AOSIS

The Trinity and the Old Testament

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Confessing God as the triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is central to the Christian faith. A basic conviction is that the triune God is also the solitary God of the Old Testament. The problem that emanated from this conviction is how to relate the triune God with the one God of the Old Testament. It is argued that New Testament authors made use of Old Testament metaphors to conceptualise God as the triune God. The central question mentioned in this article may be formulated as follows: how do the Old Testament metaphors of God as Father, the Son of God and Holy Spirit contribute to a better understanding of the God that we confess to be the triune God? The revealing of God's proper name in Exodus 3 and the meaning of Jesus' name in Matthew 1 create a relationship between Jesus and God. The theological link between the name of God in the Old Testament and the name of Jesus in the New Testament functions as a firm indicator that God and Jesus are two persons in the Trinity. It is also argued that due cognisance should be taken of the fact that the Old Testament is also the Tanakh of Judaism. It is for this reason better to speak about the Trinity *and* the Old Testament rather than the Trinity *in* the Old Testament, as this would imply that the Christian concept of a triune God is read back into the Old Testament.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: These results serve as a challenge to the important and often neglected interdisciplinary debate between systematic theology and the study of the Old Testament. Insights gained from the side of Old Testament studies can enrich systemic theology in the study of theological themes. This investigation can also stimulate a debate between Old Testament studies and New Testament studies to gain a better understanding of how and why the New Testament made use of the theological vocabulary provided by the Old Testament.

Keywords: Trinity; triune God; Old Testament; name of God; Tanakh.

Introduction and problem statement

The Christian church in general and individual Christians in particular confess God as the one and only triune God who is revealed in the Bible as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. According to Bates (2015:12), there is a renewed interest in the Trinity in the last century within systematic theology. This observation is confirmed by other publications as well. Venter (2016:158–159), for instance, remarks that the work of Barth and Rahner may be considered as the impetus for the renewed interest in the Trinity, and according to Van de Beek (2017:239–248), the doctrine of the Trinity became central in the 20th century, especially through Karl Barth, who made the Trinity the heart of theology.

A basic point of departure concerning the Trinity is that the triune God of the New Testament is at the same time and also the solitary God, as revealed in the Old Testament. The obvious problem that arose from this point of departure was if and how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Testament can be related to the one God, YHWH, in the Old Testament. Already in 1998, Viviano (1998:195) asks whether it is not time to reopen the question of the Trinity and/or the Old Testament in the light of a kind of stalemate situation in the debate. More recently, according to House (2017:5), the Old Testament is under-represented in the dialogue on the Trinity, which he found unfortunate, because the Old Testament has much to contribute to a thorough understanding of God in three persons.

It must at once be admitted that the New Testament does not provide us with a doctrine on the Trinity. Swain (2017:38) rightly remarks that the Trinity does not present himself to us in Holy Scripture in the form of the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed. This contribution does not intend

Note: Special Collection: Trinity.

to provide an overview of how the church eventually came to a confession of God as the triune God, nor does it intend to explore all the New Testament verses where traces of a Trinitarian God are also alluded to. Another avenue of investigation was to look for proof of the Trinity in the Old Testament. The Trinity was read back into the Old Testament. This contribution does not intend to go this way either. Hence, the title of the article is the Trinity *and* the Old Testament rather than the Trinity *in* the Old Testament.

The thesis explored in this article is to take the triadic formulations in the New Testament as a starting point. The New Testament made use of metaphors describing God in a triadic formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these metaphors are metaphors for or relating to God that also occur in the Old Testament. By making use of these metaphors, an undeniable relationship is created between the God of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament. The God who was seen by the writers of the New Testament as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is none other than the God YHWH, revealed in the Old Testament. Merrigan and Lemmelijn (2006:177) note that it is of vital importance to realise that the New Testament and the early Christian conceptualisation of a Trinitarian divine reality did not evolve *ex nihilo*. The question mentioned in this article is to ask what the meaning and importance of these metaphors from an Old Testament perspective would be. How do the Old Testament metaphors of God as Father, the Son of God and Holy Spirit contribute to a better understanding of the God that we confess to be the triune God?

