

Article

The Migrational Triune God: A Study from Migrant Perspectives

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Abstract

Churches are valuable places for migrants to settle in new locations, regardless of diverse cultural backgrounds. Within migrant contexts, the Nicene Creed itself is a result of cross-cultural engagement, reflecting migrational aspects to establishing church unity. This paper explores the Nicene Creed from a migrant perspective and suggests shifting from the traditional Trinity to a “Migrational Trinity”. First, it examines God the Father as the Father of migrants, based on the Old Testament. Second, it considers God the Son, Jesus Christ, as the incarnational migrant, moving from heaven to earth and into a historical migrant. Third, it describes the Holy Spirit as the migrating Spirit, because the symbolizing of the Spirit emphasizes movement, which inherently signifies migration. By interpreting the Trinity through a migrant lens, this study suggests Trinity Sunday readings.

Keywords: migrant theology; trinity; migrational trinity; Nicene creed; Trinity Sunday

1. Introduction

The year 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, prompting various ecumenical institutions and organizations to organize conferences reflecting upon its significance. CATS-X represents one of the earliest conferences in these celebrations, convening diverse churches. The central theme of CATS-X is “Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring Faith and Embracing Unity—Asian Ecumenical Responses.” Within this theme, two key concepts emerge: Nicaea represents the past, while echoes symbolize the present. This theme invites an exploration of the Council of Nicaea’s unique significance and how its legacy resonates with contemporary issues. A guiding question is the following: How can we connect and reinterpret the doctrine of the Trinity within the context of migration? Consequently, this paper contributes to a contextual understanding of the Trinity based on migrant experiences, specifically focusing on the three divine persons and their unifying relations.

The Trinity is chosen as the focal point of the past because it was the core theological achievement of the Council of Nicaea, even though this doctrine has developed continuously within varied contexts until the present. Terminologically, “Trinity” and “Triune God” are synonymous but expressed differently. The term Trinity derives from the Latin *trinitas*, meaning threefold or “three in one.” Conversely, “Triune God” is derived from two Latin roots: *tri-* (three) and *-une* (one). These terms emphasize the same reality: God is three persons in one being. Therefore, this paper uses the terms Trinity and Triune God interchangeably, with no distinction in meaning.

The term migration lacks a single, universal definition, as its meaning varies significantly depending on context and criteria. For example, in biblical studies, the term diaspora is often used to describe the migration of the Israelites, highlighting the theological and historical nuances of their movements. In social science, however, migration



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is defined in multiple ways, often classified into categories such as international and domestic, documented and undocumented, voluntary and forced, or temporary and permanent. These definitions are shaped by the diverse contexts in which migration occurs. For the purposes of this paper, migration will be understood using the definition provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), even though the term migration may also be used analogically to describe the divine being beyond human geographical and social movement:

“An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students (IOM 2019, migrant).”

The Trinity affirmed Christian faith within the ecclesial community and throughout the Roman Empire (WCC 2024, p. 4). It is clear that the Trinity is rooted in the past as a tie for global Christianity. Migration, conversely, represents a significant 21st century issue, often described as a global trend even though migration has existed throughout history.

Casanova (2020, pp. 4, 5) illustrates globalization, which is connected with mass migration globally, by dividing it into three periods. The first period, from the 1500s to the 1700s, was characterized by Europe-centered movement. The second phase, from the 1770s to the 1980s, involved the world capitalist system under European and Western hegemony. In these two global migrations, global migrants tended to be European/Westerners, whereas Africans and Asians suffered through forced migration imposed by them. The final period began in the 1990s and is based on polycentric trends rather than a Northern Hemisphere-centered model.

Furthermore, Oxfam (2020, p. 6) explains that migration is a “megatrend” driven by four clusters: “rapid technological development, demography, environmental pressures, and shifting power.” Specifically, migration is inextricably linked to demographic shifts, conflict, climate change, and resource scarcity (Oxfam 2020, p. 29). Consequently, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely linked to migration because the SDGs were established for prosperity and peace by overcoming poverty and inequalities. Regarding migration and the SDGs, the IOM has published a noteworthy report, *Migration and the SDGs: Measuring Progress* (Mosler Vidal and Laczko 2022). The section “Migration in the SDGs: Key Data Points” is particularly useful in illustrating how migration intersects with each agenda as a megatrend (pp. vii–xiv).

