

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Conversations along the way

Don Priest

Geoffrey Bingham –
Theologian and Troubadour

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Cover photograph of Geoffrey and Laurel Bingham, January 1982, at New Creation Teaching Ministry Summer School, Mt Breckan, Victor Harbor, South Australia

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Introduction

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour is a reflection on a selection of his theological writing. It considers several dominant themes in his theology through the lens of his song-poems and provide some details of his music, books and seasonal schools. It is not a review of his life history or his ministry activities, nor is it an endorsement of hierarchical trinitarian and gender-role theologies.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour Music Supplement provides song lyrics and music scores to his songs previously published in the *New Creation Hymn Book*.¹ I have outlined the background to the publication of the three volumes of the *New Creation Hymn Book* elsewhere.²

The Introduction to the *New Creation Hymn Book*, which I negotiated and prepared as Convenor, included the following copyright information:

Those hymns composed by people associated with the New Creation Teaching Ministry can be used without permission, provided: (i) the words are not altered; (ii) such use will bring no financial gain; and (iii) appropriate copyright procedures are followed, including acknowledgement of the author/composer.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour and its *Music Supplement* maintain the original words, are made available at no cost, and acknowledge the author, composers and original source. I have therefore kept the punctuation and capitalisation previously used for these hymns and songs, and have not changed Geoffrey Bingham's male-privileged language.

I hope that publishing *Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour* and its *Music Supplement* provides some additional opportunities for access to his theology through his books, poetry, and the music written for them.

I first met Geoffrey Bingham in January 1972 and continued to relate to him for the rest of his life, though at reduced levels after mid-2005. His frequent conversations with me while I managed and upgraded his digital technologies, and assisted him in using them more effectively, included theological and ministry insights and occurred in positive contexts that related to his aims to mentor by encouragement and enrichment.

His interest in people and their stories, along with his focus on sharing his biblically derived perspectives, was evident. I appreciated his respect for my

¹ *New Creation Hymn Book*, (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 2010) and NCPI resources accessed from 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library,' New Creation Publications Inc., <https://www.newcreationlibrary.org.au>. Also, Don Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace* (2025).

² *A Quiet Revival Reviewed – a Response to a Quiet Revival, Geoffrey Bingham in Life and Ministry* by Martin Bleby (2022).

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vocation in the public education system and his acceptance of the insights that I brought to my teaching and preaching, and my music and information technology ministries, from my different fields of interest. I am grateful for the opportunities he provided me over more than twenty years to present 49 seasonal school sessions and over 150 class sessions and for his consistent affirmation and wise counsel. I have collated the resources I have kept, editing and self-publishing many of them.³

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour was originally written as part of a response to a book profiling his life and ministry. That book, and what I see as my necessary response, given my decades-long relationship with him, are in many ways distractions from who he was and what he taught. I hope this book is freer from the disruptions that emerged late in his life; hindrances to and diversions from the dignity and decency of a man who suffered much and lived generously. Of a man who daily sought the ‘dew of the sanctuary’, as he called it, so resisting any sad attempts at grasping for *power in relationships*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour is a layperson’s journal, written and shared in the hope that it will encourage growth in community and understanding as we care for one another in this beautiful but troubled world. It is published as a thanksgiving for the communities in which we lived and for the opportunities I was given to share in their gatherings for worship. I hope that reading this book helps motivate further exploration of biblical themes and passages in their historical and theological settings, and that, in so doing, readers find peace, joy and hope. I hope that reading it deepens worship, encourages relationships and enriches application to everyday life.

Don Priest

February 2025

³ Published by NCPI: *Pastor, the Teacher, and the School, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1987); *Happening of the Cross, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1984); *God Is Not up for Re-Election* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1984).

Self-published: *Living in Love and Freedom* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2017); *In Triune Community* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2019); *Meditations on Hope and Peace* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2022); *Living Love* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2022); *Travelling Together* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2022); *Towards Eternity* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2022); *Meditations on Resilience and Renewal*, vol. 1 (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia2022); *ibid.*, 2..

Geoffrey Bingham – as I knew him

Perspectives

Several aspects

There are several aspects of my long-term contact with Geoffrey Bingham that are significant regarding the ways I knew and understood him. My perceptions of him grew from our many dialogues and his initiatives in establishing, developing and maintaining NCPI/NCTM.

Contact and Involvement

I first heard of his ministry during my late teen years while actively involved with Norwood Baptist Church – a church in rapid decline from its poor responses to local demographic changes.

I was not involved in the Intervarsity Fellowship (IVF) Adelaide University Evangelical Union (AUEU) as an undergraduate because of my concerns about fundamentalism and evangelicalism. A generous invitation for me to be at the 1972 Perth IVF Annual Conference enabled me to also attend a Christian Endeavour (CE) convention just prior to it. My parents had long associations with the CE movement, and I had been in a CE group until early high school. Geoffrey Bingham was guest speaker at the CE convention and was booked to speak at AUEU weekly meetings. I contacted him in Perth and benefitted from his mentoring during the next two years as an AUEU leader, including when he was guest speaker at an AUEU camp.

I was a group leader at his 1975 evening sessions but was not part of the establishment of NCPI. I attended Living Faith Studies⁴ before we relocated when I accepted a leadership position at Meningie Area School in 1978. We had indirect involvement with NCPI and used some of Kay Carney (nee Robinson)'s songs as leaders of a local homegroup while at Meningie.⁵

My 1982 studies on the cross for the Kapunda Anglican Parish involved carefully noting and understanding Geoffrey Bingham's recorded studies on *Words from/of the cross* and *Wrath of love*.⁶ My studies were closely aligned with his themes and insights, and were different to the way Martin Bleby profiled them in connection with his self-declared 'sea-change'.⁷

⁴ Geoffrey Bingham, *Living Faith Studies 1–50* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1981).

⁵ Priest, *Living Love*, 3–62 records notes based on some of the studies I prepared for the homegroup.

⁶ ITS 14, 20, 21 in an audio catalogue which is not included in 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'.

⁷ Don Priest, *Vinedresser Revisited, The – a Response to The Vinedresser, an Anglican Meets Wrath and Grace by Martin Bleby* (2019).

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During a subsequent ministry trip to the Kapunda Anglican Parish, Geoffrey Bingham and Kay Carney visited our family in our Point Pass home. While with us, he asked me if I would write music for his *Angel Wings* poem. I finalised a tune after a helpful comment from Kay Carney.⁸ We went to the annual NCPI Summer Schools while we lived at Point Pass. I presented my first seasonal school session at around the time I wrote that tune.

I attended and led a range of weekly and monthly classes and commenced work on designing and producing the *New Creation Hymn Books* after we relocated to Blackwood at the end of 1989. I had already researched sources of various public domain hymns and collected some manuscripts of songs written by people associated with NCPI. I wrote tunes to several of his poems while working on the three editions of these hymn books, including a tune for *Ah, strong strong love*.⁹

I maintained and improved Geoffrey Bingham's information and communications technology (ICT) setup and assisted him in using it. My music and ICT activities with him nearly always included wide-ranging and informal conversations. I also coordinated the maintenance and development of NCPI's ICT resources from pre-internet years and worked on transitions related to the internet as it developed.

I continued to help Geoffrey Bingham regularly with his ICT setup after Geoffrey and Laurel Bingham moved to Mitcham until about 2006. My NCPI involvement became even more complex when Martin Bleby joined the NCPI Team.

Geoffrey Bingham expressed appreciation for knowing our family over more than three and a half decades, for my ministries and for the assistance he had received.

I was not on NCPI Council. My views were frequently assumed but rarely if ever validated. I found my concerns were often profiled in ways that were considerably different to my own, especially during the later years of my NCPI involvement.

Profile¹⁰

People oriented

Geoffrey Bingham was interested in people – in their identities and stories. He initiated contact at seasonal schools and weekly and monthly classes with those he did not know without being on an octopus-like in-drag predatory process (to use one of his metaphors: he obviously hoped people would be interested in what was going on). As with his long-standing concern about ego-centric ministers, he encouraged ministers at seasonal schools to move away from their comfort zones.

⁸ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 65; Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

⁹ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 30; Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

¹⁰ Cf. Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder., *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914–2014*, vol. 2, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2020).

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He connected with and was concerned for the health of the family ministries at Summer Schools and focused on encouraging and affirming the many leaders and helpers who ran programs for children from early years through to young people.

Affirmation, encouragement and enrichment centred

Geoffrey Bingham built relationships by affirmation and encouragement, hoping people would find his conversations enriching. People as persons created in God's image informed his attitude and engagement rather than people as sinners needing priestly or pastoral recovery ministries.¹¹ His identity did not rely on proving people wrong by shaming and blaming them or by waiting for them to approach him and praise him.

Integrity focused

Geoffrey Bingham was not confected or affected. He was genuinely interested in people and loved to converse and interact with them and celebrate creativity and community. His interest in people matched his high view of integrity. My experience was that whatever he said about anyone was well aligned with what he had already said to them. I was confident that he did not gossip or spread false and misleading claims about me in the hope of enhancing his profile.

People shared with me their appreciation of his personal initiatives and advice in many areas of life, though they did not always agree with his hierarchical views on the relationship between trinitarian theology and gender roles.

Geoffrey Bingham sought to minimise ecclesiastical distance and was opposed to any form of sacerdotalism, especially if it involved categorising people as being failures or fragile and needing mediated priestly ministry by prayer counselling, sacramental services or power-based atonement theologies.

Authenticity generated

Geoffrey Bingham's ministry indicated that preparation and planning involved authentically listening to God, Scripture and people without calculating ways to achieve outcomes. He aimed to be a genuine Spirit-led, God-given presence.

He believed pastoring centred on grace, holiness, love, prayer and worship. He was aware of temptations about being a celebrity or seeking power over people. He warned ministers attending seasonal school speakers' meetings of these dangers.

He consistently affirmed that true *oversight* is evident in the way ministers *serve* people for whom they have responsibility, that authentic *priestly* ministry is based on genuine *sacrifices* for the benefit of other people, and that *prophetic* ministry comes from a personal *embodiment* of what is being shared.

¹¹ His view of humanity as created in God's image included his hierarchical gender subordinationism.

Service disposed

Geoffrey Bingham acted as a servant while leading, teaching and pastoring. He defined his relationships with laypeople in terms of integrity, trust, loyalty and honesty rather than by obligations or his own enjoyment.

He was concerned to be present with people who experienced difficulties and to avoid simplistic power or guilt-based narratives. He did not like ordained ministers maligning or criticising people – especially those over whom they had pastoral authority and for whom they had responsibility.

He prioritised learning names, understanding networks and avoiding friendship or sibling terminology. He emphasised that people live, learn and grow under God's fatherhood by the work of Christ and the power of the Spirit. He practised generosity from his gardening and publishing enterprises as a means of sharing joy and abundance in the context of God's grace and love.

Wisdom and witness motivated

His ongoing witness to the gospel was an expression of his own sense of being matured by it in the various seasons of his life. He understood it as God's plan for all creation and that it had been initially revealed to Hebrew communities and then to and through Israel as God's people. He believed that the Jesus story in the Gospels and the account of the early churches in the book of Acts and New Testament documents fulfilled these earlier writings and provided the testimony on which his gospel witness was founded.

This process was highlighted in his references to the spirit (Spirit) of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus. He saw prophetic discernment as correlating with faithful, accurate, substantiated and genuine testimonies about God, God's people, oneself and other people.

He avoided self-aggrandisement, especially concerning his war injuries, while acknowledging that his own substantial learning experiences changed his attitudes to God, his ministry and other people. His priorities in ministry reached beyond his personal cultural familiarities and contexts and was evident in his links with indigenous and Asian leaders and their communities.

He sought to provide a wisdom based and wisdom seeking leadership. He adopted a primarily narrative theology rather than a creedal, systematic or critical academic theology and centred it on death and resurrection rather than on power and glory. He saw his own story as having validity only to the extent that it was aligned with that of Jesus Christ and of him crucified as Lord and Saviour.

He believed that the foolishness and frailty of the cross of Christ as Paul outlined in 1 Corinthians 1:1ff and Philippians 2:1ff was central to the reign of God and that the church's witness to this reality in the Spirit's power reshapes human lives, families, communities and nations.

Creation centred

His joy in sharing uplifting stories and positive insights avoided catechetical detachment and ecclesiastical superiority. He shared insights from his wide-ranging reading with me, including regarding his perceptions of authors' personal contexts and priorities.

He believed his war experiences and his time farming, working in journalism, serving as a missionary and leading a Bible College added breadth and depth to his earlier parish ministries and helped prepare him for his NCPI leadership.

Worship sourced

His interest in people, and his narrative-based theology with its trinitarian and reconciling foci were all sourced from and flourished in his experiences of the living God.

Worship was central to his identity and was evident in his emphases on integrity, decency and dignity. His knowledge of the love of God as the fountain of life enriched who he was and what he did.

Geoffrey Bingham – theologian and troubadour¹²

An introductory overview

Geoffrey Bingham's publications included short stories and poems as well as his theological and ministry resources. Something of his theology can be discerned from each of the genres which he used. His poems form a significant proportion of the contents of the *New Creation Hymn Book*.¹³ Reviewing and reflecting on them provides a rich treasure of his theological and pastoral thinking.

The publication dates of his resources indicates that he worked on each strand over similar timespans. Much about his theology can also be accessed from notes for *Pastors and Ministry Monthly Studies* and *Pastors and Ministry Schools*.¹⁴

This brief survey of his theology aims to emphasise some of his many strengths and mention a few problematic aspects. It may also deepen appreciation for his thinking and for the triune God he loved, worshipped and served.

Geoffrey Bingham's concerns about polarising theologies within the 1970s Jesus movement and the charismatic renewal were highlighted in my earliest contacts with him as a leader of the Adelaide University Evangelical Union. He expressed aspects of his trinitarian understandings, atonement theology and insights on the sovereignty of God by focusing on the way the four Gospels linked Spirit baptism, forgiveness and the reign of God.¹⁵

His weekly series in the mid-1970s centred on God's salvation history from after the initial creation to the new creation. The gospel was about heaven coming to earth by the Holy Spirit under Messiah Jesus' reign as the Father's Son.

Geoffrey Bingham presented the gospel in a profoundly biblical way that contradicted many commonly used simplistic formularised notions. He mostly avoided terminology about substitution, exchange, purchase and other metaphors commonly used in evangelical contexts to represent atonement theologies. He taught and preached from biblical passages and insisted that the gospel was not a set of propositions but that its message was expressed in worship, hymns, prayers and sacrificial ministries. The atonement, the incarnation and the Trinity were realities embedded in everyday lives and embodied in persons and communities.

¹² Geoffrey Bingham's and other NCPI publications can be accessed from 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'. (<https://www.newcreationlibrary.org.au>).

¹³ *New Creation Hymn Book*, NCPI Music resources are available from 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'. Don Priest, *Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour Music Supplement* (2025) republishes Geoffrey Bingham's words and music scores from the *New Creation Hymn Book*.

¹⁴ Appendix 2 lists his songs in this hymn book, a selection of his books and the main themes for many of the seasonal schools.

¹⁵ For example, *Geoffrey Bingham, Living under Lordship* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1980).