Traces of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Testament

There are several texts in the New Testament where the triadic formula of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is found. Mark 1:9–11 records the baptism of Jesus, where both the Spirit and God the Father were involved. In Matthew 28:19, the risen Jesus entrusted his disciples with what has become known as the great commission to baptize converts 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. In 2 Corinthians 13:13, the last verse of this letter, Paul extended a benediction to the congregation, where the triad of the Lord Jesus Christ, God and the Holy Spirit is mentioned. In 1 Corinthians 12:4–5, the Spirit, the Lord and God are mentioned. Galatians 4:6 states that God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who call out 'Abba', Father. In Ephesians 3:14–17, a prayer is prayed to the 'Father' that believers may be strengthened 'through his Spirit', so that 'Christ may dwell' in their hearts, while in Ephesians 4:4–6, mention is made of the 'one Spirit', the 'one Lord' and the 'one God and Father'. In Colossians 1:3–8, 'God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ is thanked', *inter alia*, for members of the congregations' 'love in the Spirit'. According to Titus 3:4–6, God saved the believers through the Holy Spirit, who was poured out on believers through Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 1:2, one reads about 'God the Father', the 'work of the Spirit' and 'obedience to Jesus Christ'. In the letter of Jude (v. 20), the readers are encouraged to 'pray in the Holy Spirit', keeping

themselves 'in God's love' while waiting for the 'mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ'. In Revelation 1:4–5, grace and peace are wished upon the readers from 'him who is and who was and who is to come', the 'seven spirits' and from 'Jesus Christ'. It is interesting to note that there is no fixed sequence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit followed in the quoted verses. This is an indication that during the first century after Christ, there was no formal or fixed doctrine on the Trinity. At the same time, it should also be said that the 'close linking of Father, Son and Spirit cannot be regarded as accidental', as Guthrie (1981:113) rightly remarks.

God is, however, not only seen as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but also as Creator (Mk 13:19; Ac 17:24; Rm 1:20, 25; 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9), King (Mt 5:34; 23:22; 1 Tm 6:15), Judge (Mt 3:7ff.; Lk 3:7ff.; Rm 2:16; 3:6; 14:10), Saviour (1 Tm 2:3; Tt 2:10, 13; 3:4), Most High (Ac 16:17; Mk 5:7; Lk 1:76; 6:35; 8:28; Heb 7:1), the God of the patriarchs (Mt 8:11; 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37; Ac 3:13; 7:32) and the Alpha and Omega (Rv 1:8; 21:6), to refer to a few of the more prominent depictions of God.

The Trinity in the Old Testament

As has been noted above, for many years, the Trinity was read back into the Old Testament. The assumption was that the one God of the Old Testament and the Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit are the same God. If that is the case, then the Trinity must also be present in the Old Testament, and consequently, the Trinity was found in various ways in the Old Testament.

One way of finding the Trinity in the Old Testament was to point out the plurality of God. There are texts in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Genesis (1:26; 3:22; 11:7; also Is 6:8) – a standard source of Trinitarian doctrine in the early church (Beeley & Weedman 2018:24; Moskala 2010:249–259) – where the one God is spoken of in the first-person plural form ('Let us'). From this, Gulley (2006:84) concludes that although God is one, there is more than one Person in the Godhead. God 'allowed them to glimpse that one God as more than one Person' (Gulley 2006:84). The use of these plural forms was seen as indications of a dialogue among the persons of the Trinity (Huijgen 2017:256; Viviano 1998:193). In similar vein, Dempster (2017:66) argues that readers of the Old Testament are confronted with the plurality of God on the very first page of the Old Testament, where in Genesis 1:1–3, one reads about God and his Spirit.