Thus, the primary aim of this paper is to build a bridge between the past (Nicaea) and the present (global migration) by reinterpreting the Trinity. To achieve this, the research is structured as follows: first, it establishes a connection between the Trinity and migration through a contextual theological approach, recognizing the Trinity as a contextual theological achievement (Bevans 2018, pp. 6, 7). In the second section, alternative interpretations of the Trinity from a migrant perspective are proposed. God the Father is understood as the creator of all, including the contexts in which migrants live, becoming the God for migrants. Jesus, the Son of God, is depicted as a migrant, with (the) incarnation viewed as a form of (the) migrational incarnation. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is associated with the migrant experience, as the Spirit’s movement is symbolic of migration itself. In conclusion, this study affirms that the Triune God is a God of migration. In this sense, the Trinity is not only characterized by perichoresis but also interpreted through the figure of migration, viewed from a contextual and analogical perspective.

2. Contextual Triune God

A contextual approach serves as a stepping stone for reinterpreting the Trinity in relation to migration. The Nicene Creed emerged from the cultural and theological diversity of its time, with the Council of Nicaea marking the beginning of debates “among geographically diverse Christian bishops and theologians” (Lyman 2024, p. 7). Although the terms Western and Eastern Christianity today differ from their usage in the early church, at that time both were united under the Roman Empire. The Nicene Creed was shaped by evolving social and cultural contexts over several years (Kinzig 2024, pp. 609–12). Rather than viewing these differences as negative, the Council of Nicaea can be seen as a positive outcome of cultural conflict, facilitating dialogue between distinct cultural backgrounds (pp. 213–354).

Bevans (2018), in his renowned book *Models of Contextual Theology*, explains that contextual theology utilizes three sources: scripture, tradition, and human experiences. Specifically, human experiences are intertwined with space, time, and people; thus, contextual theology is based on experiences of the past and the present, as well as traditional sources, the Bible, and history (Bevans 2002, pp. 2, 3).

Bevans analyzes contextual approaches by categorizing them into six distinct methods: translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental, and countercultural models. Each model has different strengths and weaknesses; hence, he emphasizes that it is impossible to suggest a perfect or ideal model. Among the six models, the “synthetic model” is particularly relevant to doctrinal development, such as that of the Triune God in the Nicene Creed, to explain the process. This is because the synthetic model might be referred to by other titles: the dialogical model, analogical model, both/and model, or the middle-of-the-road model (Bevans 2018, pp. 19–22). In other words, the synthetic model focuses on a well-balanced dialogue between the past and the present.

Here is Bevans’ (2002, pp. 88, 89) explanation regarding the synthetic model: it “might rely as well on theories of doctrinal development that understand doctrine as emerging from the complex interaction of Christian faith and changes in culture, society, and thought forms.” The Nicene Creed and the Trinity are no exception. The doctrine of the Triune God at Nicaea “may have travelled owing to the bishops’ mobility or for political reasons,” as they came from both Western and Eastern Christian regions, each with its own social context (Kinzig 2024, p. 158). Consequently, the development of Christian doctrine can be seen as part of the heritage of the Council of Nicaea, laying the foundation for a contextual understanding of the Trinity through dialogue within various situations. The Trinity has stood over contextual theology, observed at anytime and anywhere throughout the whole of Church history.

The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity illustrates what a contextual Trinity is by exploring the understanding of the Trinity from the New Testament and the early church’s affirmations to contemporary interpretations. For instance, the division between Latin and Greek Christianity emerged through a complex interaction of theological, linguistic, ecclesial, cultural, and political factors, including disputes concerning authority and the procession of the Holy Spirit (Phan 2011a, pp. 7, 8).

Furthermore, modern theologians explore the Trinity within their specific contexts, such as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, and others. Karl Barth emphasizes the Trinity in relation to revelation for reconciliation (Heltzel and Winn 2011, pp. 174, 175), while Karl Rahner focuses on self and grace in the incarnation (Phan 2011b, pp. 194, 195). They dialogued with the Trinity under their specific institutional settings and locations—Reformed and Catholic backgrounds, respectively. Moltmann also stood on his own social foundations when developing Trinitarian theology and paid attention to “relationships and communities” (Kärkkäinen 2011, p. 224).