Geoffrey Bingham prioritised sharing Jesus Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension, and living in the community of the Holy Spirit as gift from the ascended Lord Messiah and as family of the Father and the Son of the Father's love – all known as evidence of God's trinitarian relations, experienced in the household of God as God's people and by passing on this message of hope and faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Geoffrey Bingham profiled his thinking about *authority as service* and *identity in community* at an Australian Teachers' Christian Fellowship (SA) conference in the 1970s.¹⁶ He sought to move leaders' practices and attitudes from power to people, prestige to presence and honour to humility.¹⁷ He avoided dualities by, for example, speaking of the wrath of love rather than wrath and love.¹⁸

While he believed in hierarchies and roles, he disapproved of sacerdotal rituals which he saw as involving priests transmogrifying the gospel and seeking power by using liturgies to align themselves with God and describing laypeople using shame and blame narratives.¹⁹ He understood that his rejection of sacerdotalism had its parallels with evangelical self-aggrandisement, where the 'word of God' was used to silence people, and prayer counselling in the charismatic movement, where self-declared insights could be employed to dominate and demean people.

His opposition to these forms of ecclesiastical power came from his theology of creation and new creation – of God giving humanity dignity and decency without relying on priestly pronouncements. God's reign is the realm of the Holy Spirit in which Messiah Jesus administers his Father's grace and mercy in tides of love, holiness and goodness from everlasting oceans of divine abundance.

Geoffrey Bingham's sharing of this good news did not depend on fault finding. His opposition to power-obsessed, self-promoting spiritualities and his concern for those discriminated against aligns with New Testament restoration narratives written against perverse and punitive religious tyrannies.²⁰

¹⁶ *Who's Boss* and *Who's Who*, is CS 6 in an audio catalogue not included in 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'.

¹⁷ For example, *The Authority and Submission of Love*; *Dear Darling Idols: Lords & Gods Piffing & Appalling*; *True God or New Guru*, cf. *The Meaning & Making of Man: Seven Studies in Theological Anthropology*; *The Sons of God Are the Servants of All*; *Three Special Stories*; *Truth – the Golden Girdle*.

¹⁸ For example, *Liberating Love*; *I Love the Father*; *Twice Conquering Love*; *Ah, Strong, Strong Love*; *Love's Most Glorious Covenant*; *Love unto Glory*; *Love is the Spur*; *The Wrath of His Love*.

¹⁹ *An Australian Prayer Book*, (Sydney, NSW: Anglican Information Office, 1978), 18: Cf. Revelation 4:11; John 4:24; Habakkuk 2:20 as aligning priests with God and blaming and shaming laypeople using Daniel 9:9, 10; Luke 15:18, 19; 1 John 1:8, 9 cf. Daniel 9:8: 'Open shame, O LORD, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you'. Once this power narrative is established and entitlement is claimed, confession of sins is sought and acknowledged before the priest announces absolution and gives blessing.

²⁰ For example, *For Pastors and the People*; *God and Man in the Mission of the Kingdom*; *Proclaiming Christ's Gospel in Today's World*; *True Preaching: the Agony and the Ecstasy*; *The Clash of the Kingdoms*; *The*

Fifty Living Faith Studies assumed an implicit transfer of meaning from original cultural and ideological settings to contemporary contexts.²¹ This assumption could be seen as closing down issues or as creating opportunities for research and learning – as indicated in NCPI's statement of belief and context.²²

Geoffrey Bingham's Foreword to these studies stated that

Basically, of course, the Scriptures are the general foundation for all themes. ... The writer then has sought to provide gathered material for preachers, teachers and leaders, from which they may draw, and on which they may care to build.

No claim is made that the studies are the fullest coverage available. ... [The] studies concentrate primarily on the Biblical materials available. There is little attempt to relate them to current situations ...

The text is taken as presented and available without the underlying problems which present themselves to textual critics. The avoidance of these problems may seem to be a cavalier treatment of the labours of critics. This is not intended. ... The writer sees the Scriptures as a natural, integrated, functional whole, despite (or perhaps because of) the timespan in which they were composed. ...

The writer is frankly an evangelical, and of the conservative theological school. This does not mean he does not appreciate other viewpoints ... Theology must have recourse to comparative resources.

The first ten studies covered love, forgiveness, gifts, faith, authority and obedience, holiness, prophecy, discipleship and the gospel. The next were on fatherhood, worship, prayer, the reign of God, atonement, the persons and works of Christ and the Holy Spirit, grace and life, mission and creation and reconciliation. The remaining studies covered theological, pastoral and ministry topics.

Several books, including *All Things Are Yours*, *The Things We Firmly Believe* and *For Pastors and the People*, highlight his biblical thinking and affirming teaching about which he believed those with whom he shared could be confident. This included his views on hierarchies and authority.²³

Dominion of Darkness and the Victory of God; Shepherds of the Flock – Eldership in the Scriptures; The Sons of God are the Servants of All; True God or New Guru?

²¹ *Living Faith Studies* 1–50.

²² 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'. See ... /about/doctrine.htm.

²³ Geoffrey Bingham, *Things We Firmly Believe, The (2nd Ed)* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1986); *For Pastors and the People* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1989); *All Things Are Yours* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1996), see Appendix 1.

He subsequently prepared and led monthly *Pastors Studies* from February 1986 to December 1999 and *Ministry Studies* from February 2000 to June 2006. Appendix 2 lists his ministry booklets, novels and short stories, and theology books. See 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'.

Jesus Christ, atonement and reconciliation

Tide of love

Geoffrey Bingham's familiarity with atonement theories was only matched by his refusal to be fully aligned with them.²⁴ Arguing that Christ's death was only a divinely imposed legal, sin-bearing penalty differs from his theology. He emphasised the horrible impacts sin and evil have on people created with dignity and decency in God's image and likeness. Love, truth, goodness, (restorative not punitive) holiness, mercy and grace were at the heart of his thinking.

Geoffrey Bingham's compassionate and caring, God-in-and-with-Christ-among-us weakness, sacrifice and service centred theology, rejected severe and dominating views of grace and wrath. Aligning 'for us' or 'for you' references with preferred atonement theories lays foundations for patterns of ministry that can claim to be *for* laypeople when they are *against* them by being *over* them, rather than by being *with* them and living *among* them.

Love was rarely absent from his thoughts of God, as his war poem indicates:

Angel wings, beating my face, forcing me into grace.
Dear eyes, loving my soul, drawing me to the goal.

Strong Word, piercing my brain, bringing me holy shame.
Pain's cry, welling within, lifting me out of sin.

Red hands, clotted with blood, thrusting me up to God.
Angel wings, beating my face, forcing me into grace.²⁵

He wrote of the cross as a 'tide of love' (not love and wrath) in a poem from around the time he left ABI to establish NCPI:

See the Cross – the cleansing fountain –
See the mighty tide of love flow through pain to purge creation;
All of this – and what He does – is from our God.

When the heart, the mind and conscience know this purifying love,
Then they share with all creation;
All they have – and all they give – is from their God.²⁶

Geoffrey Bingham later returned to this 'tide of love' theme, where God's love was not divine severity but peace and gentleness:

²⁴ E.g. Bingham, *Things We Firmly Believe, The (2nd Ed)*, 103_105. *Person and Work of Christ, The*, 128–131, cf. Leon Morris, *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, The* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Eerdmans Publishing, 1965); *Cross in the New Testament, The* (Exeter, Devon, UK: Paternoster Press, 1979); *Atonement, The: Its Meaning and Significance* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983). Cf. *New Creation Hymn Book*, 194 *The Glory of Christ*. Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

²⁵ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 65 *Angel Wings*. Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

²⁶ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 13 *Like a glorious fountain flowing*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Ah, tide of love that floods my heart, that flows to me from Your dear Throne,
That finds its way through all my wastes, until it makes me all Your own;
Ah, dear dear tide that floods my heart and makes me Yours – one holy part.

...

Ah, glorious love that formed the plan to win the nations far and wide,
To kill all hatred, ban all wars, and heal all wounds – for this He died.
We watch Your love through all our pain till we are wholly one again.

Ah, Father-love, ah, Spirit-peace, ah, gentle Brother, Warrior strong –
You teach us ways that Heaven knows and fill our hearts with glorious song.
You stand upon the heav'nly shore and call us home – for evermore.²⁷

This eternal gentleness is the tenderness of sovereign love:

How gentle is His hand upon my life, how tender is His touch upon my heart,
His faint imprint of feet upon my shores, without a wish or intent to depart.

...

His gentleness is as a torrent strong that flows within to heal in every place.
I love this gentle, tender Lord of love, This quiet Father, Son and Holy Dove.²⁸

Jesus' death resulted from political and religious hammers, not divine hostility:

'Ah, Lord!' I cried, 'How can You die where I deserve that hanging?
I saw them nail You to the Cross, I heard their hammers banging:
Those nails went cleanly through my sins, those nails hold me forever;
With You, my Lord, I'm crucified and nought can ever sever.'²⁹

Triune counsel

God's plan was not an action *against* his Son but *in* and *through* him.³⁰ Divine wrath was against the impact of evil on humanity and humanity's embrace of and alliances with evil, and not against Jesus. God's wrath was God's insistence on acting in peace, gentleness, love, holiness and purity towards humanity when faced with personal and systemic wickedness rather than on any disposition that correlates with human coercion, pugilism, vitriol, antagonism and hatred:³¹

²⁷ Ibid., 149 *Ah, tide of love that floods my heart.*

²⁸ Ibid., 280 *How gentle is His hand upon my life.*

²⁹ Ibid., 247 *He is my own – my only Lord.* God the Father was not nailing Jesus.

³⁰ E.g. Geoffrey Bingham, *Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1987), 69, 70; *Things We Firmly Believe, The (2nd Ed)*, 113.

³¹ Cf. *Dominion of Darkness and the Victory of God, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1977); *Beyond the Cross* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1987); *Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss; Dear Death or Dark Devourer?* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1989); *Word & the Words of the Cross, The: 7 Bible Studies* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 2003); *Wrath of His Love, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 2004).

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The Christ of the Covenant breaks sin's bonds with His powerful Breath:
The Son of the Covenant rolls through darkest prisons of death.³²

Is it nothing to you that My Father and I were one in our counsel as God,
And planned this sad day in the face of your sin, when all you deserved was His rod?

...

Is it nothing to you that I bear all the wrath of the God who is holy and pure
On sin that defiles, on sin that destroys, that its judgement is what I endure?

...

Is it nothing to you that His love is in Me, that this pain is the proof of My love,
That I bear in My heart the hate of your mind, to bring you to Father above?³³

Aspects of the incomprehensible mystery of God's salvific accomplishments in God-in-Christ Jesus as they confront hideous, horrific and anti-creational evil with its deceptive, duplicitous corrupt accusations accompanied by its counterfeit and counterpart appearances of truth, goodness, love, holiness and righteousness are portrayed in *O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss*:

O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss, of man's invective traitor's kiss,
Of sin and shame, of wounds and fear, O Cross of pain you call us near.
The world cannot escape Your Cross, its mind reject fore'er the loss,
The darkness of the limbo dread from which You cried for us – the dead!

We cannot know the pain You bore, nor ever live the anguish sore
That tore that holy cry of shame from hellish depths of dreadful pain.
In You the ancient evil met the modern guilt, th'eternal debt,
The wrath of God, the curse of law, the separation evermore.

The wounds that sin in us had wrought – Unholy sickness that we caught
From evil's madness, from the womb, that led us to eternal doom –
These, these were there upon You laid, You wounded were by wounds we made,
Our wounds were Yours upon the Tree, that we into Your wounds may flee.

In You the sins of all the race distorted body, mind and face,
Until You seemed as man no more, destroyed – as Man – for evermore.
O Holy One, You suffered much to free us from the doomful clutch
Of sin and Satan, wrath and law, and liberate us evermore.

Sometimes when all the world's asleep, sometimes when terror's passions deep
Come stealing to us from their grave – those sins from which He came to save
Our race of doom and dreadful death – we cry as though our latest breath
Had come at last, and we are lost, upon guilt's storm forever tossed.

But grace comes throbbing through that night, and sin's forgiven, and holy light
Breaks to us from Your Cross and Tomb as You come to our upper room.
O Christ now risen from the grave, You gave Yourself ourselves to save,
And all the pains of memory are banished in that holy Tree.

³² *New Creation Hymn Book*, , 125 *The blood of bonding has flowed*.

³³ *Ibid.*, 71 *Is it nothing to you – all you who pass by*.

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The shame of guilt cannot return, nor fire of curse within us burn.
You sin and guilt and curse became to save us from eternal shame.
Our spirits in Your Cross rejoice, and with us all creation's voice
Is lifted in the highest praise for love and grace and all Your ways.

O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss, of man's invective, traitor's kiss,
Of sin and shame, of wounds and fear, O Cross of pain and love so dear,
We praise our God for love that gave as Son to die, as Son to save.
We lift our songs, our hearts adore and worship You for evermore.³⁴

Immanuel forever

This crucified Christ was 'God in our flesh forever', anointed by the Holy Spirit as God's 'eternal holy Son':

Immanuel! Immanuel! God in our flesh forever,
You walk our streets, and feel our pain with love that none can sever.
Our eyes had never seen our God nor known that He would shed His blood.

Immanuel! Immanuel! The prophets sang Your coming,
They said that God would dwell with [us] that we might see His loving.
Oh, how our hearts and minds are dazed, whilst all creation stares, amazed.

Immanuel! Immanuel! We see Your eyes of pity,
We watch You walk in Spirit's power in hamlet, vale and city.
We see the Father's glory near and know His Presence all so dear.

Immanuel! Immanuel! The Spirit dwells within You.
He shows His power and love to all in fruit You bear abundant.
Ah Triune God, we see You One In this eternal holy Son.³⁵

Nothing Jesus did or said was outside of him suffering and 'serving in the depths of man's dread sin' in the context of 'the rain of grace':

You came in flesh from heaven – a babe, a man, a King,
A servant serving in the depths of man's dread sin.
You hung in pain, and all the while the rain of grace was on the land.

You came with Your great Word to speak our death to sin;
You fought the Tempter to the end, our life to win.
There You displayed the powers of evil all amazed in their defeat.

You sent the Spirit strong to take the words of grace
To every haunt of evil's power, to every place;
And [we] may cry, 'Our Saviour God is in the land: we shall not die!'

Oh Christ our Conquering King, our hearts of love implore,
That we may be Your messengers to every shore,
To every place, to bring Your grace and save our race for evermore.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., 327 *O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss.*

³⁵ Ibid., 282 *Immanuel! Immanuel!*

³⁶ Ibid., 119 *Oh Christ our Conquering King.* Also, *Priest, Songs of Joy and Peace.*

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In a poem that contrasts a familiar hymn about God's transcendence, Geoffrey Bingham outlines the results of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension:

Holy! Holy! Holy! is our High Priest, Jesus,
Holiness becomes this One whom heaven and earth adore.
By His blood we're holy, sanctified for ever,
In Him made perfect, now and ever more.

Blameless! Blameless! Blameless! Fit to offer blameless
Sacrifice of purging love that sets our conscience free.
Through His blood we're blameless – not by our endeavour –
So then we worship to eternity.

...

Exalted to the heavens; there a priest for ever,
Always interceding for all our daily needs.
Father ever loving has for ever made Him
High Priest of love for all eternity.³⁷

He used themes relating to Hebrew-Jewish Temple sacrifices to write of God sanctifying God's people by destroying death, purifying consciences and immolating shame. He indicates that the Temple mercy seat and rituals involved a triune initiative that brought death to evil and a new life of goodness:

Lord of the high Golgotha, You heard before we prayed,
Purged the guilt of our beings, cleansed where we were dismayed.
Ah, Holy Loving Fire! Burn till the dross is gone.
Make us Your living Temple, make us Your holy ones.