Relating to the idea of the plurality of God is to refer to theophanies in the Old Testament. Perhaps the most famous one occurs in Genesis 18, where three figures appear to Abraham. According to this interpretation of Genesis 18, the Lord in Genesis 18 is identified with the Lord of Christian worship (Bucur 2018:35). Later, in early Christianity, the interpretation changed to a Trinitarian interpretation, where it was maintained that Abraham saw the Trinity in three figures (Bucur 2018:36–37).

A second way was to locate the Trinity and especially Jesus as the second person in the Trinity in Old Testament figures. The angel of the Lord or the *mal'ak* YHWH was one manifestation of God that was seen as a pre-existent form of Jesus himself. The angel or messenger of YHWH is a complex and elusive phenomenon in the Old Testament (Viviano 1998:193). On one hand, the angel or messenger is clearly distinguished from YHWH. The angel is something different from YHWH, identified as an angel, and also in terms of the task of the angel – the angel is a messenger of YHWH. As the Hebrew words for angel and messenger are the same, it makes the identity of the angel or messenger even more difficult. On the other hand, it is also true that because the angel speaks in first person singular form conveying the very words of YHWH himself, the angel has to be understood as the second person in the Trinity. It is then a matter of both differentiation and identification. The identification of the angel with YHWH, however, cannot be maintained. Huijgen (2017:260) notes that by speaking on behalf of their senders, messengers act as extensions of their personalities. Van der Woude (1963:7) cites examples from Genesis 44 and Judges 11–14, where this happened between messengers and their earthly masters. The same happened in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Prophets speak the words of YHWH, but never can it be said that the prophet is identified with the one whose message he delivered. The prophet never becomes YHWH. Just as the distinction between the prophet and YHWH who called the prophet remains, so there is a distinction between the angel or messenger of YHWH and YHWH. The angel or messenger can therefore not be identified with Jesus from the New Testament. To claim that the kind of 'double identity' of the angel of YHWH hints at the Trinity (Jenson 2002:332) or even that the 'angel of the Lord' is a divine being, the pre-incarnate Christ, appearing as God's messenger (Moskala 2010:263), is an overinterpretation of the figure of the angel or messenger of YHWH.

The servant of the Lord or '*ebed* YHWH' was another figure linked with Jesus. In Deutero-Isaiah, the so-called four servant songs (Is 42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12) have been identified. Although the identity of the servant in these songs remains a bone of contention, it cannot be understood as a prophecy concerning the mission of Christ. However, the identity of the servant may be controversial (is it the unnamed prophet himself, post-exilic Israel or a combination of both?), and it is not a messianic prediction or prophecy of the coming Christ. In the New Testament, the image of the servant was taken from the Old Testament to explain the suffering of Jesus, but this does not change the figure of the servant of YHWH into a messianic prediction of Christ. The fact that the servant-figure was picked up in the New Testament and applied to Jesus Christ does change the servant songs into prophecies about a coming messiah that has now been fulfilled in Christ's coming (Wegner 2011:140–141).

In similar vein, neither the figure of 'Lady Wisdom' in Proverbs 8 nor the concept of the Word of God can be seen as a kind of pre-figuration of Jesus.

Space does not allow a discussion on the idea of a coming messiah in the Old Testament. Suffice to state that a distinction should be made between the presence of Christ in the Old Testament and prophecies concerned with a future coming of a messiah. Strictly speaking, the issue of a messiah falls outside the spectrum of this contribution.

Two questions come to mind when considering the presence of the pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament: firstly, if the pre-incarnate Christ is so apparent in the Old Testament, why was not he recognised as such by his contemporaries? Secondly, one also wonders why there are so few instances then of the pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament given his prominence in the New Testament? One cannot escape that the conclusion that attempts to find the pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament is the result of a forced interpretation of Old Testament texts and/or figures to fit Christian convictions.

The Old Testament and the Trinity
God the Father

God as Father is a familiar and even dominant metaphor for God in the New Testament. Jesus addresses God directly as Father in this way and thereby appropriates himself the authority to speak in the Father's name (Merrigan & Lemmelijn 2006:179). Furthermore, Jesus taught his disciples to address God in the same way in the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9–13). In the Pauline and other epistles, God is frequently mentioned as Father.