Additionally, several Asian theologians have already sought to reinterpret the Trinity through contextual approaches. For example, Lee (1996) and H. Y. Kim (2017) draw on East Asian philosophical concepts like *Yin* and *Yang*, and *Tao*, to understand the Trinity (Chung 2009, p. 82). Other Asian theologians explore the Trinity through their lived experiences in contexts of poverty and insecurity. Koyama (1999), a pioneer of Asian theology, addresses the Trinity through the lens of suffering in his book *Water Buffalo Theology*, focusing on the Son of God and His solidarity with the Thai people. Similarly, Korean Minjung theologians (B. M. Ahn 2019; Hyun 1997, pp. 130–60; D. G. Kim 2003, pp. 176–84) interpret the Trinity, specifically focusing on the Son of God, in light of the suffering of Koreans, which they refer to as *Han*. They prefer to refer to the Korean people who have been oppressed, suffered injustices, and been marginalized as *Minjung*. B. M. Ahn (2019, p. 122) explains the Trinity as a tool to understand God and focuses on the character of the “event” in the present: “Jesus is an event, God is an event (pp. 18, 19)”, and the Holy Spirit is also an event (p. 169). Song (2002), another prominent Asian theologian, emphasizes marginalized experiences as a key to understanding the Trinity contextually.

Reinterpreting the Trinity as contextual theology is not a departure from tradition but rather a reinforcement of Nicaea’s heritage. To establish a contextual understanding of the Trinity for the present day, it is essential to address current social issues, with migration serving as a core concern for Christian communities across national and ethnic boundaries. The following sections will address each person of the Trinity from a migrant perspective.

3. Trinity from a Migrant Perspective

Traditionally, the Trinity is often explained in terms of love: God the Father as the origin of love, the Son as love extended toward the world, and the Holy Spirit as the personal and life-giving presence who transforms Christians and the world through divine love (Migliore 2014, Chapter 4). Building on this, Daniel Migliore (Chapter 4) offers a metaphor using the words “indwell, make room, and hospital[ity],” which provides a basis for reinterpreting the Trinity from a migrant perspective. The following sections explore each personhood of the Trinity in this light.

3.1. God the Father from a Migrant Perspective

In the Nicene Creed, God the Father is described as the Creator of all things, both in heaven and on earth. Notably, the Nicene Creed emphasizes God as the “Maker of all things, both visible and invisible,” more explicitly than other early Christian creeds, such as the Roman, Apostles’, and Constantinople Creeds (Kinzig 2024, p. 616). This focus on creation and the relationship between Creator and creation forms the foundation for reinterpreting God the Father from a migrant perspective.

From this viewpoint, God’s creative work provides a theological analogy for experiences of separation and gathering that are central to migration. As George (2021, p. 167) notes, God’s act of creation involves the processes of being “separated and gathered,” terms that are deeply meaningful in the context of migration. The Lausanne Movement captures this idea with the phrase “Scattered to Gather,” emphasizing that migration (or diaspora) can be viewed as part of God’s divine action to establish His reign (Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Teams 2010; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization 2017).

Furthermore, *imago Dei* is also one of the valuable keys to understanding God’s creative work as migrational creation. To interpret *imago Dei* from a migrant perspective, one must first define what *imago Dei* entails. According to Cortez (2010, pp. 18–27), *imago Dei* has four traditional aspects in theological anthropology: the structural image, functional image, relational image, and multifaceted image.

While each has a different emphasis, they share the common understanding that God's creation and the *imago Dei* move from the invisible to the visible and from infinity to finitude. In other words, *imago Dei* includes the meaning of "crossing the border" ontologically; thus, the human being is created as a being of crossing borders, reflecting the likeness (*imago Dei*) of the ontological mover, God (Shin 2024). God the Father, as Creator, can also be understood as the divine source of migration, and God's creative works reflect the characteristics of migration.

Phan (2020, p. 103) expands on this idea, describing God as a being who is infinitely migrant: "God is a migrant; God is not a migrant; and God is infinitely a migrant." While God the Father is not a migrant in a human sense, he participates in a kind of migration within the eternal relationship between the persons of the Trinity. This migrant nature is also reflected in God's creative acts.

The Old Testament, particularly the Book of Genesis, is often the primary source for understanding God's role as Creator. It reveals how God, through creation, builds relationships with his creatures, which is a result of God's dynamic, migratory nature. Israel's history exemplifies God's relationship with "electing grace," rooted in the covenant (Migliore 2014, chapter 4). Some theologians, including Daniel Migliore, highlight this relationship to explain the Trinity, particularly in terms of God the Father's covenant with Israel (chapter 4).