Pain of the loving fire purges until the peace
Floods afresh all our spirits joy that shall never cease.
Father of loving fire, Spirit of living flame,
Saviour, our fragrant off'ring, Blessèd be Your Threefold Name!³⁸

God the Father and the Trinity: families and communities

Triune community – reconciled humanity

The Meaning and Significance of the Trinity

Geoffrey Bingham wrote *The Meaning and Significance of the Trinity* as part of a *Christian Teaching Series* around the time NCPI was formed. He says that, when rightly understood, 'the doctrine of the Trinity ... is deeply significant for our understanding of every doctrine of Scripture and indispensable to knowing the nature and action of God'.³⁹

³⁷ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 349 *Holy! Holy! Holy! is our High Priest, Jesus.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 262 *Lord of the loving fire.*

³⁹ Geoffrey Bingham, *Meaning and Significance of the Trinity*, *The, Christian Teaching Series* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1974), 2.

He explores *formal arguments for the Trinity* in both Old and New Testaments and outlines biblical evidence for the deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He reasons that

Whilst the term [essence] is not satisfactory it helps us to see that in their essential being there is no difference between the Father and Son and Spirit, yet in their function and operation they are seen by those manifestations which are consonant with their names or offices. ...

Because the Trinity is unique it is not surprising that we cannot understand it. Some people like to use analogies, for these seem to show what the Trinity is like. They do not, really, and often in fact demonstrate modalism, rather than the unity of the three persons, which is through their nature as love.⁴⁰

Having outlined aspects of his theology of the triune persons, with his emphasis on love identifying their relations, he considers *the action and significance of the Trinity* and looks at *the mystery, plan and purposes of God in creation, God's mode for creation* and *God's communication with creation*. His final themes in this section are *the trinitarian mystery of redemption* and *the trinitarian work of restoration*.⁴¹

He emphasises that the glory of the Father is revealed in the family of God:

That [the family of God] cannot be His sons apart from the Son and the Spirit is the great teaching of the New Testament. They came to the Father through the Son, and to the Son through the Spirit. Having come the Father, the Son and the Spirit indwell the hearts of the redeemed.

This truth of indwelling is astonishing. It leads us back directly to the fact and truth of Creation. Man was made totally in the total image of God. For this reason he is able to be indwelt. The lineaments of that Trinity accord with his creational self as it was unimpaired by sin, and now with his new-creational self restored by God. The amazing and exciting fact now begins to appear – man is a creature destined to be indwelt by the Trinity and restored to his full being by redemption. Even more his sonship was planned, not primarily to be complete and matured by the initial Creation, but to be total by virtue of the New Creation, the external objective work of the Trinity in redemption, and the internal and subjective application of that through the indwelling Trinity.

We see now the goal and triumph of God in His Trinitarian action and Person. He has brought, through glorification, His own sons to that place of fulfilment whereby they can fellowship with the very Godhead, and be partakers in the divine nature. Out of the crucible of failure and suffering,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁴¹ Ibid., 15–25.

out of the chaos of sin and loss, and through the suffering of the act of redemption God has achieved His goal and plan.⁴²

There is much goodness and richness in his account to this point, including his rejection of Arianism and his subsequent comment on triune relations.

The next paragraphs include his views on authority; views he would repeatedly affirm.⁴³ Authority requires superordination and subordination, with the Son of God's sonship always involving the Son's subordination to the Father. This subordination, and that of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, reveals 'that most marvellous and adorable inner dynamic unity of essential love', and glorifies the Father.⁴⁴

Geoffrey Bingham outlined the way in which Jesus Christ revealed 'the Father as Father' by being rejected '(as Man-for-men) in order to reconcile the world to [God's-self]'. God in Christ 'made Christ to be sin; He laid on Him the iniquity of man, setting Him forth as a propitiation', while the Son offered himself in love through the eternal Holy Spirit' in a revelation of 'co-ordinated holy love! This is the true Trinitarian revelation of [God's] own Godhead'.⁴⁵

Readers of this early document were left with two simple choices: appreciate the richness and goodness of what preceded these paragraphs and hope for later clarification, or see them as points of departure and seek alternative ministries.

The doctrine of the *eternal subordination of the Son*, in contrast to the doctrine of the *eternal generation of the Son*, as is stated in the Nicene-Chalcedonian Creed, anthropomorphically projects the subjection of the Son of God as a human person into the inner life of the Trinity. The triune persons, according to the pro-Nicene theologians, all relate in love by honouring, serving, giving and receiving from each other. They *share one essence*, have one will and purpose without any ontological *essential* hierarchy within their *one being*.⁴⁶

There are also a number of essential nuances and clarifications to his claim that *God rejected Christ on the cross*. His point that *God was in Christ doing what God was doing in setting him forth as a propitiation* is consistent with his later writings. God was in Christ condemning the evil condemnation of everything that was

⁴² Ibid., 25, 26.

⁴³ Bingham, *All Things Are Yours*, Appendix, 214ff, see Appendix 1 in this book.

⁴⁴ *Meaning and Significance of the Trinity*, The, 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27. Cf. Geoffrey Bingham, *Pastor's Monthly Study Group Notes* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1995).

⁴⁶ Cf. Don Priest, *Redefining – Meaning and Scripture, Inclusion and Hierarchies, Community and Ministry* (2023); *Trinity – Worship and Wonder* (2025); *Living in Love and Freedom; In Triune Community; Vinedresser Revisited, The – a Response to The Vinedresser, an Anglican Meets Wrath and Grace by Martin Bleby; Towards Eternity*.

good and generous in the creation and its humanity which God had established, was sustaining and would bring to fulfilment.⁴⁷

The Glory of God and Human Relationships: A Study in Trinitarian and Human Relationships

Geoffrey Bingham's Doctor of Theology thesis outlines his theology of God the Father and the Trinity and explores ways in which this theology could inform families and communities.⁴⁸ He believed that

as the true Community reflects and lives out the relationships of the Persons of the Triune Community then it brings a new and ontological sociality to the world. In the light of the present confusion of relationships this should be valuable. The climax or telos of these relationships should be seen to be the admission of the people of God into the social and relational life of the Trinity.⁴⁹

Changes in family and church patterns of behaviour are seen as highlighting different views about authority and ordination, and hierarchical theologies and 'equalitarian values'. Reviewing them begins 'with a substantial theology of the Godhead and its constituent Persons, i.e. biblical Pateriology, Christology and Pneumatology and the interrelationship of these three areas of study'. He claims that this theology requires research into trinitarian relationships, biblical anthropology, cosmology, soteriology and eschatology. His reference to 'ontological sociality' indicates the trajectory of his affirming views on hierarchies, his opposition to egalitarianism, and his understandings of mutuality.

He commences his 'theological anthropology' by reflecting on God's goal that God's elect people share in the 'glorious liberty' of God's children. This freedom is God's own inner relational liberty and enables God's family to be 'partakers of the divine nature', to be conformed to the image of God's Son and to live in hope as they receive the gift of eternal life.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Cf. Bingham, *Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss; Wrath of His Love, The*.

⁴⁸ 'Glory of God and Human Relationships, The: A Study in Trinitarian and Human Relationships' (Pacific College of Graduate Studies, 1990). PCGS received government accreditation in 1993 but apparently 'had no recognised accreditation' in 1990. It was evidently associated with Kingsley College. Geoffrey Bingham's thesis, in my opinion, is a substantial biblical studies document which outlines his theological perspectives with many references and minimal literature analysis. Cf. Wikipedia, 'Pacific College of Graduate Studies,' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_International_University; Don Patton, 'A Brief History of Pacific College of Graduate Studies,' <https://www.bible.ca/tracks/Pacific-College-of-Graduate-Studies-Melbourne-Australia-brief-history.htm>; 'Kingsley College: A Brief History,' Kingsley College, <https://kingsley.edu.au/about-us/>. Pastors' schools and studies and several books from the early 1990s contain material from this thesis.

⁴⁹ Bingham, 'Glory of God and Human Relationships, The: A Study in Trinitarian and Human Relationships,' Introduction, 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2, 3.

Some reasons for writing his thesis are nominated:⁵¹

- Theologies of human and divine relationships need redefinition in the light of new insights into trinitarian theology and the lack of literature regarding (singular) 'theological anthropology'.
- Pateriology is lacking since 'Most systematic theologies deal with Christology and Pneumatology, but generally contain no specified Pateriology, but simply have a section on "God". Pateriology is essential to a full treatment of the person and work of Christ and the person and work of the Holy Spirit'.
- Theologies identifying God with human suffering require further exploration, especially about theopaschitism and patra-passionism 'as against the old heresy patripassionism'.
- Covenant theology is 'an obviously rich source for further research when it comes to the matter of relationships since it is the basis of biblical sociality'.
- A lack of 'resource material' relevant to divine and human interrelationships exists despite divine and human relationships having been examined 'in the light of salvation history and the ultimate hope of glory'.
- The 'vexed question' of the relationship between headship and body needs consideration.

Geoffrey Bingham's claims about renewed interest in trinitarian theologies link with his call for a review of the extent to which systematic theologies begin with divine oneness and postpone trinitarian discussion. His comments remind me of reading Leon Morris' *Spirit of the living God* and *The Lord from Heaven*, and of a third book of his referencing *Testaments of Love* rather than God as Father.⁵²

Several questions emerge concerning Geoffrey Bingham's theology on God's and human fatherhood. They include asking about the extent

- sentimentality and emotionalism *and/or* authority and prestige are involved.
- the kingdom/reign of God is misrepresented by privileged power profiles.
- misogyny is encouraged, and elitism, hegemony and oligarchy endorsed.
- the creation of a hospitable and welcoming home for *all* humanity regardless of gender, class, ethnicity or sectarian identity is minimalised in favour of a world under hierarchical domination.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3, 4.

⁵² Leon Morris, *Spirit of the Living God* (London, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1960); *Lord from Heaven, The* (London, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), cf. *Testaments of Love* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, United States: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981).

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- privileged knowledge is used to define human context and culture in ways which readily generate abusive, condescending and unilateral behaviours.
- a theology of God's fatherhood reinforces warped views of human fathers, and vice-versa.
- biblical language about God as Father is seen as beyond cultural adaption.

Holy Father

Aspects of Geoffrey Bingham's worship-oriented insights into God as Father and their revelation to and within human communities (especially the church as God's redeemed family) can be seen from his poems and songs.

Three of his songs from the 1970s affirm God as our holy, all-loving Father whom we worship in appreciation for forming a new family in God's love. God is first worshipped and adored, and creation is seen as God's good gift:

Most holy Father, now we bow before You,
Children created by the Breath of God;
Formed for Your purpose, shaped into Your image,
Glorious children of the living God.

When He created in His own likeness –
Gave us His glory, made us to reign –
We were as princes, born of the Father,
He gave creation into our hands.

After setting *context*, humanity's *crisis* is described with emphasis on Jesus' humanity *and without* individualistic accusative language. Jesus' presence with people, his identification with humanity and his participation in the horrible impact of evil on God's creation is depicted:

Son of the Father, sent by Him who loved us,
Warm flesh as ours became in Bethlehem's inn,
Baptized by Spirit, mighty in His power;
Great God's great Conqueror over all our sin

There on the Cross He wrestled with our darkness,
Tracing His steps back through mankind's sad sins,
Until He bears and suffers and exhausts them
And the new family in God's love begins.

God's restorative messianic action in Jesus emphasises *conquest* rather than economic compensation, transactional substitution, divine appeasement, divine satisfaction or ransom payments.

God's victory is not achieved by vengeance, vindictiveness, violence or violation but by suffering *with* God's people and then by them being raised *with* him. It is not centred on the end of the world at Jesus' second coming nor on us going to heaven. It is about life in a renewable and renewed creation:

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Rise, sons and daughters, in His resurrection,
Conquerors you are now over sin and death;
Renewed in Christ, empowered for holy living,
Created by the Holy Spirit's breath.

Reign now in life by One – Christ Jesus, Victor!
Reign in this world, and kingdom yet to come;
Know fullest joy as members of God's family,
Know what it is to live in Him as one.⁵³

These themes of context, crisis and conquest also permeate *God is all-loving, He is our Father*, and *We are the children, sons of the Father* from this same decade.⁵⁴

Perhaps his signature song about God's fatherhood is *Abba! Abba! Father God!* which was written during the 1980s with life's transience in mind. It aligns our turning to God the Father with the story of the prodigal son. God's great heart of eternal love releases us from captivity and brings us to live forever in his presence:

Abba! Abba! Father God!
You have filled us with Your love,
Abba! Abba! You are dear:
How we feel Your presence near.

Thou great Heart – Eternal Love –
Pour upon us from above
Freedom from each bond and chain,
That we may be Yours again.

As that son returned from sin
To the father's arms of love,
So we turn, O Lord, to Thee,
Ever in Thy Home to be.

In the night-time of our soul,
You have healed and made us whole;
You have banished pain and dread,
With Your hand our spirits fed.

All the longings of our heart
Bid us from this life depart
That our eyes Your glory see,
That we may be one with Thee.

Abba! Abba! Father God!
You have filled us with Your love,
Abba! Abba! You are dear:
How we feel Your presence near.

Abba! Abba! Father dear,
You will bring us yet more near;

⁵³ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 52 *Most Holy Father*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 48 *God is all-loving, He is our Father*, and 57 *We are the children, sons of the Father*.

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Take us to Your heart of love,
Make us one with You above.⁵⁵

Another song from this decade expresses his beliefs in the Trinity, creation, the cross and the fulfilment of God's eternal purposes:

O Father, our Father, You give to Your children,
The glory You give to Your own blessed Son;
You raise us from dust and You give us Your Spirit:
You breathe Your own life into us, every one.

...

The Cross and the Spirit unite in their power,
To shape us to glory, to be like Your Son,
And one day the heavens will shout with the triumph:
'The people of God have been made to be one!'

Oh, how we adore You, Great Father of glory!
Oh, how we all love You, dear Son, there, above;
And how we rejoice in the life of the Spirit!
And worship and bless You, our great God of love!⁵⁶

A further anthem to God as Father included rich verses of adoration of the Son and the Spirit, with declarations about God's triune accomplishments:

Through the Holy City's portals
Stream the nations and the tribes,
God and Man in glory seated,
One forever, loosed from strife,
Freed of guilt and wounds by healing
Leaves plucked from the tree of life.

With the hosts of heavenly creatures
One with You, Your children cry,
Singing, 'Glory, power and honour,
God of love eternally,
You who ever live within us
Granting immortality!'

Triune God! Eternal Glory!
Filled our spirits are to raise
Songs and psalms of adoration,
Praise and worship all our days:
To Your Persons in Your Oneness
Flow eternal, endless lays.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid. 42 *Abba! Abba! Father God!*, 65 *Angel wings*, 30 *Ah, strong, strong love*, 183 *One day we'll see Him face to face* and were sung at Geoffrey Bingham's funeral. Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

⁵⁶ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 54 *O Father our Father*, Also, 41 *You are our Father loving God*, and 61 *Oh Father! Oh Father! we come in our wonder*.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 245 *Holy Father, in Your mercy*. Also, 289 *I sing the songs that reach my heart*, 302 *The Godhead glows most gloriously* and 343 *Amazing Grace is God Himself*. Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

Spirit of the living God

The structure of and themes in Geoffrey Bingham's book, *The Day of the Spirit*, partially pre-empted his perspectives on the Trinity and God as Father in his doctoral thesis. His thesis emphasised *coming to know God relationally in this world, knowing God personally by biblical revelation and personally knowing God as Father, Son and Spirit* by being reconciled and adopted into God's family through the atonement. The 'praxis of relationships' that he wanted to establish by examining trinitarian relationships would be both community centred and personally experienced just as he profiled earlier in *The Day of the Spirit*.⁵⁸

I have tried ... to take some sort of narrative approach, for the Spirit is always in action. For this reason, the treatment is not so much theological as it is descriptive. ...