While the father metaphor occurs quite often as metaphor for God in the New Testament, it is not the case in the Old Testament. There are only 12 texts in the Old Testament that mention God as Father (Dt 32:6; 2 Ki 17:13, 22:10, 28:6; Ps 2:7, 89:27; Is 63:16, 64:8; Jr 3:19, 31:9; Ml 1:6, 2:10) over against (roughly speaking) 255 times in the New Testament. The metaphor of father in the Old Testament conveys the idea of Israel's origin. A text like Deuteronomy 32:6 (regarded as a very old poem) makes it clear: 'Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?' (NIV). In verse 18, the imagery of father is pushed even further when it is said that the people deserted the Rock 'who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth'. Israel as a people owes its very existence to God, and in this sense, he is Father to Israel. YHWH is the reason why Israel exists (Snyman 1998:49). It was YHWH who called them into being as his people. Israel became the people of God because of their exodus from Egypt and the fact that YHWH entered into a covenant with them at Mt Sinai. Israel's existence as a people can only be ascribed to YHWH, and it is in this way that he may be seen as the origin of Israel. In a nutshell: YHWH is the father of Israel.

The father metaphor in the Old Testament also denotes the idea of God entering into an enduring relationship with his people. In Isaiah 63:16, it is said: 'But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us,

you, O Lord are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name'. In another powerful passage (Hs 11:1–11), YHWH is portrayed as a father who cares for his son, who nurtured his son and who keep on yearning for and seeking his son even when it seemed as if the son rejected his father (Brueggemann 1997:245–246). While it might have been that the relationship between God and his people was under threat during the Babylonian exile, the relationship has been restored as it once was long ago. To call YHWH Father refers to an enduring relationship stretching even over a period of centuries. In Psalm 103:13, the relation between God and his people is seen as a father having compassion with his children: 'As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him'. Exactly because YHWH is a father, he has the capacity to forgive the sins and trespasses of his son. Brueggemann (2008) concludes regarding the father metaphor in the Old Testament as follows:

> Since the Exodus this father has been seeking fullness of life whether the firstborn son, whether Israel, the king or the vulnerable and needy. It is clear that this image of YHWH tilts the strong image of warrior – king – judge in the direction of intense engagement and intimate attachment. (p. 120)

Merrigan and Lemmelijn's (2006:180–181) conclusion is that the idea of God as Father is by no means a Christian 'invention', and it is already present in the Old Testament and found a new application in a new faith situation. Although not a frequent metaphor, the Old Testament emphasises two vital aspects of God as Father: firstly, the people of God owe their very existence to God, and secondly, it denotes the idea of an enduring relationship. These two fundamental convictions were picked up by the New Testament authors and paved the way to view Jesus as the Son of God and followers of Jesus as children of God the Father in New Testament times.

God the Son

Closely relating to the metaphor of God as Father is the metaphor of Jesus as the Son of God. The metaphor of Jesus as Son of God has its roots in the Old Testament. Seeing Jesus as Son of God was a way in which the unique relationship Jesus had with God as Father was described.

The term 'son of God' is also found in the Old Testament. There are mainly three ways in which this term was used in the Old Testament. Firstly, the king is called the son of God. On more than one occasion, the king was called the son of God (Ps 2:7; 89:27; 2 Sm 7:14; 1 Chr 22:10). The king became the son of God because he was chosen by God to be his son, and consequently, God would be his Father. The king was also seen as son of God because he was regarded as God's representative on Earth (2 Chr 9:8). For the king to be adopted as the son of God is indicative of the close relationship between God and the king and for that matter also the relationship between God and his people.

Secondly, the people of Israel is also called son of God (Ex 4:22–23; Jr 31:9, 20; Hs 11:1). It was not only the people as a whole who was regarded as son of God, and individual members of God's people were also seen as sons, daughters or children of God (Dt 14:1, 32:5, 19; Is 30:1, 43:6, 45:11; Ezk 16:20–21).