However, if we interpret God the Father exclusively as Israel's God in the Trinity, this traditional approach risks limiting God's nature to a specific ethnicity (Kelly 1972, p. 215). Such a view narrows the scope of God the Father from Creator of all to merely a national deity. In contrast, the Nicene Creed emphasizes God as the Creator of "visible and invisible things," a broader scope that transcends ethnic and geographic boundaries. This distinction between the visible and invisible was formulated in opposition to early heresies like Gnosticism and Marcionism, reinforcing that God's reign encompasses the entire universe. Consequently, missiologists claim a universal God beyond Israel's God, specifically as a creator (Kaiser 2012; Glasser 2006).

As these interpretations evolve from past to present, it is necessary to reflect on what "visible and invisible" means today. Migration, as a global megatrend, offers a fresh lens through which to reinterpret these terms. The concept of Israel as a nation may shift from an ethnic identity to a migratory movement, viewed through a missiological lens (H. K. Kim 2023). This reimagining is possible because Israel's history can be understood as a journey of migration, from Egypt to Babylon (Groody 2022, pp. 65–100). For instance, the covenant between God and Abraham marks the beginning of Israel's history, and Abraham's obedience, particularly in response to God's command to migrate, is emphasized in Hebrews 11:8–9 (Phan 2020, p. 105). As Peter Phan (p. 110) illustrates, "The climax of the Israelites' migration is the covenant God." Furthermore, God is depicted as journeying with Israel, even dwelling in a tent as they wandered through the desert (Phan 2020, p. 108).

Thus, God the Father, as Creator, can be reinterpreted as a migrant Creator—not human, but a divine migrant within the Trinity, who creates, protects, and sustains migrants. Also, God the Father provides migrant cultures with God's covenant and His ongoing presence through migrating and dwelling together.

3.2. The Son of God from a Migrant Perspective

Christology is a prime focus in the Nicene Creed, with an emphasis on the divine nature of the Son of God, especially compared to earlier creeds like the Roman and Apostles' Creeds. Kinzig (2024, p. 621) explains that the second part of the Nicene Creed highlights "the relation between Father and Son and summarizes their respective actions in salvation

history.” In other words, the Nicene Creed emphasizes the Son of God’s incarnation; His journey from heaven to earth, from invisible divine being to visible human being, through the life of Jesus Christ. This concept serves as a foundation for reinterpreting the Son of God as a migrational incarnation.

Langmead (2004) offers two emphases in his explanation of incarnation—“incarnation” and “the incarnation”—and his suggestion provides a useful method for reinterpreting the Son of God as a divine migrant. First, incarnation refers to “the process of embodiment,” stressing the transition from the invisible to the visible, encompassing not only humanity but also the material aspects of all creation (Langmead 2004, pp. 17, 18). Second, the incarnation (emphasizing the definite article, “the”) signifies the salvation of the world, where God, while remaining fully divine, became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ (Langmead 2004, p. 18). These two nuances are found in the Nicene Creed’s portrayal of the Son of God, with the first part emphasizing the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the latter part illustrating the events of Jesus Christ’s life. Therefore, the Son of God as a divine migrant can be reinterpreted through two perspectives: migrational incarnation and the migrational incarnation. The former concerns the ontological boundary-crossing inherent in the divine being, while the latter concerns the historical journey of Jesus’ earthly life.

Firstly, migrational incarnation can be understood as the Son of God migrating from heaven to earth, as expressed in the Gospel of John, where the *Logos* became flesh. The Word of God is “incarnate in certain ways in creation,” moving from the invisible to the visible (Langmead 2004, p. 21). However, as John 1:10–11 indicates, humanity did not recognize this incarnate being: “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” Tension between migrants and local residents often arises due to differing streams of consciousness or cultural thought. Ontologically, the uncreated Son of God and the created world possess a difference that is never fully overcome, and the Gospel of John highlights this ontological gap.

Thus, the Son of God as migrational incarnation serves as a unique bridge connecting the invisible divine realm with the visible material world. Because the visible material world is unable to identify an invisible being, migrational incarnation (not *the* migrational Incarnation) is an act of self-migration, such as self-giving. Volf (1998, p. 85) explains that Christ’s personhood serves as “a relationship between uncreated and created reality.” As such, the migrational incarnation of the Son of God becomes the primary means through which the invisible divine reality interacts with creation, particularly with created migrants (Migliore 2014, chapter 8).