I am also sure that theology must always be to some degree experimental. ... The Spirit is necessarily related to the prophetic: indeed prophecy is rooted in the Spirit. It is the prophetic which gives movement to the religious history, for it is action. It is truth not only being communicated, but truth being lived, namely the truth of God which is God himself, God in action. ...

I assume that anyone picking up this book in order to read it must either know the Holy Spirit or at least be interested enough to find out something about him. ...

The point that I am trying to make at the very outset is that knowledge of the Spirit, in order to be true knowledge, must be personal. Whilst a person of faith can come to know the Spirit, those not of faith can only come to know about him, i.e. have notional but not personal knowledge.⁵⁹

Geoffrey Bingham concludes *The Day of the Spirit* by highlighting these same themes and priorities:

It is impossible to look at the work of the Father and of the Son apart from their persons, or to look at their persons apart from their work. This is the case also with the Spirit. Because the work of God is a Triune work, one of the persons of the Godhead cannot be seen apart from the working of the

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Bingham, *Day of the Spirit, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1985); 'Glory of God and Human Relationships, *The: A Study in Trinitarian and Human Relationships*.' There are several passages in *The Day of the Spirit* that profile his views about man and woman and his use of man-usually-includes-woman language. See regarding The Spirit and gender, 2; gendered language, 27, 28; 'Being God's sons ... links with the image of man and woman, and their mutual relationships' 180; 'The new man enters into a new hierarchy. ... To break this functional hierarchy is to invite anarchy. It is to re-introduce the old rebellion into the new situation' (1 Corinthians 11:3), 285. Pastors' schools and studies and several books from the early 1990s contain material from this thesis.

⁵⁹ *Day of the Spirit, The*, Preface, 1, 3.

whole Godhead. Indeed, this very unity of God defies individual evaluations of any member of it. ...

... the full evaluation and survey of the Spirit's work and person will be made when the entire family of the Father stands before him, in thunderous worship and unceasing gratitude for what he has done. That is when we will see the true nature of the Spirit, i.e. in the gathering of the entire family, the full community of the Spirit.⁶⁰

His poems and songs again express his delight, joy and anticipation of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's empowering promises. *There was a day when God sent man his Spirit* is an early song which links a conquest narrative with the outpouring and gifting of the Holy Spirit. A decade later *Father sends the Holy Spirit* outlines a Spirit-oriented salvation history that expands on the themes of context, crisis and conquest. Evil is defeated not by any action by the Father *against* Jesus but by resurrection-enabling surges of the Holy Spirit:

From the Cross cascades are pouring: from the Grave fresh torrents surge,
Spates of life are ever flowing, floods so pure that cleanse and purge. ...

Praise the Father who creates us, praise the Son who, from the Tree,
Liberates the whole creation into glory's unity.
Praise the Spirit of the Father, praise the Spirit of the Son:
Praises ring through endless ages for the vict'ry they have won!⁶¹

A salvation history song highlights the work of the Holy Spirit in what God accomplishes in creation and history and is achieving until the ends of the ages:

By the breath of His mouth He made all the heavens,
By the breath of His mouth He formed the whole earth,
By the breath of His mouth He breathed into Adam
And caused the whole race to come to its birth.

...

By the breath of His mouth Christ gave up His spirit –
The life that He gave for the sins of the race –
By the love of the Father He rose all triumphant,
And poured forth in torrents His rivers of grace.

...

Oh Breath of the Father, Oh Breath of the Saviour,
Come breathe into us as we praise and adore,
Thus help us to bring all Your grace to the nations
And turn them to live in Your love, evermore.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., 348.

⁶¹ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 143 *Father sends the Holy Spirit*. Also, 147 *There was a day*.

⁶² Ibid., 4 *By the breath of His mouth*.

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Two more songs centring on the Holy Spirit were written twenty years after the first one mentioned. Both poems speak richly and intimately of the Spirit's person and presence with Jesus in rescuing and restoring humanity:

Christ offered through Your peerless power full grace of His redeeming love.
He bore the sins in Calvary's hour, upheld the race to God's dear love.
And now Your presence fills my breast – the heart of all on whom You light –
To drive the sins and self away and put the dread of death to flight.

Ah, Spirit-Dove, ah, Holy One, You moved as wind within my mind,
You breathed to life my deadened heart and brought me to His riven side.
You gave me sight of Calvary's grief, of Father-mercy, Son's great pain,
Redeeming me from Evil's power to make me fully whole again.

...

You never fail to give me sight of love that holds me till I die,
And by You – with all saints above – shall transformed to Your temple fly,

To be at one in City pure, to join the throng, below, above,
To reign in power and worship You, Dear Father, Son and Holy Dove.⁶³

The cross is seen as deeply personal and powerful in God's purposes as the Holy Spirit remakes humanity into a new purified community of love:

Time was when spirit, fallen, human, full certain of its innate powers,
Living within its world of idols, and shaping out its ego hours.
The Father gave the Son to suffer, the Spirit led Him to that Tree.
And aided Him to rise in power and rule as Lord eternally.
Then came the pain of self and idols, then came the anguish, horror, fear.
The Wind was blowing in His mercy, a Voice to dread and yet so dear.

The Voice spoke of the grace of glory, the Cross that purifies the mind
And heart and spirit – all its story – to give the peace the heart must find.
Ah! Spirit gentle, Spirit hallowed, who takes this heart so sinful, weak,
And makes it pure and makes it holy and turns the wilful into meek:
You came – the gift of Holy Father; You came – the gift of loving Son;
You purified the heart from evil and made the shattered spirit one.

You lead the weak in holy power; You intercede within the heart;
You cause us to cry 'Father! Abba!' Ah! You, who never will depart.
You cause us to share all the glory, of all the grace and all the love.
And when we've told the matchless story You take us to our home above.
Ah! Spirit of our Holy Father, Ah! Spirit of the loving Son,
Through You we'll sing the praise forever of You, the glorious Triune One.⁶⁴

The reign of God

Geoffrey Bingham developed his insights on salvation history over many years. They informed two of his key books: his commentary on the book of Revelation

⁶³ Ibid., 259 *Ah, Spirit dear, the sin that's sad.*

⁶⁴ Ibid., 260 *Time was when spirit, fallen, human.*

and *The Clash of the Kingdoms*, published four years earlier. He wrote that writing a book on the conflict between God's reign and evil's empires was 'no small matter':

The sheer triumph of Christ, and the immutable sovereignty of God not only act as spurs to such a subject, but they are really the heart of the matter. God's Kingdom is substantial and eternal. Satan's kingdom is a myth and is wholly without substance. This is not to say that Satan has been wholly without effect in his mischievous attempts to destroy the Kingdom of God, and subvert the creation, but the end result will be nothing. Nothing of all his seemingly prodigious efforts will remain.⁶⁵

His preface to his commentary on the book of Revelation emphasises that this *Apocalypse* needs 'constant reading':

One needs to live in its ethos, its atmosphere. One needs ... to relax into its living material and feel the life of the prophecy. Certainly it is essential that we keep knowing the mind of God through it. Whilst we seem to have a drive to decode what we think is coded, and interpret what we think requires interpretation, the best way to go is to let it soak into us. The Book is apocalyptic, but it is not fantasy. ... It is a prophecy which is intended to speak to us, and go on speaking, and help us to have the way of life it espouses.⁶⁶

Three songs help profile Geoffrey Bingham's theology on the reign of God. They point to his aversion to overfocused thinking on demon possession and Satanic activity and to being inappropriately absorbed on questions concerning God's sovereignty and human free will.

We reign in life profiles his theology of the kingdom of God: 'Christ's Cross has conquered through His precious blood' and those deadened by sin are given new life as God's resurrected Son pours out the Holy Spirit. This Ezekiel-37-like outpouring forms an army sharing God's love as they anticipate their new home:

Lift then the feet that falter in the way,
Rise! stand erect, before the Father-God;
Be filled with Him who maketh all things new,
And walk within the victory of the Lord!⁶⁷

Two further songs written around twenty years later amplify this anthem. *Praise now to You, Oh glorious King* speaks of God's glorious comfort as sins are forgiven and prodigals come home. Jesus, as healer, and the Father, work together to deaden

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Bingham, *Clash of the Kingdoms, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1989), Foreword, vii.

⁶⁶ *Revelation of St John the Divine, The* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1993), 2, 3.

⁶⁷ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 203 *We reign in life by one, Christ Jesus, Lord*.

sins, destroy their pain and shame and create a royal, priestly family that forever rejoices when ‘at last we see [the healer’s] face’.⁶⁸

King of all sinners, and King of all saints might be wrongly read as referring to two categories of people: elect/saved and non-elect/unsaved, or perverse laypeople and perfected ministers-priests-pastors. The context emphasises that *sinners are saints* and *saints are sinners*:

*You bring all nations to bow at Your throne,
All of creation Your Kingship will own.*

Geoffrey Bingham describes Immanuel’s high priestly sharing ‘the blood that flows now in our veins’ and still sharing our sorrows and pains having ‘*opened pure heaven to bring nations in*’. Christ’s love as ‘*true Spouse*’ draws us to the eternal marriage banquet and gives us new songs during ‘*Earth’s travails*’ as he ‘*rights all Earth’s wrongs*’. This saga song climaxes in a trinitarian doxology:

Love of the Father and love of the Son,
Love of the Spirit who makes nations one.
We shall all meet in Your City of love;
Pure, we shall know You in rapture above.

*Rapture above! Rapture above!
Nations shall come to know His dear love.
Wonder of healing shall know from the Tree,
Drink of the river that ever flows free.*⁶⁹

Geoffrey Bingham’s theology of God’s reign was not an exercise in abstract and dispassionate philosophy. It was personal, communal, and cross and resurrection centred. His – and all human – sneering, mocking and contempt for God’s sacrificial self-giving while pursuing deadly dreams and dying from deceitful lies finally reaches its defeat and destiny in its journey to the place of the skull, to Golgotha. It is there that he – and we – discover that Jesus’ messianic victory abolishes death and replaces it with *His own dear life that we may be immortal*:

He is my own – my only Lord,
The Lord I love forever.
Though lords of other glories press
And seek my soul to sever
From Him who is my only Lord,
Mine – who was once His mocker:
My heart He caught at Calvary,
Who took me to Golgotha.
...

⁶⁸ Ibid., 246 *Praise now to You, Oh glorious King*.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 332 *King of all sinners, and King of all saints*.

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Lords other than th' Eternal Lord
Are lords without true glory:
They live in lies and die their death
Without an endless story,
But Christ our Lord abolished death
And opened heaven's portals:
He gives to us His own dear life
That we may be immortal.

He is my own – my only Lord.⁷⁰

Gender and marriage

Nearly all NCPI books are written by men. Two groups of books written by male church leaders on church leaders only profile male leaders.⁷¹ Only male speakers led teaching sessions at NCPI's seasonal schools.

Living Faith Studies 46 and *The Role and Purpose of Man and Woman* are two of Geoffrey Bingham's earlier documents on gender and sexuality. He explains aspects of his Man and man terminology in *God's Glory, Man's Sexuality* and other books.⁷² His 1990 doctoral thesis explores these themes.⁷³ He later focused on Christ and the church as Christ's bride while maintaining role-based considerations.⁷⁴

I reviewed *The Role and Purpose of Man and Woman* in *Redefining – Meaning and Scripture, Inclusion and Hierarchies, Community and Ministry*, in which I commented on my two seasonal school sessions on related themes. I also wrote on these themes in *Living in Love and Freedom* and *Learning to Love Wisdom*.⁷⁵

People's well-being may be negatively affected by expectations in gender-based theologies. Pertinent questions relating to pastoral issues include:

⁷⁰ Ibid., 247 *He is my own – my only Lord*. Also, see my earlier reference to this poem in *Jesus Christ, atonement and reconciliation – Tide of love*.

⁷¹ E.g. Marcus L. Loane, *They Were Pilgrims* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1985); *These Happy Warriors* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1988); *Three Faithful Servants* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1991) and John Dunn's short biographies on George Whitfield, John Bunyan, George Müller, John Newton and Charles Spurgeon, 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'.

⁷² Bingham, *Living Faith Studies 1–50, God's Glory, Man's Sexuality* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1988), 6, 7. Also, *For Pastors and the People*, 143ff.

⁷³ 'Glory of God and Human Relationships, *The: A Study in Trinitarian and Human Relationships*.' Pastors' schools and studies and several books from the early 1990s contain material from this thesis.

⁷⁴ *The Role and Purpose of Man and Woman; Man, Woman and Sexuality; God, Man and Woman in Today's World; The Heavenly Vision; God's Glory, Man's Sexuality, The Profound Mystery*.

⁷⁵ Priest, *Redefining – Meaning and Scripture, Inclusion and Hierarchies, Community and Ministry, Learning to Love Wisdom* (Printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys, South Australia 2019); *Living in Love and Freedom*.

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- In what ways are women to understand their leadership gifting if biblical theology says they are not created for certain leadership roles?
- In what ways are male and female laypeople to understand their roles in relation to male only ordained ministers, priests and pastors?
- What confidence can women have that women's pastoral concerns will be empathetically and appropriately understood when there are only male ordained ministers, ordained priests and licensed pastors?
- What confidence can women involved in Christian communities have in relation to processes aimed at resolving actual or perceived conflicts of interest arising between men and women if only men make decisions?
- Is the final forum for women who believe they have suffered abuse by men (who alone are assigned to leadership roles that exclude women) one where they are assessed and judged exclusively by other men?
- Can organizations with male only leadership effectively lead communities that are inclusive and diverse of gender, race and class?

An analysis of Geoffrey Bingham's hierarchical theology and his rejection of inclusive language may clarify the nature of the exclusivist gender practices evident in his ministry, and whether his theology also has an inner logic that can lead to a more inclusive approach to gender, class, race and religious status.

I find claims that women are never as able as men to do theological research, prepare and share theological documents, and recite liturgical resources and conduct religious ceremonies absurd and a form of systemic abuse. I acknowledge the pain caused by the exclusions of women by privileged men – including me.

Two songs by Geoffrey Bingham on marriage and written in the same time frame are *Tell them about the banquet* and *Life of our life, Lord*. They highlight aspects of dilemmas inherent in his theology on gender and marriage.

His song on the marriage banquet features patriarchs, kings and priests speaking and prophets dancing and presumably prophesying before switching metaphors from the patriarchy to Messiah and Messiah's bride:

Messiah will rise in the Spirit, His tender hand soft on His Bride,
He will bow to acknowledge the Father Who gave her to be at His side.
He will hand all the glories of Kingdom to His Father, ineffable King,
And millions of sons and of angels will join as the galaxies sing.

If the patriarchs, kings, priests and prophets are in the bride, then why are they speaking and why is Messiah apparently silent? If this pattern is appropriate, then should not women's voices be heard, as well as those under royal, priestly and prophetic authority, including those marginalised or excluded by the regimes that dominate human history?

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Geoffrey Bingham describes the eternal joy of God's people as shared

In the songs that are ever and endless of the banquet of worship and praise,
Of the union of God with His image – the Bride and her people – always.

...

The songs of the banquet we're singing, in faith with love's full hope in sight,
The foretaste keeps life in the suff'ring and Heaven makes darkness all light.
The thousands and myriads are singing as angels and creatures adore,
And wisdom and honour and glory flood heaven and earth evermore.