Thirdly, the members of the divine court or the assembly of the saints were referred to as 'sons of God' (Merrigan & Lemmelijn 2006:185). The common denominator between all three ways in which the term is used in the Old Testament is that of a special and close relationship to God.

It is important to note that both the metaphors of father and son convey familial language (House 2017:6). Father and son are indicative of close human relationships. Likewise, the metaphor of son of God in the Old Testament indicates a close relationship between God and the king as well as between God and his people. The Son of God metaphor taken from the Old Testament communicates the close relationship between God and Jesus. Through the sonship status of Jesus, Christians may also experience this close relationship with God. The humanness of the son of God in the Old Testament both in terms of the king and the people of Israel as son(s) of God gave impetus to Jesus as a human being and yet the Son of God as well (Huijgen 2017:257).

Relating to the importance of the metaphors to convey relationship is the emphasis on the relationality of God to identify the nature of God (Venter 2016:159). God is the God of relations (Van de Beek 2017).

The first Christians had to come to grips with Jesus as God's new initiative to turn to the world. In the words, deeds, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, this totally a new initiative of God became apparent. This was enacted, *inter alia*, by making use of the son of God metaphor in the Old Testament.

God the Holy Spirit

As was the case in the relationship between God as Father and Jesus as the Son of God, there is a close relationship between the Spirit on one hand and the Father and the Son on the other hand. Firstly, this close relationship is perhaps the best illustrated in Galatians 4:6 where it is stated: 'Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba", Father' (NIV). It is striking that 'Abba' is used to refer to God as Father. 'Abba' was the preferred way that Jesus speaks of God as Father. Secondly, this verse makes it clear that the relationship between the believer and the Father is made possible in the same way as the relationship between Jesus and the Father, namely by means of the Spirit. To share in the Spirit is to share in Jesus' relationship with the Father (Merrigan & Lemmelijn 2006:190). Addressing the believers as 'sons' (Gl 4:6) is clearly an allusion to the Old Testament, where the people of Israel were called the sons of God (Ex 4:22–23; Hs 11:1), indicating a relationship comparable to familial relationships.

The expression 'the Spirit of God' occurs far more frequently than the metaphor of father. According to Averbeck (2011:26), it is found approximately 94 times, while the expression 'Holy Spirit' occurs only three times in the Old Testament (Ps 51:11; Is 63:10, 11).

The Hebrew word for spirit, *ruach* [רוח] is the same word used for 'wind' or 'breath'. Averbeck (2011:27) calculated that almost 40% of the time *ruach* refers to the literal movement of the air in wind or breath. Breathing means to be a living being, and hence, *ruach* also acquired the meaning of 'vitality'. House (2017:7) regards the Spirit as 'wind', 'energy' and 'power'. When Genesis 2:7 is considered, where God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being', then spirit became a term to refer to life itself (Merrigan & Lemmelijn 2006:191). Wind [*ruach*] can be seen as the breath [*ruach*] of God, and in this way, the breath or spirit of God is nothing less than God's life energy (Merrigan & Lemmelijn 2006:191). According to Averbeck (2011:29), 'wind, breath and spirit are essential and primal categories of life'. This life energy of the Spirit of God could be seen in the charismatic judges and early prophets who spoke empowered by the Spirit of God. However, it seems that the Spirit that overpowered the judges and early prophets was only a temporary gift to fulfil a specific task. With the monarchy, it seems as if the gift of the Spirit of YHWH became a more permanent characteristic of the king. Even later, it is foreseen that the Spirit of YHWH will be poured out on all people (Jl 2):

> I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (vv. 28–29)

The Spirit will dwell permanently in believers and will enable them to understand God's will and obey his commands (Is 29:24, 59:21; Jr 31:31–34, 32:38–40).

