts. Yet even here Sobrino gives far less emphasis to kingdom than he once did, although it is still a critical ground for his work in the book. In *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), Gary Dorrien makes the claim that in “the biblical faith recovered by social Christianity, the reign of God is an immanent/eschatological reality that engenders community, peace, and justice. It is not a dispensable vestige of patriarchal religion but the heart of a liberating spiritual reality that transcends its patriarchal elements. Though [Dorrien] embrace[s] much of the radical feminist critique of classical Christian theism, [he] do[es] not accept the verdict that Christian kingdom language or Christianity itself is unredeemable for feminism. Rather, [he] argue[s] that the spiritual reality of the resurrected Christ is the ground of a hope that sustains and transcends Christian struggles for justice and peace” (19). Dorrien now may or may not back off from seeing kingdom as redeemable, but nevertheless, he is making an important point: without developing kin-dom to the complexity that kingdom has been developed, we lose truth that is recoverable. We may even lose our connection to avenues of liberation by classic North American theology. While Dorrien might be a liberal, the connection between the social gospel and liberation theology is close for him theologically and personally. In fact, they may be the same thing in a different key: “Moltmann and Gutiérrez both asserted... that the work of Rauschenbusch represented the most instructive precedent for a North American theology of praxis” (*Reconstructing the Common Good*, 10).

17 This is rendering Charles Taylor's “closed world structures” in another key. Another presenter on the panel (at the *Future of Liberation Theology* conference where a condensed version of the article was presented), Elijah Prewitt-Davis directly affirmed the move to sheer immanence, seeming to assume that transcendence is outdated. He also argued that the world is ultimately characterized as closed. In fact, in his estimation and others also present for the paper, it is not that the world is shaped to look closed, it is closed. If the world truly is closed, or at least if we assume it is, then the implication of this essay is that the idolatry critique is out of reach—and so it makes sense that it has not undergone development for so long. It should not be surprising then that the continued emphasis on commonality and mutuality, without the previously assumed divine determination, results in sheer immanence that defines solidarity as social solidarity for its virtue as a political tool. This seems to be the general direction that Clayton Crockett moves in his recent *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

the modern sovereign: the sovereign as the mortal god is a demi-god of power.¹⁸ It is this sovereign that lurks in the background of historical, European rule for much of modernity.¹⁹

In response, we need to re-think the sovereign, but while Isasi-Díaz did not do so, she did still assume divine sovereignty.²⁰ She amends the quotes of Gutiérrez that use the word “kingdom” with [*sic*], but she does not question divine sovereignty when she quotes Gutiérrez again soon after: “Oppression and poverty must be

18 For more, see the political scientist Michael A. Gillespie, “Sovereign Selves and Sovereign States: Political Theory for a New Millennium,” in *Freedom and the Human Person*, ed. Richard Velkley, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2007), 109-112, 114, 116; *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xiii; and *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 22-23, 31, 41-43, 242-254. Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); *Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); and “Secular Philosophy and Its Origins at the Dawn of the Modern Age,” in *The Question of Christian Philosophy Today*, ed. Francis J. Ambrosio (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1999), 61-79. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Sovereignty* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008), 52-55, 67, 108-114. Adrian Pabst, “Modern Sovereignty in Question: Theology, Democracy and Capitalism,” *Modern Theology* 26, no. 4 (October 2010), doi:10.1111/j.1468-0025.2010.01633.x. For philosophers on the importance of nominalism for modernity—that modernity is actually living out late medieval projects, rather than a sharp break from the medieval age—see Andrew Cole and D. Vance Smith, eds., *The Legitimacy of the Middle Ages: On the Unwritten History of Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