The Three rise as One in the banquet in union the One are the Three,
The love and the power of communion encompass the Love-Family.
All creatures are one in the Father, all things unified in the Son.
One fellowship are in the Spirit and the banquet has only begun.⁷⁶

I am looking forward to hearing from the women in the patriarchs' households and in the genealogies in the Hebrew Bible. I am wanting to learn from the silent, unnamed women, including the woman whose murder is recorded in the last chapter of Judges, Jephthah's daughter, the patriarchs' slave-women, as well as the daughters of Zelophehad, Rizpah, Bathsheba, the prophetesses, and many more.

I am hoping to be present when those murdered or abused by Moses, Elijah, David and other political and religious leaders mentioned in the Bible share their stories. I am anticipating the testimonies of the women who, according to Luke, Mark and Matthew were with Jesus, including his mother and Joanna, and who were ministered to by Jesus. I am wanting to hear the accounts of the numerous women mentioned in Paul's letters, such as those listed as leaders in the last sections of Romans, including Phoebe, a minister, Prisca, a coworker with Aquila, and Junia, an apostle.

A second song, *Life of our life, Lord, Husband to Bride*, uses elliptical phrases to profile God's redemptive actions. Geoffrey Bingham's use of a marriage metaphor raises questions. What are the implications for supposedly divinely mandated, human male dominated, wife subordinated marriages, of the picture of God as an angry, wrathful bridegroom?

What messages are being given about rationalisations for male-initiated domestic and ecclesiastical violence and abuse unless divine wrath is understood as God's *determined refusal to be angry* like so many biblical political and religious leaders:

Life of our life, Lord, husband to Bride,
Hasting the union, communion high;
Drawing the wonder until complete –
Both as the one flesh at Father's feet.

...

⁷⁶ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 286 *Tell them about the banquet*, Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace*.

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Came now the Bridegroom to woo His Bride,
Cleansed her at Calvary from His split side.
Clothed her with beauty, swathed her in love,
Called her in service here and above.

Nothing shall sever, nothing divide,
Nothing break union, nothing deride.
All heaven's portals glorious will ring:
Communion ever for Bride and the King.

Life of our life, Lord, Husband to Bride,
Hasting the union, communion high;
Drawing the wonder until complete –
Both as the one flesh at Father's feet.⁷⁷

Creation, re-creation, humanity and covenant

Geoffrey Bingham's trinitarian theology has significant *relational* themes and is neither modalist – with *unrelated divine personas* – nor tritheistic – with *divine persons* not sharing the same *essence* and *will*. The *triune persons* in Bingham's thinking are known by their *relations*, with their *relations* identifying their *persons*.

His trinitarian theology is integrated with his theology of creation, new creation and covenant. It links with his anthropology, Christology and pneumatology. Two of his poems or songs in this collection anticipate *face to face* presence with God, another three are about our *creation and destiny*, and the others profile our *re-creation* in and by the atoning actions of Jesus Christ.

Face to face

His song, *One day we'll see Him face to face*, sung at his funeral, makes it clear that *our home* is about *presence with God* rather than simply arriving at some remote celestial location. Our *face to face* encounter with Jesus Christ book-end his poem, and current *intimations of our eternal home* with God bring seasons of *joy, bliss* and *love*, all of which are evidences of grace and indications of confident hope:

'Tis then the sights of heaven abound,
And flood our tired hearts of pain,
The tears of wonder flow in ecstasy,
And we are fully home again.

The years of sorrow and of strife,
The sin that brought a holy shame,
The guilt our hearts could never wholly hide
Will never visit us again.

Dear Lover, Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Our present life is hid in Thee,

⁷⁷ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 341 *Life of our life, Lord*.

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But oh! the wonder when we are unveiled
In glory of our liberty.

Till then we live in present hope,
In patience of the coming sight,
And those who share with You Your glory now,
We then will meet with great delight.

Delight and bliss and joy and love,
As now our hearts cannot contain,
Will flood us as we see Him face to face
And we are wholly one again.⁷⁸

These themes are also considered in *It does not yet appear*, where the Father's plan for *the wondrous world of human life* flows from God's pre-creational steadfast love. Humanity's destiny is as a single family living in glory, redeemed by the Father's only beloved Son. We anticipate coming *face to face with God in God's purity and holiness through the agony of the Son of God*:

His only Son in love redeemed the fallen race,
That through His agony He'd bring us face to face
With Him whose purity is such that heaven, earth and sky
Before that holiness must flee and from His goodness fly.
Yet mercy of His faithful love ordains our glorious end.
We shall be like His Son of love Who does His glory lend.

Bingham expands this *face to face* theme by profiling worship, purity, glory and love as the results of being *washed in our Saviour's tears*:

What love of Father, love of Son, and love of Holy Ghost.
What glory to Them evermore and to Their filial host.⁷⁹

Creation and destiny

His poem, *Within the home of glory*, outlines his trinitarian theology before addressing the *lonely* and *sad* consequences of human depravity:

Within the home of glory before all time began,
The Father, Fount of Being, begot His Holy Son,
And from the Two the Spirit proceeded and proceeds,
And Three are One in fullness as One are Three in deeds.

The Father – Love in essence; the Son, in Father's love,
Receives eternal glory, eternal glory gives.
The Spirit who is holy is Spirit of all Love –
The Spirit of the Father and Spirit of His Son.

None looks to do His own thing, none looks to have His own,
But turned to Each, to others, in love the Three are One.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 183 *One day we'll see Him face to face*.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 326 *It does not yet appear*.

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In love create Their image, the living creature, Man,
And set him in creation to fill all history's span.

...

Christ lonely on Golgotha is orphaned for the race
To bring back to the Father the children of His grace.
He treads eternal darkness by power of His blood
To bring the orphans homeward to join their Father, God.

Praise be we're not abandoned, praise be we're not alone,
Praise be the Father's called us back to the holy home.
In love we're in the Father, in holiness we're one
With Son and Spirit glorious, to full communion come.⁸⁰

Before He planned the world He made and *Out of the dust Thou madest us* also focus on humanity's plight and identify the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as a trinitarian redemptive and restorative action planned from before creation.⁸¹ *Out of my nothing I was all* and these two songs were all written in the same year as part of an outpouring of poetic worship and wonder between 1990 and 1995. In fact, over half of his published songs were written during these years.

Re-creation

Out of my nothing I was all is one Geoffrey Bingham's more dramatic poems with its vivid language about the emptiness of the poet's self-declared brilliant *tower of fame* and *walled city*. The poet thankfully discovered *the weakened God whose art'ries dripped my deadly blood. I saw Him groaning on a Tree and I was Him and He was me*. The poet's longing was to live within the renewing embrace of the love of the triune God who *pulverised the ego-centred tower of fame*.

Out of my nothing I was all, out of my everything was whole.
Full power was mine to be, to do, and I could only upward fall.
I thought myself no god to be since there was nought, but only me.

I scorned the shiftless schemes of men, their mediocre dreams and plans,
The best surpassed; my mind was keen to go beyond their settled lands.
I knew myself no god to be but I could reach the heights of Thee.

Full height I reared my tower of fame, my city walled held me in peace,
I thought to be as Thee, O God, and let my strivings never cease;
And though my art'ries never bled, I owned the city of the dead.

That city dead was mine: I owned, I resonated in its power,
I loved the thoughts my spirit bred, exulting in creative hours.
No end to treasures I could find nor limits to my brilliant mind.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 297 *Within the home of glory*.

⁸¹ Ibid., 294 *Before He planned the world He made*, 322 *Out of the dust Thou madest us*.

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One day I found the weakened God whose art'ries dripped my deadly blood.
I saw Him groaning on a Tree and I was Him and He was me.
All brilliance mine from Him had fled within the city of the dead.

I saw myself as wan and pale, a skeleton, a dreary corpse.
I hung within His blessed bones, He thought my prideful, crassful thoughts.
I bled to nought within His Tree, and by His death He captured me.

Lord! I was nought when I was full, full empty I when rich with fame,
Yet You embraced my wasted self and all my dreary shambled shame.
I loved You Lord who me had loved, dear Father, Son and Holy Dove.

Lord, hold me weak that I be strong, my shattered tower keep pulverised.
Let not one giddy, heady hour return, O Lord. Keep tranquillised
This weeping spirit filled with love as through its heights and depths You move.

You are my Lord, and I love Thee who bled me out upon Your Tree.⁸²

These next poems can be seen as responses to the confession embedded in *Out of my nothing I was all*. The first two use *we* language, which may seem to carry a condescending tone. Geoffrey Bingham wrote and thought as one of the many:

We have not been knowing the voice of the Father,
We have not been hearing the voice of His pain,
We have not been knowing the heart of His loving;
Our own have been sinning – yes – time and again.
...

There's balm in the fountain of Calvary's Gilead,
There's healing from pain in the Cross of His love,
There's pardon that heals us, and purifies wholly;
There's peace for the conscience which comes from above.

The Father has healed from the wounds of our sinning,
Has clothed us with beauty – all brought by the Dove;
The judgements are finished, 'tis joy until glory,
'Tis grace upon grace, and is love upon love.⁸³

We cannot live without His Word begins with reminders of the first two biblical creation accounts and of God's subsequent testimonies to humanity by creation and through the prophets, before mentioning the incarnate Word and reminding us that the Son of God whom we worship is *Word-in-Trinity*:

That Word heals Man and makes him pure
By power of His flowing blood.
This Word is life to us who hear.
Our spirits by that life are fed.
We share this life with all mankind;
We offer them the Living Bread.

⁸² Ibid., 301 *Out of my nothing I was all*.

⁸³ Ibid., 252 *We have not been knowing*.

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Ah, Word of God we weep with joy
To have Your Voice within our hearts,
To live afresh each time You speak
Your love to us in all our parts.
Ah, Father God – whose Word is power –
Ah, Spirit-Word that flows so free,

Ah, Living Word, ah, Son of God,
We worship – Word-in-Trinity.⁸⁴

Where shall I go if He's not there is a profoundly evocative poem, speaking of the *rugged Cross* as *hung between heaven and earth* not as an abstract, transactional location but as a deeply divine-human locale where our *sins find their resting place*. And *where our consciences are purged of pollution*.⁸⁵ The agony the crucified One experiences is not of Father God against him, but of the divine Father rescuing and resurrecting him from those who *thrust him away*:

'How?', 'When?' and 'Why?' my heart cries out.
'Here,' cries the Voice from the hill.
'Here, where I hang, your death I die;
Here is your pain and ill.

'Down in My tomb you die with Me,
And deep in My grave you lie.
This is the "Where?" you burst the tomb,
Rise with Me when I rise.

Where shall you go if I'm not here,
Not riveted on this Tree?
Nowhere to go, nowhere to live,
No true humanity.

'But if I die, but if I rise,
But if I cleave to the sky,
You too shall die, you too shall live,
You too ascend on high.'⁸⁶

Love, holiness, grace, mercy and presence

Strong love

Triune unity is evident in God's attributes or properties. God's tripersonal being is seen in God's triune relations as Father, Son and Spirit. God's eternal being is known through God's actions in creation and especially within humanity through and by the Holy Spirit in God's incarnate Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. These three themes permeate Geoffrey Bingham's theologies of creation, covenant,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 250 *We cannot live without His Word*.

⁸⁵ Cf. Geoffrey Bingham, *Conscience – Conquering or Conquered, The?* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1987); *Living Faith Studies 1–50*, Studies 32, 49.

⁸⁶ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 300 *Where shall I go if He's not there?*

atonement and new creation, of Father (especially), Son and Spirit, and of love (again, especially), holiness, grace, mercy, presence and other characteristics.

He first published his *Liberating Love* book in 1960, and his *Angel Wings* poem and *Three rice cakes* story profile aspects of his war-time focus on God as Father during his *search for moral sanity*.⁸⁷ He shared his *Strong strong love* poem with me while I was coordinating preparation of the first edition of the *New Creation Hymn Book*. *Strong strong love* does not align well with traditional tunes of the same metre, suggesting it needed its own tune.⁸⁸

Ah, strong strong love is bookended with themes of being willingly caught up into sovereign eternal union with the triune God who is love and acts in love. This union is seen as a covenant and birthing binding where everything is renewed and refreshed by the Holy Spirit through death and resurrection. It takes us into the *pain of Calvary* where the incarnate Son of God recreates us in him from breathlessness and death into resurrection life with God.

This new life focus mentions sin in terms of its *dark horror* rather than using the traditional evangelical forensic terminology. Geoffrey Bingham wanted people to think primarily in deeply personal terms rather than by using external, transactional, disconnected language.

Ah, strong strong love ends by speaking of a transformed person with a renewed heart of love for God (and so for everyone whom God loves) rather than of a self-oriented, narcissistic, ambition oriented, vanity-centred love of power, position and prominence. This renewal is the now ongoing reality of a heart *eternally caught to You on high, where strong strong love can never die*.

The symmetry of thought in his poem is again evident when the birthing and glory-wings themes of the Spirit and the cross are seen in the penultimate verse:

Ah, strong strong love that binds my heart
In utter union with Thine own;
Which reaches down from glorious heights
And catches me unto the throne:
Ah, strong strong love, to Thee I fly,
Who catcheth me to dwell on high.

When birth had come and all was new,
When time on wings of glory flew,
When all around were those who loved,
And on my spirit breathed the Dove,

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Bingham, *Liberating Love [3rd Edn]* (Philippines: CLC, 1969). The story of the three rice cakes is in *Angel Wings*, 2nd ed. (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1992), *Tall Grow the Tallow-Woods* (Blackwood, SA: Troubadour, 2000) and *Story of the Rice Cakes: The Search for Moral Sanity in a Prisoner of War Camp, The* (Blackwood, South Australia: New Creation Publications Inc., 1999).

⁸⁸ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 30; Priest, *A Quiet Revival Reviewed – a Response to a Quiet Revival, Geoffrey Bingham in Life and Ministry by Martin Bleby*, 10, 27, 36, 58; *Songs of Joy and Peace*,

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That strong strong love held me in pain
Till I had died and lived again.

When sin's morass brings horror dark,
When heart's engulfed in vision stark,
When soul's a-pant for sight of Thee,
Thou sendest pain of Calvary;
Ah, strong strong love that stoops from high
And bids me to Thy bosom fly.

When all around is sin and pain,
And death is near and life is vain,
Thy glory breaks from out the tomb
As new life issues from its womb,
And I am caught to You on high,
Where strong strong love can never die.

Ah, God of pain, ah, God of love,
Ah, Father, Son and Heavenly Dove,
Ah, strong strong love that binds with chain
And woos my heart from all that's vain;
My heart responds in love to Thee,
And ever shall, eternally.⁸⁹

Geoffrey Bingham's song-poem *Ah, tide of love that floods my heart* expresses aspects of the incarnational, atoning love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's triune love *floods our hearts* from God's *dear throne*, replacing wasted wildernesses with holy union and communion. God's sacred love is peace- and joy-giving for and in *jangled hearts of pain*; coming with a divine *face of love* to anguished guilt-filled spirits. God's restorative action is not that of a wrath-filled deity intent on punishment. God's purging, cleansing freedom-giving *glorious love* is part of God's pre-creational plan to *win the nations*, kill all hatred and act to recreate humanity as *wholly one again*. No wonder his poem ends doxologically!

Ah, Father-love, ah, Spirit-peace,
Ah, gentle Brother, Warrior strong –
You teach us ways that Heaven knows
And fill our hearts with glorious song.
You stand upon the heav'nly shore
And call us home – for evermore.⁹⁰

This theme of cleansing, triune love is developed in *I am not proof against Your love*, emphasising Geoffrey Bingham's interest in the victorious reign of God. Unsettled by God's songs and liberated from fear, his *lone, grim and firm* defences were no match to God's triune, redeeming love:

⁸⁹ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 30 *Ah, strong strong love*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 149 *Ah, tide of love that floods my heart*. I referenced *Ah, tide of love* in *Jesus Christ, atonement and reconciliation – Tide of love*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

My gates were lifted up that day:
My portals broke and opened wide.
The King of glory and His hosts
Flowed in for ever to abide –
The glory of eternal love
Of Father, Son and Holy Dove.

