

# CURRENT

A Taft Avenue Publication

February 2012 | Vol. 14 | Issue 2

*Equipping the church to reach the world  
for the glory of God through Christ*



Three in One?

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**The Necessary Trinity, 4**

By Pastor Bob

**In a Few Words: Trinity, 6**

By Various

**Why a Trinity?, 7**

By Laura Baxter

**Meet the Leaders: Brian Phipps, 8**

By Ingrid Chung

**A Fragrant Life: Harriet L. Warren, 10**

By George Warren



## *Editor's Note*

(Why) does the Trinity matter?

So, you may know the explanatory mantra of the Trinity: three distinct Persons, yet all are equally and eternally God. You may know the analogies—water in three different states, parts of an egg, three notes in a chord. Of course, you know the analogies break down. And how do they actually help you to live in the day-to-day?

Find out in this month's Current. Walk hand-in-hand with Pastor Bob, as he opens our eyes to where we would be without the Trinity, and Laura Baxter, as she delineates how the Trinity resolves crucial paradoxes. Read favorite Trinity quotes! And get to know the stories of folks who were/are caught up by and engaged in the redemptive story of the Triune God.

*Ingrid Chung*



The girls at youth winter camp

By Pastor Bob

## The Necessary Trinity


If there is any doctrine that makes Christianity Christian, then it is the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity holds the secrets of purpose, life, salvation, eternity – in short, everything. How do you begin a *short* article on the deepest, most incomprehensible and yet vital truth in the Bible?

I suppose the best way is to summarize the triunity of God in seven statements: (1) There is only one God; (2) The Father is God; (3) The Son is God; (4) The Holy Spirit is God; (5) The Father is not the Son; (6) The Son is not the Holy Spirit; and (7) The Holy Spirit is not the Father. It's the application and understanding of these truths in the language and narrative of the Bible that makes God's personhood come alive. For example:

**Without the Trinity there would be no saving us.** The Father's judgment of our sin and at the same time His rescue plan; the Son's work of righteousness and substitutionary death and resurrection as payment for our sin; and the Spirit's empowering and directing the perfect God/man and applying His work – assisting, supporting, helping, sustaining and equipping. This truly is a wonder of the triunity of purpose and design (Ephesians 1:3-14).

**Without His Trinitarian personhood, God**

**would be a needy deity, loveless and relationally challenged and culturally irrelevant.** The perfection of His love for Himself and fellowship with Himself, their communication and honor, assistance and support speak to His independence and lack of any needs. God is never alone or lonely, never unloved or unlovely in all His perfections (Acts 17:24-25; John 17). Kevin DeYoung writes, "We worship a God who is in constant and eternal relationship with himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Community is a buzzword in American culture, but it is only in a Christian framework that communion and interpersonal community are seen as expressions of the eternal nature of God. Likewise, it is only with a Trinitarian God that love can be an eternal attribute of God. Without a plurality of persons in the Godhead, we would be forced to think that God created humans so that he might show love and know love, thereby making love a created thing (and God a needy deity). But with a biblical understanding of the Trinity we can say that God did not create in order to be loved, but rather, created out of the overflow of the perfect love that had always existed among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who ever live in perfect and mutual relationship and delight."



**Without the Trinity, we would have no pattern for submission or authority, or any other human relationship.** The submission of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, equals in all things and yet distinctive in their roles, is exemplary for husband and wife in marriage and the roles of leaders in the church. There is unity and diversity, equality and honor in all things. The Son only does that which glorifies His Father. The Son only does that which the Father has ordained. The Father gives praise and honor to His Son (John 8; I Corinthians 11:3).

**The doctrine of the Trinity distinguishes Christianity from all other religious traditions and ideas.** We only have an un-needy, all powerful, eternal, personal, transcendent, eternal, Creator God. Where else do we find an authoritative, submissive, serving, holy, all knowing, purposeful God?

In short, we are lost without the triune God of the Scriptures. I've only touched on the surface of this essential doctrine.

Here are some suggestions for further study. The three great ecumenical creeds, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, are all structured around our three-in-one God, underlying the essential importance of Trinitarian theology. They are found in the first appendix of Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* or a quick Internet search will also let you read their contents. Also, Grudem's *Systematic Theology* gives valuable introductory thoughts on this great doctrine. Bruce Ware's *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* is readable and thought provoking. And once your appetite is whetted, read Fred Sanders' *The Deep Things of God*.