19 I do not intend to say that patriarchy did not exist or was not endemic in the time between Rome and the late middle ages. I am simply pointing to what constitutes our understanding of kingdom today because Isasi-Díaz emphasized just that. Also, what I am saying is in part the product of descriptive analysis by Carl Schmitt, Michel Foucault, and Giorgio Agamben. Carl Schmitt famously stated that the “[s]overeign is he [*sic*] who decides on the exception” (*Political Theory: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5). It was in that one observation that Schmitt realized that political liberalism is not self-grounding, and that despite the move to democracy, the Hobbesian sovereign still remains. Foucault's analysis of biopolitics (*The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)) partially assumed this, but focused on the development of political and economic liberalisms: rather than let live or kill, the state today makes one live, but rarely actively kills. However, and here is part of why I still mention Hobbes, Giorgio Agamben criticizes Foucault for not seeing that the Hobbesian sovereign is still there (*Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government (Homo Sacer II, 2)*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mandarini (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011)). What we need to do is rethink the sovereign, rather than abandon divine sovereignty because it has been defined by the late medieval and modern conceptions of God as sheer, arbitrary power that underlies patriarchy in general, and the Hobbesian sovereign in particular. Also, in relation to my constructive move about the triune economy, Agamben notes that it is “the Trinitarian *oikonomia* that may constitute a privileged laboratory for the observation of the working and articulation—both internal and external—of the governmental machine” (*The Kingdom and the Glory*, xi). This explains why Graham Ward writes about the “return of the king” (*The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 58-63). If we do not restructure or redefine, the notions of power that underly patriarchy in general, and the Hobbesian sovereign in particular, the power structures will not truly be dealt with.

20 For a very interesting and promising re-thinking of sovereignty, both divine and political, see Rowan Williams's *Faith in the Public Square* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)—especially part one.

overcome because they are ‘a slap in the face of God’s sovereignty.’ The alienation they cause is a denial of God.”²¹ In sum, kin-dom is theologically based on the God who holds together and defines reality.

Therefore, while divine sovereignty is the basis for a theology of solidarity, it is also crucial for the critique of idolatry.²² The ground for calling idolatrous the perversions in the human city was that God had a city imbued with divinity’s warm, grand affirmation of creation and sharp rejection of sin and death.²³ Indeed, without a divine kingdom for the human kingdom to presumptuously co-opt, there is nothing to be idolatrous about. Subsequently there is little theological ground to *categorically* question old fashioned imperialism, the new imperialism of bio-politics, or the sovereign market. Without measurement for idolatry, the ultimate outcome—that there is no idolatry—seems the most idolatrous position possible. This blindness is particularly disturbing for those of us made complicit in oppression just by simply living in the belly of the beast (the U.S.).

So divine sovereignty is crucial, but, and this is the root of the problem, Isasi-Díaz does not develop divine sovereignty in light of kin-dom. The concept as a framework for solidarity is incomplete. Rightly smashing sexist notions, but without establishing a thick notion of divine sovereignty within the kin-dom framework, leaves us inadvertently cut off from older notions of kingdom and reign that Isasi-Díaz might allow, like *basileia*, that maintains emphasis on transcendence necessary for the critique of idolatry.²⁴ The problem is not with the goal

21 Isasi-Díaz, 32-33. Interestingly, this paragraph on oppression rejecting divinity could very easily have used the word idolatry, but it does not. Instead it is construed as atheism.

22 Gutiérrez, *God of Life*, 48-64; Sung, *Desire, Market and Religion*, 27. Elizabeth Johnson notices this in Gordon Kaufman’s work (“God’s absoluteness, humaneness, and present presence and dimensions of the one living God, a concept which relativizes all idols and judges all human inhumaneness.”) and in liberation theology’s emphasis on the triune God and rejection of the nominalist God of sheer, arbitrary power (which characterized Hobbes’s sovereign): behind reformulating the “Trinity as a community of three distinct persons lies the common assumption of the political danger of nontrinitarian monotheism. One single God reigning in absolute power calls for one emperor or dictator similarly ruling. Imperial rule receives easy theological justification while human political dependency and attitudes of servitude are legitimated. In this context, the trinitarian doctrine takes on a corrective and liberating role insofar as it replaces the concept of a divine monarch with the social character of the triune God.” *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 2007), 208, 210.

23 For instance Petrella sees this when he follows Sung and Gutiérrez with the notion of “a unitary vision of history” (*Beyond*, 15).