I was not proof against that love;
The hands I saw were scarred with nails;
The eyes – that once were filled with pain –
Spoke love to me that never fails.
I gladly bowed to conquering love
Of Father, Son and Holy Dove.

Ah You – the One Eternal Love!
I thank You that You entrance made
Into this needy heart of mine
By grace, and by the price You paid.
And now I love You for Your love,
Dear Father, Son and Holy Dove.⁹¹

Geoffrey Bingham's *Love You, Lord* poem shares his love for God's grace and mercy filled, redemptive and restorative love. His adoration expands until he cries out in hopeful longing for the whole of creation to know and participate in God's love:

Love You, Lord, love You, Lord.
Love You, Lord, love You, Lord.
Love You, Lord, love You now, Lord, forever.
Love You, Lord, love Your word,
Love Your sweet precious blood,
Love You, Lord, in our hearts and forever.

...

Oh sad heart that is lost,
That is far from its home,
Turn your steps to the One who redeems you,
Plead His mercy and grace,
Look now, full at His face,
And believe that this Son now receives you.

Oh come now the whole world,
Bow in wonder and come!
Come with faith and with thankful adoring;
Lift your hearts in glad praise,
To the dear Saviour raise
Songs of joy that shall ring out forever.⁹²

⁹¹ Ibid., 166 *I am not proof against Your love.*

⁹² Ibid., 176 *Love You, Lord.*

The wonder of *Such love we never loved or knew* is expressed in this poem through references to God's passionate triune love:

Such love we never loved – our love is dross.
Such love we never knew – our love was loss.
Love was beyond our love, love that You loved.
Love that You love is love – love of that Cross.

Kneel I in wondered awe before this love.
Scarce lift these darkened eyes to Yours that saw
Your love ascend in Him on dismal Tree
To take this loveless love from loveless me.

Love on that Cross for her; Father and Son
Purged through the Spirit's pain grossest of all.
All love now purified lives through the days
Until the Bridal Feast is our 'Always'.⁹³

Living presence

God's vivifying presence is expressed as a personal experience rather than a merely external reality. Its impact is known in the joy of worshipping the triune God as

God's troubadours in every land
Give vent to rapturous singing;
Their psalms and hymns and glorious songs
Through every age go ringing,
Through every age go ringing.⁹⁴

This profound intimacy *wholly lives within this place* and fills his heart with God's *dear love*, resulting in *songs of peace flowing to him from above* – even

... when battle presses strong,
And loneliness seems rampant in my soul,
When all around the storms of life rage on,
When sad is part, and sadder yet the whole,
Then Presence comes so gently to my heart
And whole is peace, and wonderful the part.

We are the grateful beneficiaries of this divine giving:

We walk by faith and never live by sight,
Know anguish as we view the human scene;
See every spirit storm-tossed in its place,
And know the power that Evil's always been;
'Tis then the Word tells of the Presence dear,
Assuring us who feel He is not near.

We live, dear Presence, by Your Holy Self
Though pain still stay within this human vale:

⁹³ Ibid., 311 *Such love we never loved*.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 251 *A silver song is in my heart*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

We know that You whose Presence gives all life,
Once lonely were where timber was, and nails
Pierced harsh Your dear beloved and holy flesh
And drew You out to darkest, loneliest death.

There was, within that hour of fearful pain,
Such horror when the Holy Presence fled.
And You were in the limbo of the lost,
Gripped in the death of death's most deadly dead:
Your Presence without Presence then endured
Until the soul of Man was fully cured.

Thus, Lord, Your Presence out of fearful death
Has come to be within my transformed soul.
I know the resurrection of Your Self
And all my spirit's pure and wholly whole.
I weep for joy to know Your Presence near
And worship You, Immanuel, loved and dear.⁹⁵

His poems are personal and sensitive. Seeing beauty, singing creation's and heaven's anthems of praise *as sunlight dapple leaves and moonlight silver silent trees* is accompanied by scenes of cruelty, pain, starvation and poverty, all ultimately swept up and enfolded in the redemptive mystery of the death of Jesus:

That heart which died to beauty rare
And scorned to call creation fair
Stopp'd short one day at Calv'ry's hill
And saw the bloody river spill.

That heart so bitter – frozen cold –
Thawed out to love as God of old
Was God anew in blazing love,
Who sent His peace through Holy Dove.

Now, Lord, afresh my heart can sing
For every dear created thing,
With inner ear hear psalm and song
And join the full adoring throng.

I hear the whole creation throb
With pain – and yet with joy – to God.
All wait the hour of full release,
All wait the coming Prince of Peace.

Ah dear, dear Lord, who suffered pain,
So Your creation's not in vain,
We feel Your love upon the air
And praise afresh Your beauty rare.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 241 *Sometimes Your living Presence is so near.*

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Ah dear, dear Lord, who suffered pain,
We praise afresh Your beauty rare.⁹⁶

This life of faith, hope and love flows from daily times of prayer where he is assured by experiences of divinely given beauty that God hears him as he prays with patience, humility and wonder in worship:

A sacrifice I make to You
Of wonder, adoration too,
Of praise, thanksgiving, glory free
For all Your grace has given me.
For all Your grace has given me.

I cannot stem the tide of praise
My heart, constrained, is bound to raise.
That it is fragrant, sweet to You,
Refreshes me to worship new.
Refreshes me to worship new.

Thus Lord, in patience now I wait,
Nor hammer fierce on heaven's gate.
Dear Lord You've heard my plea full true;
You know my case: I wait for You.
You know my case: I wait for You.⁹⁷

Grace and mercy

Within the songs and poems written between 1990 and 1995 already mentioned are five poems written between 1992 and 1995 that express the unity, restoration, renewal and anticipation that come to those awakened to new life.

His trinitarian theology provides the axis in his *Nothing between us* poem. God's intra-personal communion as one God is tri-personal:

Communion heals us, makes us all one
With Holy Spirit, Father and Son.

It is this communion, this *holy love*, that restores humanity from the fractures resulting from primal and ongoing failures. Our recovery reveals the glory of God's eternal intra-personal and other person-centred communion in creation and in humanity. It discloses *who God is and what God has planned by what God does*:

All is recovered; Calv'ry makes fresh
All that had shattered created flesh.

Union of Father, union of Son,
Godly communion, God only one.
Man too recovered, in holy love,
Glory reflects of Heaven above.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 295 *How is it, Lord, my eyes can see.*

⁹⁷ Ibid., 319 *O Lord, You hear my voice each day.*

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Grace has forgiven, closed the divide
'Twixt us as brethren, 'twixt all of life.
Communion heals us, makes us all one
With Holy Spirit, Father and Son.

Humanity's fractures and failures are the toxic tragedies of sin, filth, guilt and shame, with their horrific and hideous pride-filled divisions and separations. The blood of God's Son shed at Calvary in the cosmic victory of grace over evil enables rich and thankful worship and adoration:

Praise be to heaven for sins forgiv'n;
Praise be for union, love in living;
Praise for communion with our one God,
For liberation through His dear blood.

This anthem flows from the testimony that there is

Nothing between us, nothing between;
Nothing that's sinful, nothing unclean;
Nothing of guilt, and nothing of shame,
All is so pure, and all is so plain.⁹⁸

The story of restoration is developed in *For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord* where Geoffrey Bingham builds on the themes from Ezekiel 36:

For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord,
'To joy that it knew in those days;
With praise that arose and the worship you gave
When grace was before you always'.⁹⁹

Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou explores some aspects of the biblical Song of Songs. Rather than idly lazing in *drowsed content*, the call is to

Awake, O Zion! Wake and rise!
Awake who slumber night and day;
The King of glory bids thee wake.
Rise up, renewed and come away!

The call to awake in the crucifixion narratives is linked to Zechariah 13:7 in the context of Peter's denial (cf. Matthew 26:31–46; Mark 14:27–42). The poem's language might infer aspects of Geoffrey Bingham's atonement and trinitarian theologies about which his views were more nuanced and written after much greater consideration.

His book, *The Wrath of His Love*, outlines his thinking, and concludes with his poem, *Wrath Averted*. What might seem to be the action of the Father *against* the Son is described as the love of the Father *and* the Son:

⁹⁸ Ibid., 262 *Nothing between us, nothing between*.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 330 *For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Ah, strong cascades that empty from
The Eternal Bosom, fall upon
The Son He loves, the beloved Son.
He bears that wrath since he is one with me
And all my dread and sorrow cease
In the wrath of love that bears on him
In place of me. Ah, blessed love
Of Father and of Son that shelter me
From wrath that's truly mine,
The wrath I should endure.¹⁰⁰

After outlining his theology of the cross, *Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou* concludes by again using the bridal language of *Song of Songs*. It also mentions Jesus' reference to the restorative prophecy of Zechariah 13:7–9 in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. Was violence by God against Jesus the core essence of divine redemptive action, or is there a deeper and richer narrative of divine love for humanity resisting the violating violence of evil indicated in this verse? Geoffrey Bingham outlined his thinking in several of his books, at times appearing to answer in the affirmative while then emphasising contradictory perspectives.¹⁰¹

God's sword awoke against that One
Who bowed His heart for us to die.
His blood-spent life sank to the dust,

¹⁰⁰ Bingham, *Wrath of His Love, The*, 80ff.

¹⁰¹ *Angel Wings*, 11: 'The original form of the prophecy had been changed as Jesus quoted it. In Zechariah 13:7 it had been written, "Awake, O sword, against my fellow," saith the Lord of hosts, "smite the shepherd ..." He had seen the sword of judgement poised to strike in the hour of the Cross. He had seen the dark, hurtling form of the wolf, Satan himself, bringing every accusation to bear upon the sinless One, who had become as the sinful – all mankind. *Here was the Glory Himself sustaining the pitiful, painful failure of man, both in being and doing*' (Italics added). Geoffrey Bingham's point was that unless God sustained his creation in which evil's murderous sword is wielded, then divine redemptive resistance against evil would be unnecessary.

Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss, 69, 70: 'There must be no talk of God being personally wrathful with His Son, but there must be talk of the Son bearing the wrath of God upon evil, or no theodicy will ever prove valid'.

Things We Firmly Believe, The (2nd Ed), 113: 'Christ, in bearing the guilt of sin, bore also the wrath of God. This is what is meant by propitiation. Yet wrath-bearing was the sign of God's love to man, for Father and Son are one in this voluntary bearing. We mean that the Father is not wrathful against His Son, but against sinful man, and that the law must be justified by the sin-bearing of the Son. This is true Atonement, without which the conscience of man cannot cease to indict him for his evil. The cry, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!" stands categorically as the fruit of Christ's sin-bearing and the love of God in the Atonement.

Wrath of His Love, The, 65, 66: 'We must first of all realise that he did not cry, "My Father! My Father!", so that it would be incorrect to say that the Father forsook him as the hitherto acknowledged Son. There was no rift in the Trinity. The Three Persons were one in the action of the Cross, though their roles differed. As at the beginning Christ called as Son to the Father, and at the end committed himself into the Father's hands, so it is clear that the cry of dereliction is a vicarious one, that is, the man Christ Jesus being the man, the redeeming one, on the Cross. When he cried, "My God! My God!" he was crying as the man for all humanity'.

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His cry of love fled to the sky.
He proved His love; ah soul, awake!
Awake with love and be His Bride.
The river of His love – His blood –
Flowed for thee from His riven side.

O'er all the world the pain of Man
Is heard in anger, anguish, shame,
Until they hear the song of love
Flow from the awakened Bride again.
Awake, O Zion! Rise my soul!
Put on His love, put on His power,
And with thy conqu'ring Bridegroom go
In this salvation's glorious hour!¹⁰²

All of a sudden it caught to flaming depicts the agony of crucifixion and its impact on those present as Jesus was

Venting His pain in the lonely cry
That swept to the heart of Holy Father,
That men in their sins should never lie.

This song then highlights the *joy of release and liberation that springs from the fountain, out from His pains*, of this intra-trinitarian, incarnational Father-Son intercession – with the mystery of love being revealed by the Holy Spirit.

All of a sudden nature is singing,
Breaks on the hills and flows on the plains.
Angels and humans are ever ringing
Songs that adore both Him and His pains.
Fountain of joy is His fount of anguish,
Praising the Saviour who now does reign.

Glory to Father who sent the Saviour,
Glory to Jesus whose work is done,
Glory to Spirit showing the mystery,
Glory to love from the dear Three-in-One.
Glory forever for His redemption,
Glory forever for what's begun.¹⁰³

Glory

Geoffrey Bingham's theology of glory was not triumphalist but was centred in the revelation of God's-self to God's people, as is evident in three of his song-poems.

Oh Christ, we are Yours rejoices in the love-union and communion we have with and in Christ, whose life is *in the Father immersed*. Humanity's *sorrows and griefs are reversed* by Christ's love-giving salvific death, sacrificed in the Father's love-

¹⁰² *New Creation Hymn Book*, 291 *Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 310 *All of a sudden it caught to flaming*.

giving of his Son as God's love-gift to the world. The Father's glory, evident in Jesus' resurrection, is seen as Christ *took to himself those given to him by his Father, forming the church in dear Pentecost's hour.*

Our lives, now hidden in Christ, whom we love, are lived by the *unseen divine power* that enables us to *share what Christ's blood has made clean.* The final revelation and reality that awaits us of our glorious union and communion as the family of God evokes anthems of praise, adoration and worship.

Oh Father and Son!
Oh Spirit beloved!
Our hearts with Your heart wholly one
Shall glorify You in the City of joy,
Whose lives are now hid in the Son.

Forever as one
In the fam'ly of love,
Partakers of Godhead we'll be.
This glorified dust in fellowship full
Shall reign with the glorious Three.

Oh, Three Who are One!
In homage we bow
With angels and creatures galore:
Our thunderous praise to Your dear throne we raise,
Forever Your splendour adore.¹⁰⁴

How beautiful Your glory, Father God is Geoffrey Bingham's testimony to God's beauty, glory and gentle, precious, loving tenderness expressed in speaking *ever-flowing words* that reveal the nature and essence of God's intra-personal relations – God's law. Atonement for the loss of glory and its beauty was made at the cross and gently communicated to humanity by the Holy Spirit.

O glorious Man who suffered on the Tree,
That glory lost afresh our glory be;
You there the loveliness of God displayed
As for our sin You strong atonement made.

How mild Your Spirit is towards the mind
That would its fullness in Your fullness find,
Until the symmetry of all its soul
Finds glory in the love that makes it whole.

Now Father may our spirits holy be,
In righteousness and justice flowing free,
In mercy and in kindness unto all,
In love to those who from Your glory fall.

Now thank we all our God in holy joy;
Now do we all new faculties employ

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 249 *Oh Christ, we are Yours.*

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To praise Your name in Whom alone we boast,
Belovèd Father, Son and Holy Ghost.¹⁰⁵

Show us Your glory, Spirit of God is a prayer for the Holy Spirit to reveal God's glory and beauty, to *tell us Your Word* and to

Show us the wonder planned before time
To give us Your splendour, Your glory Divine.

We learn of the pristine glory and worship of original humanity that was *free of all evil, free of all lust*, and are drawn into Geoffrey Bingham's prayer with its narrative of triune inter-relations and creational purpose – and the results of *poisonous pride*.

Show us the Godhead, holy, sublime,
Ever subsisting as Love Divine;
Each in both Others, One in Their love,
The Son in the Father and both in the Dove.