## In a few words...

“God the Father is a deep root, the Son is the shoot that breaks forth into the world, and the Spirit is that which spreads beauty and fragrance.” Tertullian

“[Perichoresis] allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained, while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two. An image often used to express this idea is that of a ‘community of being,’ in which each person, while maintaining its distinctive identity, penetrates the others and is penetrated by them.” Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*

“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” John 17:21

This month @Taft Avenue...

**Music Team Open House: make some (joyful) noise with us!**

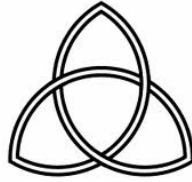
Wed, Feb 1, 6:30-8pm

**Men’s Breakfast: Food by Chef Steve, music & testimonies**

Sat, Feb 4, 7:30-9am

# Why a Trinity?

By Laura Baxter



The Trinity is one of several perplexing doctrines of the Christian faith. We know that it is important. What could be more important than the nature of God? But when we open our mouths to try to explain it, the words come out funny. We wonder whether the form of God -- outside of Catechism class -- makes any difference.

Actually, it makes ALL the difference.

The nature of God, as a Trinity, has huge implications for the nature of reality. It might help to change our terms a little bit. Because God is One, He is the ultimate Unity. Because God is Three, He is the ultimate Diversity. Ever wonder how to resolve the tension between unity and diversity? How to meet the needs of both the group and its individual members? In God, both unity and diversity find their perfect fulfillment.

God is the Architect of both intricate details, and a unified whole. Each leaf is unique, each tree singly beautiful, and yet they fit perfectly into the wonder of a forest. The human body is made of cells, tissues, organs—each distinct, yet working together as one. Planets and moons, stars and galaxies, somehow they each retain their individual significance, even as they join together in the massive choreography of the universe.

The Trinity also means that God is fully relational. In grade school Language Arts, we learn that there are three “persons” or perspectives: first person (“I”), second person (“you”), third person

(“he/she/it”). All human interactions invoke some combination of these three grammatical persons – interactions between me and you, between you and her, between us and them.

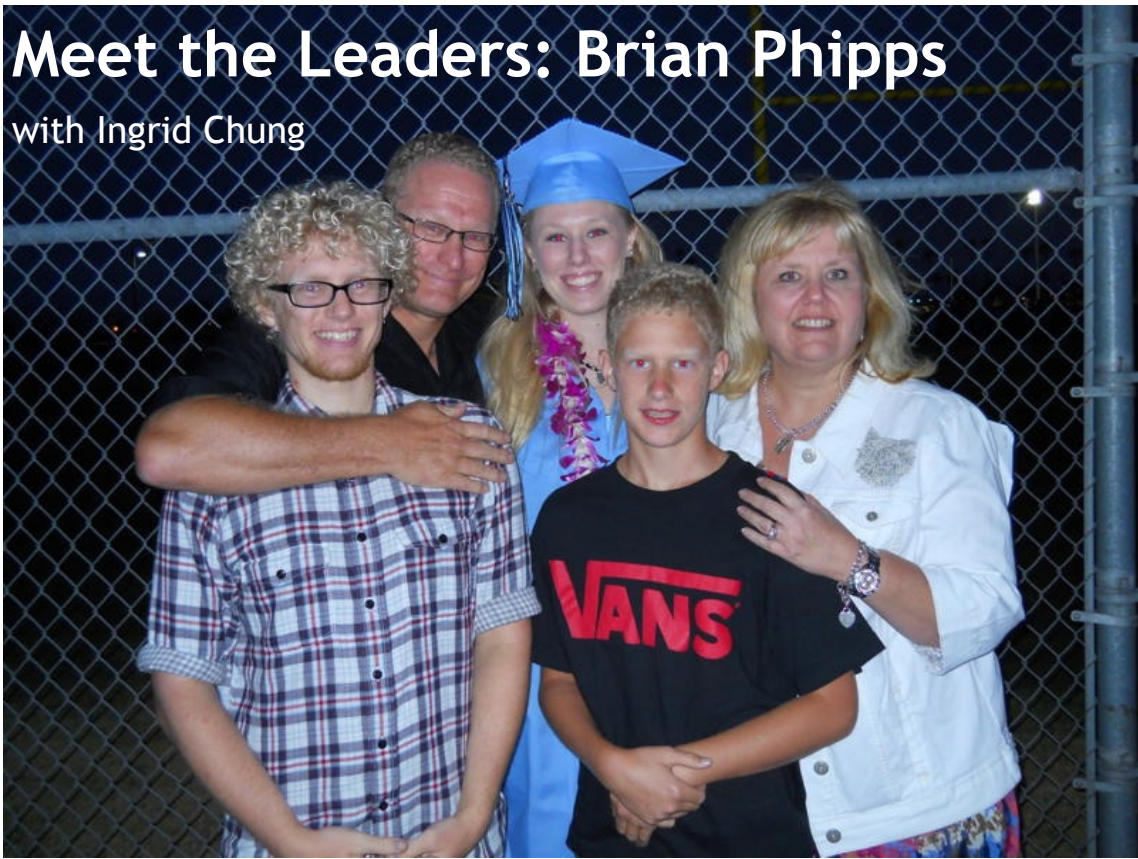
The Trinity, because it is Three, interacts along each of these three relational lines, in all possible combinations. God the Father speaks to God the Son about God the Holy Spirit, and vice versa. In other words, the Trinity understands and enjoys the fullness of all possible relational perspectives. These relational perspectives, in their created form, reflect back the glory of the Trinity. Even grammar proclaims the nature of God!