24 Sung argues for transcendence, but as utopian vision—a teleological vision of sorts that he calls “utopian imagination” and “transcendental imagination” (*Beyond the Spirit of Empire*, 116, 127, 129, 133). It sounds rather Niebuhrian in some ways, but the emphasis on God’s kingdom would make the later Niebuhr, the Christian realist, nervous. What I am getting at here with the use of transcendence and incarnation I believe to be thicker than the transcendence Sung describes. It is more than a vision, at least in part because it was also already inaugurated in Jesus. Too often I find that the eschatological vision, in its attempt to avoid naiveté, inadvertently lets us off the hook: ‘Those were nice things Jesus said, but he didn’t really mean them for today’ is the same logic that produces an untrue sympathy for liberation—‘Sure we should change things, but lets be pragmatic about this. What you suggest is too much of a category shift.’ This kind of sympathy, as it is only partial, does not go deep enough. When we do not go deep enough in our criticism and change, the theological life is co-opted. Despite our work and intentions, we become a simulacra. Vision, in combination

of her chapter where she established kin-dom—to elaborate on love and equality amongst humanity as the divine path for the redemption for humanity—but instead the issue is that as we make use of her concept of kin-dom, we should not use it as if it is a complete framework. It has understated assumptions, and ones not always held in the same way as those today who speak of solidarity. The ultimate outcome is that kin-dom as a *framework* inadvertently erodes the ground for the idolatry critique if we do not recognize, much less develop, her assumptions.

Yet kingdom cannot simply be re-asserted, because Isasi-Díaz’s criticism of kingdom is not without truth: she takes us to the structural roots of sexism. Indeed there is little qualitative difference between so-called benign paternalism and outright domination; gentle colonialism and oppressive colonialism are still colonialism. So the argument for relational equality in humanity is needed, and this reformulates our understanding of God’s order. However, equality is worth affirming not just because of its political liberation, but first because relational equality is divine, and therefore true. It is the theological truth that shows a constructive vision of social relations attracted to the good (and therefore the ground for idolatry critique), rather than a negative theology of power relations. What is needed for deepening the kin-dom framework is a constructive theology that both affirms kin-dom and establishes an explicit ground necessary for idolatry critique. I suggest the trinitarian economy of gift, which is based on the “doctrine of the Trinity... a practical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life.”²⁵ I have various reasons for the triune economy, but most notably for its theological weight, continuity with kin-dom, and its future appropriateness to address the rise of sovereign, global capitalism.²⁶

The trinitarian economy is no obscure theology, and has been even recently developed by a diverse crowd of significant theologians like Kathryn Tanner, Eliza-

with memory (*Beyond the Spirit of Empire*, 156-158, here Joerg Rieger is using Johannes Metz on *anamnesis*), then is only the beginning, not the framework. Grace—the material manifestation of divine gift—is *incarnational*, not just visionary.

25 Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1993), 1. I also want to note that Miroslav Volf has rightly complicated the divinization of humanity through participating in the trinitarian relations (see *After Our Own Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 191-220, and “‘The Trinity is Our Social Program’: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement,” *Modern Theology* 14, no. 3, (July 1998): 403-423). However, Volf nevertheless still notes “that in an important sense the doctrine of the Trinity does entail a ‘social program’ or, as [Volf] prefer[s] to put it, that it ought to shape our ‘social vision’” (“The Trinity is Our Social Program,” 406).

26 I believe that liberation theology has been responding and continues to adapt to the rise of not simply global capitalism, but a sovereign, global capitalism. One could simply point to liberation theology’s project of state building to combat economic oppression (the state needs to be fixed because it is the mechanism of keeping life together just), but liberation theology’s positioning of itself goes deeper. As much as liberation theology is contextual, the development of the current milieu also seems to be undergoing a fusing of sorts (Feminists do economics, racial studies do gender, etc.). If James Cone is correct that liberation theologies built on the logic of earlier liberation theologies (as he noted in ST 103, Fall 2006 at Union), then what we have here is the possible synthesis of a massively multi-faceted theology that maintains the *anawim* at the heart of its theology. So as much as there is a contextual difference, there is at root a grand commonality as well. Also, if the move from political

beth Johnson, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, Leonardo Boff, Douglas Meeks, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Sarah Coakley, Louis-Marie Chauvet, Miroslav Volf, Pope Benedict XIV, and John Milbank to name a few.²⁷ The trinitarian economy is a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in unity that affirms distinctiveness and equality, and expands universally in new, creative ways. It is therefore up to the task for supporting Isasi-Díaz's notion of solidarity (as commonality and mutuality), friendship, and more.²⁸ However, the history of humanity's gift giving is fraught with

to economic sovereignty is indeed going on, it is distinctly possible that contextual difference will be variations on the theme of the haves and the have-nots under a sovereign global capitalism.