The Dove in the Father, the Son in the Dove,
The Three in the unity of Divine Love.
This glory God flowed into created Man
To make him a fam'ly, a glorious clan.

Yet, God's glorious love-story involved Jesus coming *to live in our sorrow and die in our pain* and save us from death.

The height of His purpose was planned before time
To bring us to glory of body and mind,
To shape us in image to be like the Son,
To crown us with glory, and make us all one.

The creatures celestial all shout with delight,
And we with them worship in joy and all might,
'God's plan has succeeded, we're one with our God,
Redeemed unto glory by Christ's loving blood!'

Then glory to Him who glorified Man,
Who gave him the life of eternity's span.
All glory to Father, to Son and the Dove
Who've taken Mankind to the heart of Their love.¹⁰⁶

The people of God

Jesus, Thou art with Thy people is a hymn from earlier in his ministry which he later revised. It highlights the joy of a community grateful for Christ's presence with them, bringing them forgiveness and blessings by and through the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 350 *How beautiful Your glory, Father God*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 353 *Show us Your glory, Spirit of God*.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 113 *Jesus, Thou art with Thy people*.

Come, let us sing of Jesus affirms Jesus' ministry of love as our intercessor. His intercessions banishes pain and fear, and sustain us until we see his eternal glory and splendour radiating from his face. We will then be like him as our first-born brother of God as Father. Meanwhile, we are called to share the *precious story of God's love for humanity, a story planned from before creation*.

Sing how Father planned His children
Be as one great family;
Each changed into His likeness,
Clothed in immortality.

Fill, now, our hearts, O Father
With Your love for men, below;
Cause us to labour for them,
Share with them the love we know.
Let us labour for our brethren,
Whilst our gaze is fixed above,
Then – in that day of splendour –
We will glory in Your love.¹⁰⁸

Oh lift up your heads, oh you gates is based on Psalm 24 with similar themes to *I am not proof against your love*. We are to open ourselves to Christ the King and welcome him as our Saviour and Lord.¹⁰⁹

The glory of Christ has now entered my heart is an evocative song resonating with our experiences of spiritual release from sin and guilt into a new life filled with *the glory of Christ who is Lord*. Geoffrey Bingham's poetry is warm and personal, and expresses the impact of Christ's glory on our souls and minds as we are redeemed and *lifted to heights where He reigns on the throne, where now He is Lord over all!*

This One whose name is above every name, *suffered on Calvary's hill*, where he *destroyed all our sin and bore all the wrath of our guilt, purging their pain and defilement in the flow of the blood that was cruelly spilt*. His resurrection glory, revealed in the context of the reign of God in, through and by Christ, lifts us into loving worship and mercy-filled proclamation for being saved from death.

He fills all the heavens – He fills all the earth –
Brings all things to live in His peace;
He floods with His love as He heals at a touch
Where once there was sorrow and grief.
He purges the heart of its hurt and its pain,
Gives hope to the desolate poor,
He lifts the downcast as He lives in their hearts
To bring glory to them evermore.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 98 *Come, let us sing of Jesus*.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 120 *Oh lift up your heads* and 166 *I am not proof against Your love*.

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Oh, the glory of Christ has entered our hearts,
Rise, brothers and sisters, and sing
Of this glory that makes us a kingdom of priests
To worship our conquering King!
We are slaves of His love to the end of our days,
Constrained by the power of His word.
We'll proclaim His great mercy to all of our race,
Cry 'Jesus for ever is Lord!'¹¹⁰

Two further song-poems provide different perspectives on his theology of the people – the community, household and family – of God. *Great caravan of holy ones* develops the Exodus motif into a narrative of the *saints of old and anew* moving into *Father's view and their promised destiny*, as God had intended from before creation. After profiling the agonies endured as they travelled, and the way God's covenant was climaxed through the shed blood of the second Moses, the poet rejoices in this ultimate union and communion with the triune God.

O glorious Lord, our Shepherd good,
Who holds us with Your loving hands:
We march across the hills of time
To meet You in the Holy Land.

When through the fires our bodies pass,
The flames shall not consume our soul,
The waters shall not drown in death,
Nought hinders as we reach our goal.

Ah, holy Home of God-Abba!
Ah, Holy Father, we adore!
Through Spirit who has made us one,
As brothers [siblings] of our glorious Lord.¹¹¹

Church of the loving Lord uses a bridal metaphor for the church. It depicts Jesus as the loving and suffering Lord, the conquering sovereign and beloved priest, who gathers the bridal community to *his Father's heart and sweet (not angry) presence*. The song-poem explores the shepherding and rescuing of the lost and lonely bride whose new birth and bridal presence is the fruit of *Christ's heart's travail and unflinching love*.

Church of the loving Lord
Clasped on His blessed wood;
Bride of His heart's last breath,
Fruit of His holy blood,
Speaking of His dear love,
Taking away the shame,
Healing the wounded heart,
Making all whole again.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 194 *The glory of Christ has now entered my heart*.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 257 *Great caravan of holy ones*.

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Be filled with fire and power,
Tell of Him far and near
Until the wedding feast,
Until the marriage dear.
Then shall all creatures rise,
Then shall all nations sing,
'Blessed be His flesh and bone,
Blessed her immortal King!'¹¹²

Ministry and counselling

Gospel proclamation, for Geoffrey Bingham, was neither pragmatic proselytising nor ego-centred empire building. It was not a controlling or condescending demand or decree; but an outpouring and overflow of being part of a redeemed and renewed humanity, reborn by the anguish of Christ's suffering love and enduring compassion and grace. It was empowered by Christ's resurrection enthroning from where he sent and sends the Holy Spirit who first filled him.

We go, O God, that men might find the Father,
Until the family bought with Christ's own blood
Shall see the heaven and earth renewed in glory,
And all in Christ are fully sons of God.¹¹³

The lives of the people of God are shaped by an ever-present awareness that God is writing a different story that defeats arrogance, pride and self-oriented ambition. The incarnation of the *Son of God, the true Prophet and divine Word* reveals *the secret and fulness of life* and God's victory over evil from within humanity.

He has broken the bonds of man's sin,
He has caused the dark powers to flee.
He has grappled with sin's awful curse
And set His humanity free.

Now the light has been poured from on high,
And life flows to men through new birth,
For the Prophet has come and redeemed,
And His glory has filled the whole earth.¹¹⁴

Christ to the heart of all the world is a rich, commissioning testimony and prayer affirming that God's *holy plan* is from the Father's heart and fulfilled in Christ and realised in the compassion of the people of God as they journey to *earth's remotest parts*, empowered by the Holy Spirit and filled with the Father's love.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid., 292 *Church of the loving Lord*.

¹¹³ Ibid., 209 *Ye men of God*.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 228 *My eyes ran down fountains of tears*.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 96 *Christ to the heart*.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Lord, grant me just one longing plea can be read as a single ‘versed’ poem as well as in a stanza form set to music. The breaks in sentences provide good places to pause and consider his thoughts.

This poem expresses his ache *to share what God had given*

From out the Rock that You had riven,
Where waters flowed into a flood
To show the mystery of Your blood.
In Him – the Christ – all wisdom is,
The treasures by which Man must live.

Geoffrey Bingham goes on to describe those who lack an awareness and appreciation of the eternal riches and wealth of this divine mystery – and, worse, those who *steal God’s holiness by stealth* but end up *bereft and lonely, drifting into nakedness and nothingness* when eventually we all *stand before the holy God*

Who sanctifies with blessed blood
When suppliants come and suppliants plead
Before the One who for them bleeds.

The poet’s longing to share this mystery is not from spiritual superiority, but is the outcome of the purging power of divine love. His hope is that others will *see God’s loveliness, fall in love with God’s beauty and swoon with joy as they, with us, a faltering race, incomprehensibly see God’s holy face*. This divine majesty, as throughout Geoffrey Bingham’s theology, is revealed in Jesus as Emmanuel, incarnate among and for us, by and in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is given to and through the Holy Spirit in a triune action by God the *dear Father*, who hears Christ’s and our prayers and provides the wisdom we need not only as creatures, but as a fallen humanity.

Oh come, Emmanuel, to dwell
Within our present living hell;
Enlarge the wraiths until they live
Within the Spirit that You give.

Dear Father, hear my longing plea –
You give of wisdom unto me
Until I flow in oceans wide
And rise with passionate kingly tide
To flood the thirsty hearts of men.
No wisdom’s mine, no tiny jot
Of mine is in this holy lot.

But I am in their debt – all men
I would repay – for one with them
I sinned in Adam, sinned in Eve,
I did not care to scarce believe
That You had given to us life.
I dare not dwell upon this sin,
On all the evil then within;
You cleansed our hearts on Calv’ry’s Tree.

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This grace for me I've come to know;
Make me like rivers full to flow
The holy Truth. Make me for men
A holy, happy hierophant
Your wines of wisdom to decant
Until the blazing beauty grows
'Cross skies that with Your glory glow,
And Man with life is full again;
The cavalcade across the plain
Moves to its Home where Three are One –
The Father, Spirit and the Son –
And we are caught into the Three
To be as one eternally.

Dear Father, Son and Holy Dove,
Hear full my plea, Thou whom I love.
Give me just time to tell it all,
Then let this oak, now ancient, fall
In death and life before Thy Face
And come to its eternal place –
The home Thy love prepared for me.
With all Thy saints I will adore
And worship Thee for evermore¹¹⁶

Law, authority and truth

The above poem is a fitting finale for this portrayal of Geoffrey Bingham's theology – a deeply, profound and personal expression of his encounters with God throughout a diverse life that included years in a prison camp. There is one further theme that was central to his learning in captivity, and that is that the ethical and moral nature and purpose evident in creation and humanity is firstly and foremostly that which is intrinsic to the life of God as Father, Son and Spirit.¹¹⁷

This is the law of You, dear Lord,
The law of Your own true Self,
The law of life that gives all life to all,
The law of the endless wealth
Of the Spirit, the Father, and the Son,
The Three who are One as love;
For all creation flows from Them
As on earth so in heaven above.

Yours is the law we cannot know
Where the Father Himself is Love.
The Son is truly the Son of that love,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 320 *Lord, grant me just one longing plea.*

¹¹⁷ Bingham, *All Things Are Yours*, see Appendix 1 in this book; *Oh, No, Lord! Not Law, Lord?!!* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 1979); *Law of Eternal Delight* (Blackwood, SA: New Creation Publications Inc., 2001); *For Pastors and the People.*

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

And the Spirit in love must move,
For He is the Spirit of Father-God,
The Spirit of God the Son;
And the Three as love must ever be
For They are the Three in One.

Theirs is the law of love, the law
By which the Three subsist;
But Man is the image of that God
And in covenant must exist.
The covenant law is one with God
As God is one with all men –
Created in love to live with all
Forever, as now and then.¹¹⁸

A doxology and enduring confession encourages us to abandon our efforts at self-aggrandisement and *lets God be God with us, freeing us from idolatry to be as we were created and destined to be – living in covenant faithfulness, grace and love, seeing Christ the crucified, dead, resurrected and ascended One.*

Let God be God – who dares not let Him be?
Let Man be Man as he should surely be.
Let idols perish to earth's farthest shore
Till rival gods and lords shall be no more.
Let God be God in heights beyond all heights,
In majesty and glory's holy might,
Whose goodness and whose righteousness abound
Wherever men and angels shall be found.

Let Him the God of covenant be seen
In faithfulness beyond all human dreams.
Let angels Man's depravity deplore,
Yet find God's grace abounding all the more.
Let Man be Man beyond his fallen dreams,
His wickedness and pride and evil schemes.
Let him see Christ the wholly crucified,
And know that in His Cross he too has died.

Let Man with Christ be risen from the grave –
In union live with Father God who gave
His Son to make Love's covenant be true,
That God be God and Man be Man anew.
Let ev'ry power of evil be destroyed
That lurks within the dark Satanic void.
Let glory planned flood heav'n and earth in love
From Father, Son and blessed Holy Dove.

¹¹⁸ *New Creation Hymn Book*, 376 *This is the law of You, dear Lord.*

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

God lets, and He and Man are now the one,
The covenant of grace has fully come,
The ocean of His love floods ev'ry shore,
And devils, lords and idols are no more.
Our God is God! Let all the heavens ring.
Let worship be in Christ our Adam King.
Let every creature fully God adore
Since Man and God are one for evermore.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 363 *Let God be God*.

Conclusion

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour has reflected on themes in his theological writing through the lens of his song-poems. I have affirmed the worship-oriented and people-centred essence evident in his theology and ministry while including some brief critiques of his theology.

I hope that this book and its supplement encourages additional opportunities for access to his theology through his poetry and the music written for it.

I remember him for his genuine interest in people and their stories, along with his focus on sharing his biblically derived perspectives, and am grateful for his trust and transparency, and his concerns to *truth it in love* (cf. Ephesians 4:11–16)

I hope this book highlights the dignity and decency of a man who suffered much and lived generously. Of a man who daily sought the ‘dew of the sanctuary’, as he called it, so resisting any sad attempts at grasping for *power in relationships*.

Appendix 1: Geoffrey Bingham, *All things are yours (Appendix)*¹²⁰

Outline

Geoffrey Bingham asks whether there is ‘an inbuilt hierarchy in the Godhead, such as seems to be suggested by the prior situation of the Father with his *principium*, and the seemingly posterior positions of the Son and the Holy Spirit’. These ‘posterior positions’ are the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Spirit. This hierarchy, he claims, is ‘benign and ... in love’.¹²¹

He says ‘authoritarian’ and ‘rigid’ elements occur when there is an insistence on ‘autonomy’ arising from the absence of ‘personal loving relationship[s]’. He claims the triune ‘hierarchy’ as ‘functional’ because of its ‘mutually interdependent and *perichoretic*’ relations – relations immanent and economic.¹²²

He describes this divine hierarchy as being ‘first in time or order’, and as a ‘powerful force in the functional operations of the Father and the Son’ and the ‘co-operative Spirit’. It is in the triune love that the Son and the Spirit ‘understand the *principium* of the Father [and] the Persons utterly know one another’.¹²³

His reasoning is that there ‘maybe ... some kind of an order of precedence’ and insists that our distaste for subordination leads us to refuse to see ‘any kind of hierarchical order in the Deity and thus in the true order of human ontology’.¹²⁴

This ‘true order’ is a ‘hierarchical *schema*’ of superordination and subordination which ‘affects the whole matter of authority and law, all forms of leadership and, of course, the matter of male and female gender order’.¹²⁵

Response

Superordination and subordination

Intra-trinitarian relations and the divine-human relation of the incarnate Jesus are essentially different. The incarnation establishes Jesus’ *ongoing* humanity, and has eschatological consequences in and for the new creation. The ontological order revealed in the incarnation and inherent in creation reflects an intra-divine *perichoretic*, tri-personal, one-God, giving and receiving, serving and honouring.

Human-divine relations are subordinate-superordinate *because of God’s good and very good creation*, so establishing *creational* relations that do not exactly mirror non-hierarchical intra-trinitarian *non-creational* relations – and are not simply

¹²⁰ Priest, *Trinity – Worship and Wonder*, Appendix 1 provides an alternative review.

¹²¹ Bingham, *All Things Are Yours*, 214, 215.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 223.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 214, 215, 227–229.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

derived from decadent, dominating, de-humanising power-obsessed regimes which demand silence, servility and sacrifice. Recognising superiority and inferiority can help preserve our sense of our own identity and integrity; our personal decency and dignity. Seeing superordination and subordination as the result of human failure, rather than as being *creationally* aligned, is unwise.