In contrast, many of the Eastern religions hold to a form of dualism: order/unity on the one hand, and chaos/diversity on the other hand. These two poles are in constant tension, each threatening to swallow up the other. This is the meaning of the popular yin/yang symbol. The Trinity resolves this tension, making both Unity and Diversity ultimate, and joining them in perfect relationship with each other.

Take some time to work out the implications of the Trinity in your own life this week. How does the nature of God impact your daily work? Your family relationships? Your political views? Of course, our human minds will never comprehensively grasp even a part of the mystery of the Trinity. Nonetheless, by thinking deeply about these things, we will be able to share them more effectively with those who do not know our God.

# Meet the Leaders: Brian Phipps

with Ingrid Chung



*Jarrold, Brian, Brooke, Sandra, and Grant Phipps*

*What is your role with Taft Avenue Community Church?*

I am the Lead Deacon and oversee all the deacons and their different ministries. I am the Deacon Representative on the Taft Avenue Community Church Leadership Team.

*Where are you from?*

I was born and raised in the city of Orange; I was born in St. Joseph Hospital, which is coincidentally, where I now work. I have multiple responsibilities as the manager of operations in the outpatient pavilion and also manager of the sleep disorders center and nasal and sinus center. I've worked at St. Joseph Hospital for 33 years. I started out as a high schooler in the kitchen and then as an orderly in radiology. I held various positions in multiple departments while returning to school and obtaining a Bachelor's in Health Care Administration at the University of La Verne.

My responsibility is over business volume, marketing, business development (working with physicians and developing relations with doctors). I'm

responsible for patient satisfaction; I guide managers to ensure that we're giving "world class customer service." My calling is to help people find a positive outcome. I love my job because I get to serve others and help them serve others better.

*Did you have any idea what you wanted to do when you started working?*

Originally, I didn't have any idea, but I found my way. I enjoyed helping others. I worked for a while in the Radiation Therapy department and got to know cancer patients; it was really sad that, as I became friends with them, I wheeled them down for treatment every day. Many of them would eventually pass away. It was eye-opening, and helped me to develop compassion for others. Life is precious. But heaven more so. I'm really easy-going, even-keel, and enjoy helping others so healthcare became a good fit for me.

*What is your family like?*

We are a very close family and do spend quite a bit of time together despite our busy schedules. My

wife Sandra and I have been married for 26 years and have 3 children: Jarrod (22), Brooke (18) and Grant (13). Jarrod is a student at CSULB, helps with youth ministry, and plays drums on the Worship Team. Brooke is attending Fullerton College and working part time. Our youngest is Grant who is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at McPherson Middle School in Orange.