27 To be clear, I use the term trinitarian economy, and not social trinitarianism, for a specific reason: they are not same—those for and against in the social trinitarianism do not directly correspond to discussion over the economy between the persons in the Trinity. As for the list, I note the theologians here specifically because of the diverse range, which I believe strengthens the argument, and so I will be using a variety of sources to describe the traits of the triune economy. However, I do not mean to flatten the differences between the theologians. For instance, Balthasar seems to retain a hierarchy—the Father generating the Son—that Johnson would be opposed to in her vision of the radical egalitarian Trinity as a triple helix (*She Who Is*, 218-221). Indeed she sees a “mutual relation, radical equality, and communal unity in diversity inherent in the triune symbol” over and against patriarchy's subordination in the Trinity. However, Balthasar is more complex than a simple subordinationism; indeed, he too seems to maintain some of what Johnson argues for: “The circular dynamism within God spirals inward, outward, forward toward the coming of a world into existence, not out of necessity but out of a free exuberance of overflowing friendship” (222). While there is clearly a tension, and I do not intend to reconcile Balthasar and Johnson here, there is some overlap between the two, particularly in terms of love and gift between the persons. It is this absolute love in gift, dynamically lived in the persons and resulting in healthy interpenetration (*perichoresis*), that I seek to push here. Gift giving is the life of the Trinity. Kathryn Tanner, *Economy of Grace* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005). Johnson, *She Who Is*. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us*. Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988). Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989). Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theological Drama Volume II: The Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1990), 256. Sarah Coakley, “Why Gift? Gift, Gender and Trinitarian Relations in Milbank and Tanner,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61, no. 2 (April 2008), doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0036930608003979; “Persons' in the 'Social' Doctrine of the Trinity: A Critique of Current Analytic Discussion,” in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, eds. Stephen T. David, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 123-144. Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan, S.J., and Madeleine Beaumont, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1995), 108. Miroslav Volf, *After Our Own Likeness*, “The Trinity is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement,” and *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). Benedict XIV, *Caritas in Veritate*, Encyclical letter on integral human development in charity and truth, Vatican Web site, accessed April 23, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html. John Milbank, “Can a Gift be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic,” *Modern Theology* 11, no. 1 (January 1995), doi:10.1111/j.1468-0025.1995.tb00055.x; “The Politics of Time: Community, Gift and Liturgy”; *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 138-161; *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 352-363; “The Soul of Reciprocity (Part Two): Reciprocity Granted,” *Modern Theology* 17, no. 4 (October 2001): 485-507.

28 It is important to highlight that in Agamben's *The Kingdom and the Glory*, he ends at the trinitarian economy as the ground for equality, and therefore democracy, which at the very least

deception, and when gift talk is weak it enables oppression rather than confronts it, so I feel the need to detail some basic elements of the trinitarian economy.

First, the triune gift economy—as is the notion of divine sovereignty—is characterized by divine freedom.²⁹ The implication then is that the God-who-gives does so in love, not obligation.³⁰ Thus the character of the Trinitarian *processio/circumincessio* is sheer gift given in love.³¹

shows that what I am doing in this argument is not without (partial) allies. But the trinitarian focus goes further than simply the root. Reflecting on Agamben, J. Kameron Carter has noted that a warped trinitarian logic is pervasive, and so if we are to challenge anything, we need to confront the trinitarian idolatry in the market and political governance by setting straight what the trinitarian economy really is and demands: Agamben “connects the problem of governance and economy to its original and paradigmatic home in Christian theology, especially patristic theology, where we find the divine economy articulated in Trinitarian terms. His argument is going to give many theologians heartburn because if he's right, the problem of biopolitics represents an ongoing social display of a certain Trinitarian imagination that is so pervasive as to be now thorough, complete, and thus invisible to us.” With David Kline, “Race, Theology, and the Politics of Abjection: An Interview with J. Kameron Carter, Part I,” *The Other Journal*, accessed April 23, 2012, http://theotherjournal.com/2012/03/26/race-theology-and-the-politics-of-abjection-an-interview-with-j-kameron-carter-part-i/. Thus, getting the triune economy right is not only important to theology, it is also important for those only concerned with sheer immanence.

29 Divine freedom being: God is not determined, but instead “free in his [*sic*] self-possession” (Balthasar, 256). Also see Meeks, 110.

30 Tanner establishes this (74) before she launches into noncompetition, mutuality, and the Trinity (75-85). I am following a similar pattern in my description here of the triune economy.