Second, the migrational incarnation also directly relates to the experiences of the migrant as a member of humanity, as Jesus Christ’s life reflects the journeys of many migrants (Alfaro 2022, p. 69). From his birth, Jesus was a political refugee, fleeing to Egypt with his family to escape persecution (Alfaro 2022, pp. 66–67). Later, he became a domestic migrant, traveling from the rural village of Nazareth to the urban center of Jerusalem, symbolizing urban migration. Additionally, Jesus lived as a marginalized figure in Roman society, embodying the experience of colonized peoples. Marginalization is a significant issue for migrants, who often lose their relationships, culture, careers, and communication in new contexts (H. K. Kim 2021). In this way, the historical Jesus lived as a marginalized migrant.

These themes are explored in contemporary theological works on migration. For instance, Groody (2022, pp. 167–75), in *A Theology of Migration*, delves into the concept of the migrational incarnation. Jesus’ migrant journey also serves as an example for the Church to follow in protecting migrants. Specifically, the parable of the Good Samaritan, asking “Who is my neighbor?”, becomes a critical question in relation to migration. The World

Council of Churches' 11th Assembly report calls on churches to stand with migrants, following Jesus' own migrant journey (WCC 2022, pp. 169–74). Biblical studies on Jesus' journey as a migrant provide meaningful sources for churches to stand in solidarity with migrants of all kinds. The incarnation focuses on the life of Jesus in Jerusalem and its vicinity, while the migrational incarnation emphasizes Jesus' migration journey and teaching within the created world.

In summary, the Son of God can be reinterpreted through two lenses. First, as migrational incarnation, focusing on the migration—which is crossing the border—of the divine from invisibility to visibility. This ontological crossing serves as a foundation for understanding migrant beings regardless of different ethnicities, genders, ages, cultures, or reasons for moving. Second, as the migrational incarnation, reflecting on Jesus Christ's life journey as a model for the experiences of migrants. Through this dual perspective, the Son of God becomes both a symbol of divine migration and a bridge for understanding the human migrant experience.

3.3. *The Holy Spirit of God from a Migrant Perspective*

This section explores the Holy Spirit from a migrant perspective, focusing on the Holy Spirit's characteristics of movement and activity. Simply put, the Spirit of God can be viewed as the migrating Spirit of God. While the Holy Spirit did not play a central role in the original Nicene Creed, its significance was amplified in the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed (Cary 2023, Article 3). The Creed evolved from a brief statement, “and in the Holy Spirit,” to “and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who is jointly worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, who spoke through the prophets” (Kinzig 2024, p. 617). Thus, this analysis draws on both the Nicene and Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creeds.

Migliore (2014, Chapter 10) describes the Spirit of God as “life-empowering,” while Yong (2015, Chapter 10) speaks of the *missio Spiritus*. Both emphasize the theme of solidarity between God and creation, particularly with marginalized people (Migliore 2014, Chapter 10). I. Ahn (2019, p. 62) expands on Yong's concept of *missio Spiritus*, explaining it as “the holistic integration of both migrants and citizens as well as the socio-economic and politico-legal transformation of global society.” This highlights several criteria used to define migrants, although it remains impossible to establish a single, unified definition of migration globally.

First, migrants (as newcomers) and citizens (as local residents) represent the two counterparts for analyzing migrant phenomena and establishing policies. Furthermore, socio-economic conditions are undoubtedly factors in identifying the meaning of a migrant. Societal changes stimulate the movement of people from rural to urban areas domestically, and economic factors push people from the impoverished “Third World” to the wealthy “First World” internationally. Thus, socio-economic factors play a pivotal role in urbanization and labor migration, regardless of whether the stay is temporary or permanent. Finally, politico-legal frameworks link various types of migrants. Political issues generate refugees and asylum seekers (H. K. Kim 2025), while legal issues connect authorities and human rights toward forced migrants, victims of human trafficking, and documented or undocumented migrants. Therefore, solidarity is closely linked to the Holy Spirit's role as the “life-giver” for all migrants, regardless of their various categories in the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed.

