An important characteristic of this book's approach to understanding and interpreting the Trinity is that in the question of the knowledge of God there must be integration of basic aspects of the Christian life in the context of the community of the church. Put succinctly, there must be no separation between revelation and reconciliation. As a result soteriology and epistemology, salvation and the knowledge of God are inseparable. O'Collins makes this clear in the introduction. He takes into account the historical experience of salvation which Scripture records and the church has interpreted, the testimony of public worship and the experience of practical Christian discipleship. Trinitarian faith expresses itself then as knowledge, worship and action. There is thus for O'Collins an integration of method in his trinitarian theology: *fides quaerens intellectum, fides quaerens adorationem*, and *fides quaerens iustitiam socialem*. Whether O'Collins succeeds in his task is an open question.

There is certainly attention to the biblical record and a real attempt to ground the trinitarian faith of the church in the biblical witness. Nearly half the pages of the book (pp 11-82) are taken up with careful elucidation of the biblical basis of trinitarian theology. This biblical section is divided into 'The Old Testament Background', 'The History of Jesus and Its Trinitarian Face' and 'The Trinity According to St Paul'. Of some interest is O'Collins' defence of the place of the Jesus virginal conception. The virginal conception is understood to yield meaning not only about Christ's divine *filiation* but also about his relationship with the Holy Spirit. He sees the event as prototypical of the Christian's life: 'the risen Jesus (with the Father) actively blessed the disciples with the Spirit, but in his entire earthly existence, he had himself been blessed by the Spirit_right from his very conception when he came into the world through the Spirit's creative power (p.38).

Unfortunately, O'Collins does not use this interpretation of the virginal conception of Jesus as illustrating his desire to integrate knowledge, worship and action in expressing the meaning of the trinitarian faith of the church. He does not spell out the pivotal integrative importance of the vicarious humanity of the incarnate and risen Jesus as the one in whom the Holy Spirit has sanctified our humanity and that as risen and ascended is the mediator of a new humanity of his body, the church and thus the eschatological head of the new creation. Precisely because O'Collins misses this basic theological point his subsequent analysis of the history of the trinitarian thought in the church, whilst lucidly written and unexceptional in its presentation, lacks theological shape and direction in terms of his stated purpose.

A further illustration of this lack of theological direction is the discussion of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in St Paul (pp 62 ff). Commenting on JDG Dunn's statement that, 'no distinction can be detected in the believer's experience',
between the exalted Christ and the Spirit of God, O'Collins asserts, 'it is patent that neither the apostle nor other NT authors finally identify Christ and the Spirit' (p. 63). The phenomenon to which Dunn alludes is perfectly explicable by understanding Christ as the risen one who, having received the Spirit for our sake, now mediates his sanctified humanity as the source of Christian new life in the Spirit (eg Col. 1:27: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory').

O'Collins then traces the development of the trinitarian dogma from ante Nicea to the Reformation and the modern period. This is set out in such a manner as to be accessible to the interested layperson or student. The story is told with a bias toward the Western Christian interpretation of that history. In fact there is a noticeable lack of appreciation of the Orthodox or Eastern Christian tradition. An example of this is the lack of appreciation of Athanasius's role in the Nicean settlement and its consequent acceptance by the church; particularly the significance of the Council of Alexandria 362 and Athanasius's letter to the Antiochenes (see Athanasius Tomus ad Antiochenos). This comment needs to be qualified by O'Collins' sensitive treatment of the question of the filioque (pp. 139-140). His awareness of the issue of Western Christomonism as devaluing the Pneumatology is certainly in line with Eastern thinking on this issue (see Nissiotis N. The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity for Church Life and Theology. in The Orthodox Ethos. ed. Philippou. AJ Holywell. Oxford).

What is true of O'Collins' somewhat tentative appreciation of the Eastern tradition is matched by his views on the Reformation tradition. An example of this is seen in his complete lack of appreciation of John Calvin's structuring of his widely influential magisterial work, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, according to the dogma of the Trinity (p.153). This assessment is particularly pertinent since O'Collins opines that 'liturgical studies' have enjoyed little impact on trinitarian theology, at least in western theology (p. 160). One only has to mention the works of Reformed theologians like TF and JB Torrance and their exposition of Calvin in this century to understand the critical significance of worship in the structure of dogmatic theology in the Reformed tradition.

Whilst O'Collins emphasises the personal nature of the trinitarian hypostases and defends this aspect of his understanding of trinitarian relationship both ad intra and ad extra, he does not attempt to enter into dialogue with such contemporary thinkers as J Zizioulas, C Gunton and C Schwöbel who have raised this issue as one of central importance for both trinitarian thinking and for anthropology.

The final part of the book is taken up with a relatively short discussion concerning the 'Naming of the Trinity' (pp 183 ff). Here attention is focused on the relevance of the 'names' of the trinitarian persons in the light of criticisms by feminist theologians and others who find such language both misleading and oppressive fostering, it is asserted, both the patriarchal and exclusivist ethos of the church. O'Collins argues for the traditional language on the basis of the biblical witness, particularly the theological significance of abba as used by Jesus. He rejects the attempted adverbial definitions of the Trinity in terms of Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier et.al as non-Trinitarian; in the sense that these names can infer a Modalist or Arian view of the Trinity. O'Collins appears to
be dependent upon Janet Martin Soskice's exposition of metaphor (Metaphor and Religious Language Oxford.) for his claims that the use of 'Father' is valid 'when we align ourselves with the meanings communicated in that metaphor by the biblical witness (above all, by Jesus himself) and refuse to literalize it.' 'When we call God Father we are clearly not making a literal statement; that is to say, one in which we mean a male parent and so use the word in its primary, matter of fact biological sense. Nor are we introducing a simile: that is to say, using language in its customary sense and merely comparing God with some characteristic of a male parent. Here, as elsewhere, metaphor asserts an identity that simile lacks; hence, it can create a greater impact than a mere simile because of the tension entailed and because literally speaking, it is partly false (p 186).

One would have thought that such an argument would have greater weight and coherence if O'Collins had followed his own dictum regarding the non-separation of dogmatic theology from the context of the liturgy and explored the meaning of the divine names in terms of the logic of the liturgy. Both Edmund Schlink (The Coming Christ and the Coming Church) and Wolfhart Panneberg (Basic Questions in Theology. Vol. 1. 'Doxology and Analogy') have pertinent things to say in this respect.

This book sets out to explore the biblical and traditional interpretations of the dogma of the Trinity. It does so with the avowed intention of showing the integrity of that tradition in terms of Christian worship and life. Whilst I have some reservations about whether the author achieves his stated aims in writing the book and there are some obvious oversights in his account of important areas of church life and theology; there is much in this book which would be useful to the student of the Bible, dogmatic theology and church history. It is written in a lucid style, avoiding as far as possible technical terms whilst not avoiding issues germane to the questions raised.

The book is set up in a clear typeface and I found but one printing error the omission of an indefinite article on page 197. There is a helpful glossary of terms and a bibliography together with an index of names. There is no subject index.