31 I do not want to inadvertently re-establish the sexism that feminism has worked so hard to exorcise (e.g. kingdom to kin-dom). However, I have yet to decide between *processio* or, for instance, Johnson's work. Johnson notes in *She Who Is* that the *processio* is one-way, and therefore asymmetrical, because it lacks equality (196). In fact, for Johnson, *processio* implies “rank” because of generation (197). One of the reasons in my argument here for noting *processio* is because it does connect with *missio* since both are about giving/sending *kenotically*. While important, I do not have the space to work out the issue of generation subverting equality, other than the next three points. First, Tanner maintains the *processio*, but does not see hierarchy subverting equality in the economy, although this could be a misstep of course (74, 81). Second, I do not think I actually need to develop *processio* here because trinitarian generation is not the model of human participation: humanity cannot imitate triune generation in *any* sense. Human participation does have agency, but it is first dependent on divine work; we do not create ourselves or others. Humanity should realize the triune economy in fresh ways, but it is still a derivative realization—humans do not create in the divine way, and thus human hierarchy does not legitimately correspond to trinitarian generation. To make human hierarchy correspond to any notion of trinitarian hierarchy is a power move that has no revelatory (e.g. scriptural) support. One might call idolatrous such justification of a hierarchy because it attempts to elevate some finite beings to a transcendent position over and against other finite beings (Volf says just as much in “The Trinity is Our Social Program,” 405). Also, such hierarchy violates the equality inherent to humanity as created in the *imago Dei*. This ultimately means that if one maintains generation, there is the needed move to distinguish some divine action and human participation characterized as responsive to divinity that generates humanity and the equality within humanity. Identity and roles would not be precisely equal between divinity and humanity, but that is already established in the creator/created distinction. However, this does not undercut human work within the triune economy because human work is participatory, not generative. Third, if there is a hierarchy within the Trinity, and if it should correlate with human inter-relationality, it would roughly correspond with the one for whom God is partisan—the oppressed and their ‘friends’ as Isasi-Díaz calls them. They are the ones who would be subverting the system by living into the divine economy, and therefore forming the oppressed by rejection of oppression and invitation into the

Second, it affirms difference in unity because it has a sense of what Rowan Williams calls “positive otherness.”³² The intra-trinitarian life is characterized by space and otherness so that all the persons are distinct.³³ Thus the divine life does not overtake the existence of each person, break down distinction, or annex and silence the particular under the guise of gift. The reality is quite the contrary. It could not work without valuing and ensuring the space for otherness.

Third, *perichoresis* does expose one to another in a vulnerable way—it is after all kenotic—but *perichoresis* is based on mutual agency of equals in reciprocity, as opposed to simple submission.³⁴ *Perichoresis* is through love and gift that which does not coerce and obliterate. Instead gift asks for the other to join in their own way. It affirms and calls; gift includes invitation. This establishes reciprocity, not market exchange.³⁵ Grace is indeed pure gift, but it also seeks to call out grace in others.³⁶

Fourth, the trinitarian economy is coherent, cohesive, and expansive. Because the Trinity and its gift economy affirms and maintains distinction between the persons, it does not become unhinged and spin unbalanced. Because the

divine economy. Nevertheless, I am reticent to argue for point three because humans are at best softly determinative insofar as they carry on God’s project, and humans are certainly not generative. In the end, I agree with the second point, and one can see this in the well traveled question: can humanity establish a hierarchy where it is the monarch or bishop that is *the* divine representative or tool on earth (e.g. the medieval monarch as a kind of regent)? As an Anabaptist, I say no.

32 “Positive otherness” is part of Williams’s summary of Hans Urs von Balthasar’s work. Rowan Williams, “Balthasar and the Trinity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, eds. Edward T. Oakes and David Moss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2004), 48. This corresponds with much of Johnson’s notion of friendship (216-218).

33 Balthasar, 257. Poetically he asserts: “there must be *areas of infinite freedom* that are *already there* and do not allow everything to be compressed into an airless unity and identity. The Father’s act of surrender calls for its own area of freedom; the Son’s act, whereby he receives himself from and acknowledges his indebtedness to the Father, requires its own area; and the act where by the Spirit proceeds, illuminating the most intimate love of Father and Son, testifying to it and fanning it into flame, demands its area of freedom.”