House (2017:7) draws attention to a remarkable passage (Is 63:7–14) that specifically mentions the Spirit as the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 63:10 identifies the Holy Spirit with YHWH himself by speaking of his (YHWH's) Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is (in this passage, at least) not only a manifestation of God, but also it is YHWH himself. As only a person may be grieved, the Holy Spirit is thought of as a person. YHWH and the Holy Spirit both have the same feeling of grief (House 2017:8). While it was YHWH who rescued his people from Egypt, he 'set his Holy Spirit among them' (Is 63:11) to guide them through the Red Sea, and eventually, the people 'were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord' (Is 63:14). God's great act of deliverance in the history of his people was accomplished through the Holy Spirit.

A few observations may be made from this brief overview of the Spirit in the Old Testament. Firstly, the Spirit of YHWH is not only a manifestation of God himself, but also in Isaiah 63:7–14, the Spirit is God himself. The Spirit goes out from YHWH and as such does have YHWH's power and character (House 2017:9). Secondly, the gift of the Spirit is related to life and especially power in the individual believer. Thirdly, the indwelling of the Spirit is a way of establishing a relationship with God. Divine agency through the Spirit is about relationality (Huijgen 2017:259). Fourthly, the indwelling of the Spirit is the way in which God's presence is experienced by believers. Merrigan and Lemmelijn (2006:192) note that the fruit of Spirit (Gl 5:22–23) come close to the attributes of a wise person in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The presence of the Spirit of YHWH in the Old Testament was a relatively easy step to relate the events of Pentecost with that of the Spirit of YHWH.

What is in a name? The importance of the name in the discussion on the Trinity and the Old Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus is given a name. According to Matthew 1:21, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and revealed to him that Mary 'will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'. Jesus will also be known as Immanuel, which means 'God with us' (Mt 1:22). The proper name 'Jesus' goes back to the Hebrew form of the name 'Jehoshua', meaning 'YHWH saves'. Jesus is clearly identified with YHWH, the God of Israel, who revealed his name to Moses in Exodus 3. Just as Israel was once saved from the hardships of Egypt by YHWH, so Jesus will now save his people. Just as YHWH was present with his people on their way out of Egypt to the promised land, so Jesus will now be with his people again. While the exact meaning of the name revealed to Moses will remain a mystery, we do know that name is taken from the verb *haya* [היה], meaning 'to be'. YHWH revealed himself as the God who will save his people from Egypt and at the same time as the ever-present God who will be with his people. Just as the name of God was revealed at the beginning of the book of Exodus, so the name of Jesus is revealed right at the beginning of the gospel of Matthew. The Exodus analogy is underlined when Jesus also, like the Israelites of long ago, returned from Egypt. The Gospel of Matthew made a deliberate connection between Jesus and the God of the Old Testament. On one hand, the connection is so close that Jesus is identified with YHWH, yet on the other hand Jesus is son of God who has been called from Egypt (Mt 1:15). Klappert (2010:5) remarks in this regard: '*Im Namen Jesu, "JEHOSHUA = JHWH rettet", ist der NAME des GOTTes Israels und aller Menschen unvergesslich eingezeichnet*', emphasising the close connection between YHWH and Jesus via the name of God revealed in Exodus 3 and the name of Jesus in Matthew 1.

It is significant to note the close connection in the Lord's Prayer between God as Father and the name of God. Immediately after God is called upon as Father, it is followed by 'Hallowed be your name' (Mt 6:9). According to Klappert (2010:2), calling God Father, Son and Holy Spirit is nothing else an explanation of the name of God.

The Old Testament is also Tanakh

There is a growing and even now an established sensitivity that the Old Testament is not only part of the Christian

canon of scriptures but also that the Old Testament is also known as the Tanakh, (Torah or law, Nebe'im or prophets, Ketubim or writings), the canon of scripture in Judaism. Christianity and Judaism share the Old Testament as (part of, in the case of Christianity) the canon of scriptures. Brueggemann (1997:735) is then correct when he states that 'Christians are able to say of the Old Testament, "It is ours" but must also say, "It is not ours alone"'. This means that an interpretation different from a 'Christian' reading is also a legitimate theological enterprise. If this point is taken seriously, it must be admitted that the Trinity cannot be found in the Old Testament.

