

Paul D. Molnar, author of *Faith, Freedom and the Spirit: The Economic Trinity in Barth, Torrance and Contemporary Theology*

## Distinguished Scholar Continues Work in Trinitarian Studies

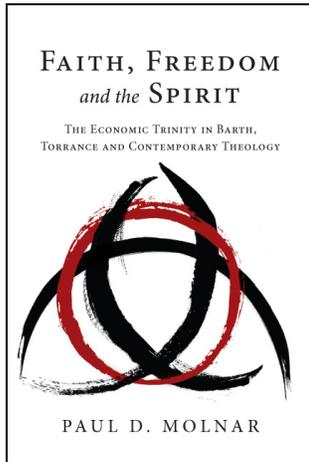
Distinguished scholar Paul D. Molnar (PhD, Fordham University) is professor of systematic theology at St. John's University in Queens, New York. He is the author of *Incarnation and Resurrection, Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity, Karl Barth and the Theology of the Lord's Supper* and *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity*, and has been published in numerous journals including the *Scottish Journal of Theology, International Journal of Systematic Theology* and *Modern Theology*.

Molnar adds to his previous work with *Faith, Freedom and the Spirit* to help us think more accurately about the economic Trinity, about divine and human interaction in the sphere of faith and knowledge within history. Exploring why it is imperative to begin and end theology from within faith, Molnar relies on the thinking of Karl Barth and of Thomas F. Torrance in dialogue with other contemporary theologians (Catholic and Protestant) about divine and human freedom.

"As the title suggests, I wanted to discuss the meaning of divine and human freedom when seen and understood in faith and thus through the power of the Holy Spirit," Molnar said. "My first book on the Trinity focused on the neglected importance of a doctrine of the *immanent* Trinity for understanding divine and human activity. The aim of this book is to explore God's relations with us and our relations with God within the *economy* by focusing on the activity of the Spirit who enables faith and freedom. By concentrating on two of the preeminent theologians of the twentieth century, Karl Barth and Thomas F. Torrance, my goal was and is to illustrate how and why a theology that is shaped by faith, grace and revelation will affirm human freedom as it is and remains grounded in the trinitarian actions of God within history."

Molnar's magisterial study begins with an extensive discussion of the role of faith in knowing God and in relating to God in and through his incarnate Word and thus through the Holy Spirit. From there he proceeds to consider the divine freedom once again as the basis for true human freedom, discussing how and why a properly functioning pneumatology will lead to an appropriately theological understanding of God's actions within the economy. He considers the perils of embracing a historicized Christology, proposing an alternative way of understanding the connection between time and eternity that is christologically focused and pneumatologically informed. And finally, he discusses at length how the doctrine of justification by faith relates to living the Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit and the economy of grace.

"Paul Molnar is one of the outstanding theologians of his generation," George Hunsinger of



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The Economic Trinity in Barth,  
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Princeton Theological Seminary said. "Everything he writes is worthy of the most careful attention. In this new book he not only offers trenchant criticisms of his opponents, but also sets forth Barth and Torrance in continuity with historic Nicene orthodoxy, especially as seen in Athanasius, Cyril and Aquinas. Powerfully argued and meticulously documented, this book is a magisterial interpretation of Barth and Torrance on the Trinity in relation to election and the incarnation."

Molnar is also general editor of the Peter Lang series *Issues in Systematic Theology*, editor of the *Karl Barth Society of North America Newsletter*, membership secretary of the Barth Society and a current board member of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship. He has also served as consulting editor for *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* and the *Scottish Journal of Theology*.