34 I say this specifically with legitimate feminist fears in mind: that theology has been and is used to make women vulnerable, and ultimately subservient, because patriarchal power denies women basic human agency. I do not believe that the trinitarian economy, although it may have a sense of service, takes from people their agency. Instead, it calls people into active participation, which presumes, affirms, and calls people to exercise agency (although not agency defined by self-generation). Johnson notes this on 196 and 220-222 of *She Who Is*. However, on Johnson’s point about *perichoresis*, I am not sure that the tradition is as distinct from her own work as she argues it is.

35 Tanner, 62. This notion of gift that I advocate is suspicious of a “restricted economy” that may eventually collapse grace into an economy of bargain by emphasizing the completion of the circuit. Chauvet is directly influenced by Heidegger (*Symbol and Sacrament*, 21-83), but Chauvet can also be read from a ‘Hauerwasian’ lens, understanding the completion of the circuit, and grace itself, as Christological hospitality that the church is called to, which is part of proclaiming and living divine peace and the *basileia* (*The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 137). This may be understood as a disservice to Chauvet by some, but I do not think so in light of Chauvet’s notion of symbolic exchange (chapter 8), specifically because of his comments on narrative analysis, *anamnesis*, grace, and “return-gift” as ethics around the Eucharist (268-280) that draw from Johannes Metz’s work, which is similar to Hauerwas’s on this point (memory and narrative operating as formation).

36 Isasi-Díaz would agree considering she wrote and quoted Gutiérrez: “But though the kin-dom is a gift of God, it also ‘requires certain behaviors from those who receive it’” (*Mujerista*, 117).

trinitarian economy relates in loving gift, it produces a dynamic life together that feeds one another. And because the economy is rooted in the boundless nature of divinity, there is no limit or finite me—and in this respect, grace as an economy of reciprocal giving is characterized by its over-flowing.³⁷ This over-abundance indicates that grace meets and surpasses a need, but through a process that is not an economy of bargain, nor simply for one’s self.

The over-abundant gift giving of the triune life is manifest in human history as the *missio Dei* (the missionary God)—the God-who-gives, gives God’s self to humans all created equal in the *imago Dei*.³⁸ To say that God is missionary is not like the colonial, missionary movements characterized by cultural arrogance and coercive, white patriarchy.³⁹ *Missio* is also quite different than the ‘gift’ of democracy that the U.S. recently ‘gave’ Iraq via war.⁴⁰ Instead, gift makes kenotic love concrete. A gift must be given in a healthy way and appropriate to the needs of the receiver; gift must be given in love and truth. An inappropriate gift is not actually a gift, it is at best a burden. *Missio* is about divine gift sent to invite humanity to reciprocate, and thereby participate in the divine economy.⁴¹ Responding to

37 This point is crucial. John Milbank names this vital character as plenitude, while Louis-Marie Chauvet puts it another way: “grace is essentially that which cannot be calculated and cannot be stocked” (Milbank, “Can a Gift be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic,” and *Being Reconciled*, 138-161; Chauvet, 108.) *Caritas in veritate* also attests to this character of grace: “Gift by its nature goes beyond merit, its rule is that of superabundance” (34). I also want to note here, so as to be faithful to Milbank and Chauvet without simply repeating a footnote above, that they seem at odds. Chauvet, a Heideggerian, is highly suspicious of metaphysics while Milbank embraces metaphysics and Thomas. However, I believe that they may not be so far apart and in my mind I use D. Stephen Long’s *Speaking of God: Theology, Language, and Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), to bridge the two. I am not the first to see Chauvet as possibly amenable to a good metaphysics. For a perspective from an heir of Bernard Lonergan, see Joseph C. Mudd, “From De-ontotheology to a Metaphysics of Meaning: Louis-Marie Chauvet and Bernard Lonergan on Foundations in Sacramental Theology,” *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy* (2008).

38 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 389-393. A recent book by John Flett contests some of the narrative around *missio Dei* (*The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010)); but nevertheless, the point still stands about divine mission as sending gift, which then characterizes human life.

39 I do want to continue acknowledging where there might be problems for some. To say that God is missionary can only be said from certain faiths—ones with certain notions of revelation, gift-giving, love defined in a certain way, and more. One may be able to fudge the Trinity for another faith if there is an understanding of faith as response to God’s gift that maintains a kind of relational equality between humanity under God. I will admit that this is not first a pluralist theology. Trinity resists translation into a pluralist framework because its basis is so very, if not uniquely Christian, which is also the root for disagreement with critical theory above. The Christian identity does not mean, however, that it is antithetical to interfaith dialogue. Quite the opposite, actually, but I do not have room here other than to point to projects like scriptural reasoning projects for interfaith dialogue that can be understood as sharing each others’ tradition through gift giving.