*How did you come to TACC?*

We used to go regularly to Calvary Chapel East Anaheim and Jarrod as a high schooler started attending the youth group with his friend Steven Shafer, which he really enjoyed. We knew Ruthe and Steve Shafer as our boys grew up together. Ruthe and Steve asked us to come and visit, so we did. We enjoyed the friendliness of the church and Pastor Bob's teaching of God's word. Calvary Chapel was a large church, so we liked the change to a smaller church and the opportunity to be more involved with ministry. We met people we really clicked with. It has helped us to grow spiritually; we've met some of our best friends here.

*How did you become a Christian?*

I was 14 years old at a church camp hosted by Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa when I accepted Christ. But in high school and as a young adult, I strayed away from God/church for a while; I was a bit of a rebel in my late teens. When I met my wife Sandra and married in 1985, we both agreed we need to be back at church. I had a real desire to rekindle my faith because I knew what it was and what I should be doing.

*What is your favorite thing about TACC?*

I enjoy Bible-centered teaching, friendliness of congregation, and the environment here feels like a family, as everything we do is ultimately for our Father God's glory.

*Why do you serve?*

I think I have a calling to serve and help others physically and mentally if possible. I'm a busy person, but I make time to help out whenever I can. I enjoy being in the background, getting the necessary tasks done to make sure events are enjoyable.

I think this is what God has designed me to do.

*What are other things you do when you're not volunteering/working?*

I enjoy off-roading in the desert with my family in our Jeep or more often on our motorcycles. I love skiing, mountain biking, and am an avid softball player (men's league) every Thursday.

*Favorite books/music/movies?*

I'm not a huge movie person. I'm a typical guy—watch sporting events, any kind of racing. I do enjoy our Bible study group because we usually go through different books of the Bible. Probably what I read the most are the study guides we go through and the Bible. I recently read a good book titled *Pastor Dad* that my son Jarrod gave me. It was about the responsibility of a father and the importance of making sure that there's spiritual growth in your home life—devotions, make sure to spend time doing things with your kids that they like, be a good example. Very good stuff.

*What's one thing you're looking forward to this year?*

I look forward to spending time with my family, taking small vacations, helping my kids to be successful in school. My youngest, Grant is a really good swimmer and plays water polo; I really enjoy going to watch him play. I am also looking forward to participating in our church outreach to Orange.

*Any final words?*

I want to share a Mission Statement that I try to model:

*People will not always remember what you said or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.*

You can do all the right things and go through all the motions, but if you don't show God's love to others and interest in them and really listen to them, then they don't feel they have been served or that you care.

In Christ, may it always be.

*Hmmm, good word. Thanks for interviewing!*

I enjoy being in the background, getting the necessary tasks done to make sure events are enjoyable...this is what God has designed me to do.

# A Fragrant Life:

## Harriet L. Warren (1919-2012)



*George and Harriet Warren*

January 9, 2012

Greetings in the Lord Jesus,

As you prayed for us the Lord directly intervened with a total change of direction. Friday morning, Jan. 6, in the first few minutes of the first meeting of our Latin America Area Conference, I, George, received a phone call from my sister in Chicago. My mom was in the hospital with a very severe infection in the whole of her small intestine caused by the lack of adequate blood supply. Due to many different complicating medical factors, including the highly questionable outcome, Mom decided to not have surgery, but “let the Lord decide.”

I left for Chicago immediately - hoping to arrive in time. Upon arriving at 5:25 pm, I went directly to the hospital. Mom was given all the pain relief she needed. Her mind was engaged, she was aware of our conversations with her, and she was responsive. We each had time alone with her to share our heart and love for her. Her brother was with us most of the time. My sister, her two children and I were at her side the whole time. We gathered around her bed, shared precious promises from the

scriptures and had a special time of prayer dedicating her to the Lord. Many times during those hours we held her, spoke to her, prayed with and for her.

My sister and I were at her side as she took her last breath. I watched her pulse weaken, slow, and stop. Mom was home with the Lord.

Her journey through this life began March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919. She retired from retail sales in 1988 and for over 23 years worked as a grader correcting school papers for Home Schoolers until she walked to the car and went to the hospital. Three days later, on January 8, 2012, at 4:30 in the morning, the Lord walked with her through the valley of the shadow of death into her eternal home with Him in Heaven.

Mom loved the beauty, fragrance, and blossoming to life of Spring. A private family memorial service will be held sometime in the Spring. According to her wishes, her ashes will be placed where she requested.

In His love,

George Warren



**Youth Winter Camp:  
Ponderosa Pines, Jan 13-15**