The Spirit of God serves as a life-giver, especially to marginalized people enduring difficulties and suffering. The Holy Spirit fosters a harmonious life between the Trinity and all creation, supporting the fulfillment of God's covenant and the restoration of the *imago Dei*. A harmonious life can be achieved through crossing boundaries, which are often the

root of discrimination and dehumanization. The Pentecost event in Acts 2 demonstrates how the Spirit of God reconciles divisions—between God and people, and between different groups of people—by crossing various linguistic, cultural, religious, and social lines (I. Ahn 2019, pp. 68–69; Yong 2015, Chapter 2).

Traditional interpretations of Pentecost emphasize overcoming human limitations caused by sin (Acts 2:11). Humanity, in its imperfection, cannot directly encounter a holy God, but through the Spirit, even sinners can commune with God. The Holy Spirit's work focuses on fulfilling God's covenantal will, embracing all nations and peoples (I. Ahn 2019, p. 71). In this way, the Spirit of God empowers marginalized individuals, allowing them to reclaim their identity as bearers of the *imago Dei* by transcending human limitations (Migliore 2014, Chapter 10). The Holy Spirit migrates alongside us, enabling us to move from instability toward completeness.

The term “proceeds,” as used in the Creed, holds significant value and may be understood in two senses: first, as the Spirit's eternal procession from the Father; and second, as the Spirit's historical sending into the world. The former reflects the traditional Trinitarian interpretation of the Spirit's relationship with the Father. The latter is closely associated with the concept of mission: Cary (2023) interprets “proceed” as *missio*, a term that emphasizes movement and activity, extending God's mission throughout the world. The Holy Spirit has been “the sending of the Holy Spirit into the world and into our hearts” since the early days of Christianity (Cary 2023, Article 3). The word “proceeds” conveys the dynamic nature of the Spirit, often compared to wind, breath, or energy (Phan 2016, p. 864). Peter Phan suggests that “proceeds” can be understood as mission, sending, or even “push and pull,” reflecting the Spirit's energy for transformation. This notion of “push and pull” is essential in migration studies, as it identifies the forces that cause migration (Urbanski 2022, pp. 2–5). The Spirit of God, as the proceeding Spirit, could be seen as the original source of migration.

Phan (2016, p. 864) explains that the Holy Spirit “pushes” migrants out of poverty and inhumane living conditions and “pulls” them toward their final eschatological goal—heaven—while restoring the *imago Dei* as the original figure created by God. Additionally, while push factors are linked to negative experiences such as suffering, pull factors present a positive vision characterized by justice, equality, and flourishing for the life journey (Urbanski 2022, p. 4). The Spirit of God is continuously migrating, proceeding, and giving life to migrants, just as it sends prophets to proclaim God's will for migrants throughout the world.

Migrants, in turn, serve as a barometer of equity, freedom, and harmony in society and the church. Historically, migrants have occupied marginalized spaces, facing challenges in securing basic rights such as mobility, employment, voting, and marriage. Their life journey, however, holds a divine purpose: to proclaim God's love and justice to the world, much like Israel's role in God's plan for Palestine. In this sense, migrants act as agents of God's word, and the Spirit of God stands with them, empowering them as life-givers. The Spirit not only supports migrants but also aligns with them in their role as God's messengers.

The Holy Spirit, when viewed through a migrant perspective, can be described through terms such as life-giver, solidarity with the marginalized, proceeding, *missio*, sending, moving, pulling and pushing, migration, and prophetic witness. Ultimately, the Spirit of God is in constant motion, migrating and standing with migrants as a source of life and justice.

4. A New Approach to Perichoresis

Perichoresis has long been an influential concept in explaining the nature of the Triune God. The term derives from the Greek word meaning “mutual indwelling” or “interpenetration.” “It was first used by patristic theologians to describe the mutual indwelling of the divine and human natures of the incarnate Word” (Migliore 2014, Appendix E glossary). The essence of *perichoresis* lies in the idea of mutual indwelling, a shared existence among the three persons of the Trinity.

A fresh reinterpretation of *perichoresis* could consider migration as a central theme, similar to the traditional focus on love. As previously discussed, God the Father is both the Creator through migration and the protector of migrants. Similarly, the Son of God embodies migration, being of migrational incarnation who transitions from the invisible divine realm into the material world. Additionally, Jesus Christ’s life is itself a migrant journey as the migrational incarnation, encompassing the experiences of the urbanized migrant, the political refugee, and the victim of persecution. Likewise, the Spirit of God is continuously migrating with migrants, acting as a life-giver. All three persons of the Trinity share the characteristic of migration, which can serve as a new framework for understanding *perichoresis*. Furthermore, this shared characteristic extends to migrants who reflect the *imago Dei*.