40 *Missio* is not about “bomb[ing] them into a higher rationality” (William Cavanaugh, “Does Religion Cause Violence?” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 35, no. 2 and 3 (Spring/Summer 2007), <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news-events/harvard-divinity-bulletin/articles/does-religion-cause-violence>).

41 For example, Jesus of Nazareth, a different kind of messiah than expected, was the incarnate, divine *hesed* seeking reconciliation through reciprocation. *Hesed* is the Hebrew concept of the creator’s persistent loving kindness towards Israel. Also, this sentence parallels *Caritas in veritate*

divine gift brings humanity into the triune life, and thus the qualities of divine relationality begin to constitute human relationality.⁴² The death of the divine giver is not the end of true gift; rather, it is the first gift that continues in plenitude and enables us to (re)give.⁴³ Therefore the specific or particular instance of divine gift is meant to move beyond those who first receive, and expand into an alternative economy that is rooted in loving gift, positive otherness, openness, invitation, stability, and abundance.⁴⁴ Indeed, the triune economy—through *missio*—redeems human relations, and in such a way that is focused on the common good.

Of course one might object that divine plenitude is not an economic source for the poor, so gift is still asymmetrical, if not paternalistic, because the poor cannot give gifts while the rich can. However, the triune economy is not a rich man's game, or perhaps Jesus would have been a rich, Roman emperor.⁴⁵ The oppressed still have agency, although oppression attempts to deny this. For example, there is prophecy, and that is a gift at the very least because it is revelatory. The call to redemption is a gift, so the voices of the oppressed are very important and should be received as gift.⁴⁶

Redemption, through an economy of gift giving, affirms and deepens Isasi-Díaz's concern for commonality and mutuality, her technical understanding of friendship, and her refusal of one-sided charity.⁴⁷ This economy also provides

(5): "Charity is love received and given. It is 'grace' (*cháris*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Love comes down to us from the Son. It is creative love, through which we have our being; it is redemptive love, through which we are recreated. Love is revealed and made present by Christ (cf. Jn 13:1) and 'poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit' (Rom 5:5). As the objects of God's love, men and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity." I do not believe that this notion of charity must be the same kind that Isasi-Díaz criticized because it is a two-way street and is charity as *caritas*, rather than giving some money to a homeless person on the sidewalk. However, Eugene McCarragher argues that *Caritas in veritate* does not go far enough ("Not Bold Enough: Why Did Benedict Pull His Punches?" *Commonweal* 136, no. 14 (August 2009): 11-12). And so, while Benedict XVI may move towards restructuring the economy, we need to make sure that it does connect to the reality of the situation, hence the need for historical projects. Our words and deeds need to go far enough, otherwise the triune economy can be warped into the charity that Isasi-Díaz was confronting.

42 Worth noting is "the need for the oppressed to learn from the 'friends,' ... [s]olidarity requires a true dialogic relationships" (Isasi-Díaz, *Lift Every Voice*, 37). The reciprocity at work parallels the dialogic relationship that Isasi-Díaz envisioned. Walter Rauschenbusch notes this, and even uses the logic of gift to do so (*A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 141).

43 Milbank, *Being Reconciled*, 157.

44 Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2005), 13.

45 Otherwise the gift economy would be the notion of charity in disguise that Isasi-Díaz is so concerned about.

46 This parallels Isasi-Díaz's "word uttered by the poor" that makes friends out of the oppressor (*Lift Every Voice*, 36).

47 What is problematic concerning commonality and mutuality in the kin-dom framework is that they are predicated on only social reality. On one hand this is necessary because Isasi-Díaz is trying to get the oppressed to unify by virtue of them being in similar circumstances. On the other hand, this is a commonality and mutuality that does not distinguish between commonality

the basis for idolatry critique. Here is an incarnational, and therefore enfleshed, economy that is so different from capitalism's market that it is difficult not to call that market anti-Christ. The divine economy supplies an intelligible measurement for the charge of idolatry directed at contemporary mammon—Wall Street—without relying on the coercive, sexist, white monarch of Hobbes. Rather than life actualized in bargain, subject to a scarcity model, limited to competition, or valued by arbitrary worth, life is instead valued by divinity's sovereignty and grand abundance.⁴⁸ This can be incarnated (e.g. historical projects) in numerous ways and Kathryn Tanner, Douglas Meeks, Michael Naughton, Phillip Goodchild, Gary Dorrien, and Isai-Díaz have outlined multiple avenues.⁴⁹