In this regard, it is also interesting that the Old Testament was retained as Old Testament in the canon of scriptures. The Old Testament was never 'Christianised' to fit New Testament emphases. In other words, the integrity of the Old Testament text was honoured. It is also significant that the Old Testament precedes the New Testament in printed versions of the Bible. Hermeneutically speaking, this is important. The Old Testament is not a postscript to the New Testament to consult to clear up some difficult passages. The Old Testament is the necessary precursor to the New Testament with a theological message of its own, while at the same time it serves to make the totally new initiative of God in Jesus Christ comprehensible.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from this investigation may be summarised as follows. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the oneness of YHWH in the Old Testament with the New Testament triadic formula of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Forcing Old Testament texts into a Trinitarian interpretation does not convince.

The New Testament made use of metaphors in the conceptualisation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these metaphors do have an Old Testament background. The Old Testament provided the theological vocabulary to New Testament authors in terms of appropriate concepts of God. These concepts were used to start the conceptualisation of the one yet triune God. This was done with a remarkable degree of creativity. For instance, the metaphor of God as Father, which is not prominent in the Old Testament, is one of the most prominent depictions of God in the New Testament. In this regard, House (2017:14) stresses the importance of biblical imagery and metaphors when speaking of the Trinity. Bates (2015:204) rightly warns against the risk of cutting off the doctrine of the Trinity from its interpretation of the Old Testament in the New Testament and early church.

In this way, the God of the New Testament is expressed in the triadic formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the one God of the Old Testament is indeed the same God and may and should be related. Both emphases are important. Fischer (2012:298) made this point emphatically when he states that the God one reads about in the Old Testament is identical with the God that Jesus proclaimed. The Old Testament emphasis on the oneness of God prevents the three persons of Father, Son and Spirit to develop into three different gods. A renewed appreciation of the importance of the name of God in the Old Testament and the name of Jesus in the New Testament is needed. The theological link between the name of God in the Old Testament and the name of Jesus in the New Testament functions as a firm indicator that God and Jesus are two persons in the Trinity.

Due cognisance should be taken of the Old Testament as Tanakh of Judaism. Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament or Tanakh is also important to Christian readers of the Old Testament. In this sense, the interpretation of the Old Testament is not the exclusive domain of Christianity. It is therefore better to speak of the Trinity and the Old Testament rather than the Trinity in the Old Testament.

Both the Old and New Testament God are more than Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Both Testaments display a richness of metaphors speaking of God that go beyond the triadic formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, God is the God known for his redemptive acts in the history of his people. It is YHWH who created the world, made promises to the patriarchs, delivered his people from the bondage of Egypt, entered into a covenant with them at Mt Sinai, led them through the wilderness and granted them the land where David eventually became king and the Temple as the dwelling place of God was built in Jerusalem (Von Rad 1975:136–347). Apart from YHWH's acts in the history, the Old Testament displays a rich variety of metaphors when speaking of God. God is, *inter alia*, judge, king, warrior, artist, healer, gardener and shepherd (Brueggemann 1997:229–260). A text like Exodus 34:6–7 lists what Brueggemann (1997:215–216) calls a credo of adjectives: merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness forgiving iniquity.

The one God of the Old Testament and, at the same time, the triune God of the New Testament, are a reminder of the unity of the Bible despite the endless variety not only between the two Testaments but also even in the respective Testaments themselves. The Bible is a unity because of the revelation of the one and the same God actively at work in both the Old and New Testament.

That God became human in Jesus Christ is a radical new initiative from God, unparalleled in the Old Testament. I conclude this article by quoting the last sentence in one of Prof. Venter's (2016:165) contributions to Trinitarian theology: 'The glory of the Triune God is the source of the beauty of theology'.

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