Awad (2021, pp. 178–79) highlights the significance of *perichoresis* in extending the relationship between the Triune God and migrants. He emphasizes that relationality can bridge the gap between refugees and host communities, transcending the barriers of identity and “otherness”. Awad (2021, p. 181) suggests that relationality can develop from coexistence into a deeper state of symbiosis: “A relationality that reaches first the stage of ‘co-existence,’ but it does not (and must not) end at that stage. It rather moves deeper into a state of symbiosis: a state of mutual and reciprocal transformation and interpenetration” (ibid., p. 181).

Awad (2021, p. 182) also notes that “Christian theology learns from its understanding of God’s inner life that the ‘triune God interacts within itself without losing distinction or equality and depicts how the created self and the other might interrelate on a created level.’” In this context, *perichoresis* becomes a model for human relationships, especially among migrants, encouraging symbiosis and mutual transformation as they connect with others.

The Trinity supports a shared sense of identity for migrants within Christian communities, as the Triune God is a migrational Triune God by mutual indwelling through migrational aspects. The doctrine of the Trinity guides us to find the meaning of the migrant, to encompass the migrant’s journey, and to live together regardless of differences in the world. Furthermore, the belief in the Trinity supports the growth of individual responsibility through symbiosis with the migrational Triune God.

5. Applications

This paper bridges the traditional doctrine of the Triune God with the contemporary social issue of migration. The Trinity is not merely a doctrine captured in texts but a living reality, actively at work in our life journeys and societies. Therefore, our understanding of the Trinity can evolve and expand to reach the broader world, including both Christian and non-Christian contexts, without losing its core affirmation that God exists as three persons in one being.

In the context of the church today, this evolving understanding of the Trinity could be reflected by incorporating a Migrational Trinity perspective into the observance of Trinity Sunday within the lectionary. Practically, I suggest the following readings for a Migrational Trinity Sunday: the first reading could be Genesis 1, interpreted to show God

the Father as a Creator through the acts of scattering and gathering. Exodus 15:1–21 or Ezra 2:1–2, 64–70 could highlight God the Father as a protector and guide during migratory journeys. The second reading would focus on the Holy Spirit as the moving force behind migration. Acts 2:1–13 exemplifies the Spirit’s power to transcend language barriers, while 1 Peter 1:1–12 connects the purpose of migration with the guidance of the Spirit. The Gospels offer a wealth of passages related to migration; for instance, John 1:1–18 and Luke 1:23–38 present the Son of God’s Incarnation as a divine migration from heaven to earth. Matthew 2:13–23 and Luke 4:42–44 depict Jesus’ life as one of constant movement, whether through forced or voluntary migration. These are just a few examples, and many other Gospel passages could be explored for a Migrational Trinity Sunday.

Although this paper suggests readings for Trinity Sunday, it acknowledges the limitation that it does not extend to proposing specific approaches to worship and liturgy. This limitation arises because churches are shaped by their particular social contexts, including their location within society, the composition of their members, and other contextual factors. Therefore, further contextual research is required to develop appropriate liturgical approaches.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the doctrine of the Triune God is a significant achievement of the Council of Nicaea, serving as the foundation of the Nicene Creed. However, this doctrine is not static but can develop as contextual theology from the past to the present. Migration, like love, may be viewed as an essential aspect of the mutual indwelling within the Trinity. God the Father is seen as the Creator who scatters and gathers, guiding the migratory journey, as Israel’s identity is defined not just ethnically but migrationally. Thus, Israel becomes the ancestor of all migrants, and Israel’s God becomes the God of all migrants. The Son of God is reinterpreted in two ways: as migrational incarnation and the migrational incarnation. The former emphasizes the divine becoming flesh, while the latter highlights Jesus’ life journey as one of constant migration. The Spirit of God, too, can be reimagined as the “migrating Spirit,” illustrating the Holy Spirit’s role in movement and as the giver of life. As such, the Spirit supports migrants and empowers them to be prophetic witnesses to the world.

The Trinity is not a token of the past, but a hopeful Gospel for migrants, offering solace and empowerment to those suffering from alienation, marginalization, discrimination, and other injustices in the world.

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