In sum, the idolatry critique is still viable. We can still access it and use it, but in order to do so, we need to develop the constructive vision of Christianity

of circumstances and commonality of self-interest, and it makes little mention of commonality of the body of Christ (although I do think Isasi-Díaz has this operating). Of course self-interest is not inherently bad, but it is the basis of our capitalist economy, so we need to make sure that kin-dom inherently opposes capitalism's logic of self-interest. Gift giving does so more sharply than what mutuality does in kin-dom (Tanner, 75-85, and also 92-95, 101-142). Also, gift giving is that which can transcend where there is not already commonality or mutuality—it is how one makes friends. It is "what connects and unites" (Milbank, *The Future of Love*, 352). Here is where gift shows the problem with commonality as the basis. For the oppressors to become friends of the oppressed, they heed a moral call and must give up their commonality of self-interest with the oppressors. Yet on what basis? To truly give up idols, and their strong temptations, requires something more than a strong moral constitution. It requires something that overcomes the idolatrous creation and maintenance of social divisions. As invitation ultimately derived from divine vision, gift works directly to overcome the social divisions of culture. Tanner notes: "As a gift giver you identify yourself very closely with all those you would not naturally resonate with or feel sympathy for because of their cultural and social differences from you" (80). Thus gift both begins the process of solidarity and is the realization of solidarity in a specific, concrete way.

48 Chauver, 108. Also worth noting is that, because of positive otherness and abundance, cultural differences, gender differences, etc. are not wiped off the table but embraced. For instance, this affirms: "Interaction among Latinas and non-Latinas will lead to participation and inclusion in a way that does not require us to renounce who we are" (Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista*, 118). One may say that covenant is in the category of bargain; however, to do so misconstrues the gracious nature in which God acts, even when in conditional promise (e.g. some form of lavishing, steadfast love—*hesed*—is gracious, even when the other party does not live up to their agreement). This the Hebrew Bible attests to over and over.

49 Tanner, 89-142. Meeks attempts to revise conceptions of numerous topics in *God the Economist*. Michael Naughton immediately connects the triune economy to the business world in his work, especially in *The Logic of Gift: Rethinking Business as a Community of Persons* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2012). Philip Goodchild works on the credit system in *Theology of Money* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 201-255. Of course there is Gary Dorrien's work on democratic socialism (sometimes called economic democracy): *The Democratic Socialist Vision* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1986); *Reconstructing the Common Good; Economy, Difference, Empire: Social Ethics for Social Justice* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 87-184. In fact, in *Reconstructing the Common Good*, Dorrien explicitly states that Gutiérrez, Segundo, and even Bonino need democratic socialism, and the reason is for establishing a concrete historical project stemming from their theology (112, 158-159). And still more, while Isasi-Díaz talks about equalizing power—"restitution" (*Mujerista*, 121)—she also rightly held a deep notion of the dialogic relationship, so restitution is only the beginning: "Mutuality among the oppressed and between the oppressed and their 'friends' is not simply a matter of reciprocal understanding and support, though

in light of the truth that Christianity proclaims (transcendence and immanence together in the Incarnation) for grounding the idolatry critique; we need to deepen the theological ground and make more explicit the political implications of the prevailing theological frameworks for informing, if not guiding or even generating, historical projects. I have endeavored to quickly show that the trinitarian economy does just that, and is especially applicable because it is immediately interactive with the social aspect of sin that generates structural evil, maintains continuity with liberation theology's second wave, and will be more relevant in the future as global capitalism continues to extend its sovereignty.

that is or could be a very positive side effect. Mutuality as an element of solidarity must push the oppressed and their 'friends' to revolutionary politics" (*Lift Every Voice*, 37). As much as this might be limiting the purchase of historical violence from the past, it is also calling the rich to participate in the gift giving already being done by the oppressed. I do want to note here that reciprocity as I have used it throughout the argument is not exactly the same as John Rawls's notion that Isasi-Díaz uses at times (specifically *Mujerista*, 122) because it is bound up in Rawls's overall project, which I find unconvincing.