Defining the *totality* of another person or genre of persons falsely assigns people to pre-determined permanent categories where those so-defined are inevitably discriminated against because of their gender, race or social status. Authentic equality focuses on particular, personal giftedness for ever-changing situations.

Intra-trinitarian relationships

Terminology

Hierarchy, *principium*, system, role, subordination, superordination, function, totality and equality are *all* metaphysically interpreted when referencing intra-trinitarian understandings.

The inter-dwelling of the three persons

Systems are deficient where superordinates are not more capable at performing their superordinated roles than subordinates. Systems do not reach their full potential if those subordinated are prohibited from using their gifts and abilities. To deny aspects of the giftedness of subordinates which align with various superordinate roles – and infer that the most able subordinate is by default less able to do these tasks than the least able superordinate – is to ignore and dismiss a wealth of creational diversity.

The *perichoresis-circumincessio* dissolves superior-inferior interpretations of the divine relations by excluding anything superordinate or subordinate within them. The triune persons share one will and purpose in and through their *perichoretic* tri-personal divine being. The *reciprocal nature of their relations*, differentiated by their persons, means there is no unidirectional authority-based intra-trinitarian command-obey hierarchy. God's *one-being essence* means that the Father's 'prior situation' includes prior situations of the Son and the Spirit. These situations are differentiated by the divine persons and their relations, and not by any ontological trinitarian hierarchy.

The eternal inter-dwelling

The incarnation derives from a single triune will, where the three divine persons share one intention for their creational and redemptive purposes in the incarnate humanity of Jesus and through the actions of the Spirit. As already indicated, if the Father is prior to the Son, and the Son is begotten in some eternal or temporal sequence of events, then the Father is not *eternally Father* as the Father must somehow have eternal being without the *Son*. This option denies the one-essence triune eternal persons and relations.

The matter of personal, functional operations

An intra-trinitarian command-obedience hierarchy is invalidated by a one-will, tri-personal Trinity. A multiple-willed Trinity is an anthropomorphic projection which leads to tritheism (three persons with three essences and three wills), or alternatively collapses into modalism (one person, three presentations) or a hierarchical monarchism. These latter options may lead to or be forms or variants of Arianism (some of which may be described using *homoiousios* or *heterousios*, rather than *homoousios*).

The biblical sending passages and references to Jesus doing the Father's will ascribe *the Father's submission* to the person and work of the incarnate Jesus Christ. When Paul indicates that Jesus, in his humanity, *submissively* hands everything back to the Father so that God may be all in all, we learn of a trinitarian mutual, reciprocal giving and receiving, rather than a hierarchical commanding and obeying.

Paul elsewhere writes of *the triune God-in-Christ* reconciling the world to God's own *triune* being. Paul's *tri-personal* thinking is explored in passages such as from the end of 2 Corinthians 3 through to the start of 2 Corinthians 6.

Seeing God's triune being as an authority-submission, power-based relation implies a legalistic command-obey three-willed process from which we somehow derive views of love, rather than a triune, mutual love relationship from which our notions of authority and law emerge as 'very good' creations in God's creation.

As with claims about prior situations, the '*principium* of the Father' must include the *principium* of the eternal Son – as in notions of auto-theos – or else we depict a divine situation where, in some sense, the Father is *Father* prior to the Son being eternal *Son*. The *principium* of the Holy Spirit is also aligned with the triune auto-theos. In other words, the *principium* of the Father cannot mean that the begottenness of the Son and the procession of the Spirit indicate that the Son and the Spirit are secondary and eternally subordinate to the Father.

Love is the key to divine and human relationships

One of Geoffrey Bingham's significant strengths was his focus on the primacy of God's incomprehensible and yet incarnate and immanent love. He mentions the mutual love of the divine persons, but then identifies it with what he calls the '*principium* of the Father' which he then identifies with the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Spirit.

Highlighting the mutual, tripersonal love in the intra-trinitarian generation and procession is helpful, while setting it in a command-obey structure warps and de-emphasises the essence of triune, tri-personal, *perichoretic*, mutual love and differs from Nicaean and related notions of one divine majesty, glory and authority.

Describing the incarnation as only a response to human rebellion bypasses the truth that *redemption* is aligned with *creational* realities and that *creation* itself is built to facilitate *redemptive* outcomes.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ, and his submission to a divine, triune, singular will expressed by his Father, is evident in his refusal to rebel when responding to religious and political violations and violence. Jesus' human subordination to the one-ness of superordinated divine triune will aligns with the original and eschatological perfection of creation, and not with any eternal subordination.

While service may be the ultimate and authentic greatness, it is demeaned if it is restricted to and only identified with the actions of subordinates. God is helper (*ezer*) and woman was created to be a *mutual ezer with* Adam rather than his subordinated, obedient servant. Adam is describe as originally lacking a *mutual ezer*, one suitably aligned with *his own* servant-nature.

*The Johannine texts*¹²⁶

Dismissing passages such as Galatians 3:28ff, and overlooking that Paul is *not* promoting hierarchies in 1 Corinthians 11:1ff, diminishes the emphases on the richness of *mutuality* in 1 Corinthians 11:8–12 (cf. Ephesians 5:15ff).

Understanding superordination and subordination

An ontological intra-trinitarian order where the Father is eternally giving does not require the Father to possess sole power and authority. The mutual giving and receiving of the Father, Son and Spirit without any command-obey hierarchy outlines the *perichoretic* nature of the begotten-ness of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and their essential love-unity.

Profiling subordination as the best form of service inevitably introduces a superior-inferior narrative about who God is as Servant. Claims that the Son's servant subordination is higher than the Father's superordination read anthropological beliefs into triune relations.

Focusing on *kenosis* and *plerosis* when dissolving all differences between the ontological and economic views of the Trinity imposes artificial and unviable constraints on trinitarian perspectives. These approaches read the human subordination of the incarnate Son into the eternal relations of the immanent Trinity and then back into hierarchical views of humanity.

The servant-ministry of Messiah-Jesus – his *kenosis* and *plerosis* – centres the atonement on his human subordination and God's triune superordination. The

¹²⁶ Cf. Adesola Akala, *Sonship, Sending, and Subordination in the Gospel of John*, Chapter 1 in Michael F. Bird and Scott Harrower, eds., *Trinity without Hierarchy: Reclaiming Nicene Orthodoxy in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2019).

Son of God – as a revelation of mutual, *perichoretic* love – entered the creational realm where human will is differentiated from the singular one-ness will of God.

Conclusion

While Geoffrey Bingham creatively expresses and affirms much theology that is aligned with the early church creeds,

- He sidelines *essence* terminology as too philosophical.¹²⁷
- He reframes equality as totality.¹²⁸
- He contexts eternal generation and procession as hierarchical.¹²⁹
- He revises *perichoresis* from mutuality to authority-obedience.¹³⁰
- He sees intra-trinitarian, incarnational and human gender as similar hierarchical realms.¹³¹
- He insists that the only alternative to his thinking sees law and authority as consequent of the fall rather than flowing from God's very good creation.¹³²
- He sees 'any division between the ontological and economic views of the Trinity [as] artificial and finally untenable'.¹³³

It is better to avoid terminology about roles, hierarchies, superordination and subordination, command and obedience when considering intra-trinitarian relationships. It is wise to set these terms aside not because of our fallen, frail and fickle humanity with our faulty biases, but because of the ontological realities that differentiate God's triune-self from God's incarnational divine and human Son, and our mutual humanity as God's creation. Our biases may have as much, if not more, to do with the extent to which we affirm and enable the richness and diversity of our personal, created identities as the community and people of our triune Creator, who is Father, Son and Spirit.

Creation is other than God. It reflects God's mutual intra-personal giving and receiving, and honouring and serving. It introduces relational hierarchies involving law, authority, command and obedience, by reflecting creational dependencies that are not present in the same way in triune one-being relations. These dependencies are expressed through structures that are not to be classified

¹²⁷ Bingham, *All Things Are Yours*, 220, 221, 272.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 222, 224.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 223, 256, 261, 272.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 215, 217. Cf. Priest, *Redefining – Meaning and Scripture, Inclusion and Hierarchies, Community and Ministry*, 52–54, 70–74.

¹³² Bingham, *All Things Are Yours*, 218, 222, 246.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 273.

as ontologically subordinated racial, gender or social orders. What is impossible *within* God is not necessarily impossible *for* God, for *what* and *when* and *where* and *who* God creates other than God's-self.

A reframing of Geoffrey Bingham's reframing might look like this:

... our [sinful, faulty] human, horizontal feelings about subordination may blind us to the glory [and majesty] of divine [*perichoretic* non-hierarchical mutuality]. If we [rightly] assume that subordination is linked only with the [creational] realm of humanity, and so also with our Lord's incarnation, then we attribute that humanity – as we do authority and law – to the [glorious and majestic] fact and scene of [God's sovereignty over human creation]. The meaning of worship is thereby [filled with] its richest element – [mutual] serving [as God's people] – and we may be [delighted] to [accept] the heart of our Lord's teaching on humility, that is, on being the least and thereby being the greatest in the sense of true greatness.

Servantship, as creatures living in God's presence, is the reciprocal, non-hierarchical, mutual way of authentic love. Its 'transcendent quality' is primarily because our humanity is God's creation and Jesus' incarnation is the locus of his reconciling redemption and renewal.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Ibid., 230, 231, 273, altered.

Appendix 2: A selection of Geoffrey Bingham's resources

A selection of song titles¹³⁵

Categories in the New Creation Hymn Book

As with other references to Geoffrey Bingham's anthology, I have kept his language constructs and encourage reframing male-privileged expressions.

Knowing God as King, Creator, and Redeemer

Like a glorious fountain flowing	1973	13
By the breath of His mouth	1987	4
It does not yet appear	1993	326
Before He planned the world He made	1994	294
Out of the dust Thou madest us	1994	322
Within the home of glory	1994	297
King of all sinners, and King of all saints	1995	332
Let God be God	1999	363

Living in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit

You are our Father loving God	1987	41
Ah, strong strong love*	1990	30
Holy Father, in Your mercy	1991	245
Lord of the loving fire	1992	262
Nothing between us	1992	261
The Godhead glows most gloriously	1994	302
This is the law of You, dear Lord	1995	376

Living in God the Father

Most holy Father	1971	52
God is all-loving, He is our Father	1977	48
We are the children, sons of the Father	1977	57
O Father our Father	1981	54
Abba! Abba! Father God	1986	42
I sing the songs that reach my heart	1993	289
Amazing Grace is God Himself*	1996	343

Living in God the Son

Angel wings*	1943, 1981	65
Jesus, Thou art with Thy people	1962, 1981	113
Come let us sing of Jesus	1979	98
Oh Father! Oh Father! we come	1984	61
Oh Christ our Conquering King*	1985	119
The blood of bonding has flowed	1985	125
Christ to the heart	1986	96

¹³⁵ *New Creation Hymn Book*, Volumes 1–3. NCPI Music resources are available via 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'. Also, Priest, *Songs of Joy and Peace* for those marked with (*).

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Is it nothing to you	1989	71
Oh lift up your heads	1990	120
He is my own – my only Lord	1991	247
Oh Christ, we are Yours	1991	249
Praise now to You, Oh glorious King	1991	246
Immanuel! Immanuel!	1993	282
Tell them about the banquet*	1993	286
O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss	1994	327
Such love we never loved	1994	311
Where shall I go if He's not there?	1994	300
All of a sudden it caught to flaming	1995	310
Holy! Holy! Holy! is our High Priest, Jesus	1997	349

Living in God the Spirit

There was a day	1971	147
Father sends the Holy Spirit	1981	143
Ah, Spirit dear, the sin that's sad	1992	259
Time was when spirit, fallen, human	1992	260

Living in the Grace and Mercy of God

Ye men of God	1971	209
We reign in life	1973	203
One day we'll see Him face to face	1986	183
Love You, Lord	1989	176
Ah, tide of love	1990	149
I am not proof	1990	166
The glory of Christ*	1990	194
A silver song is in my heart	1991	251
Great Caravan of holy ones	1991	257
We have not been knowing	1991	252
For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord	1992	330
We cannot live without His Word	1992	250
Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou	1993	291
Church of the loving Lord	1993	292
Life of our life, Lord	1994	341
Out of my nothing I was all	1994	301
How beautiful Your glory	1999	350

Knowing God in Prayer

My eyes ran down fountains of tears	1973	228
Sometimes Your living Presence is so near	1991	241
How gentle is His hand upon my life	1992	280
How is it, Lord, my eyes can see	1992	295
Lord, grant me just one longing plea	1994	320
O Lord, You hear my voice each day	1995	319
Show us Your Glory	1999	353

Categories used in this book

Jesus Christ, atonement and reconciliation

Angel wings*	1943, 1981	65
Like a glorious fountain flowing	1973	13
Oh Christ our Conquering King*	1985	119
The blood of bonding has flowed	1985	125
Is it nothing to you	1989	71
Ah, tide of love	1990	149
He is my own – my only Lord	1991	247
How gentle is His hand upon my life	1992	280
Lord of the loving fire	1992	262
Immanuel! Immanuel!	1993	282
O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss	1994	327
Holy! Holy! Holy! is our High Priest, Jesus	1997	349

God the Father and the Trinity: families and communities

Most holy Father	1971	52
God is all-loving, He is our Father	1977	48
We are the children, sons of the Father	1977	57
O Father our Father	1981	54
Oh Father! Oh Father! we come	1984	61
Abba! Abba! Father God	1986	42
You are our Father loving God	1987	41
Holy Father, in Your mercy	1991	245
I sing the songs that reach my heart	1993	289
The Godhead glows most gloriously	1994	302
Amazing Grace is God Himself*	1996	343

Spirit of the living God

There was a day	1971	147
Father sends the Holy Spirit	1981	143
By the breath of His mouth	1987	4
Ah, Spirit dear, the sin that's sad	1992	259
Time was when spirit, fallen, human	1992	260

The reign of God

We reign in life	1973	203
Praise now to You, Oh glorious King	1991	246
King of all sinners, and King of all saints	1995	332

Gender and marriage

Tell them about the banquet*	1993	286
Life of our life, Lord	1994	341

Creation, re-creation, humanity and covenant

One day we'll see Him face to face	1986	183
We have not been knowing	1991	252

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We cannot live without His Word	1992	250
It does not yet appear	1993	326
Before He planned the world He made	1994	294
Out of my nothing I was all	1994	301
Out of the dust Thou madest us	1994	322
Where shall I go if He's not there?	1994	300
Within the home of glory	1994	297

Love, holiness, grace, mercy and presence

Love You, Lord	1989	176
Ah, strong strong love*	1990	30
I am not proof	1990	166
A silver song is in my heart	1991	251
Oh Christ, we are Yours	1991	249
Sometimes Your living Presence is so near	1991	241
For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord	1992	330
How is it, Lord, my eyes can see	1992	295
Nothing between us	1992	261
Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou	1993	291
Such love we never loved	1994	311
All of a sudden it caught to flaming	1995	310
O Lord, You hear my voice each day	1995	319
How beautiful Your glory	1999	350
Show us Your Glory	1999	353

The people of God

Come, let us sing of Jesus	1979	98
Oh lift up your heads	1990	120
The glory of Christ*	1990	194
Great Caravan of holy ones	1991	257
Church of the loving Lord	1993	292
Jesus, Thou art with Thy people	1962, 1981	113

Ministry and counselling

Ye men of God	1971	209
My eyes ran down fountains of tears	1973	228
Christ to the heart	1986	96
Lord, grant me just one longing plea	1994	320

Law, authority and truth

This is the law of You, dear Lord	1995	376
Let God be God	1999	363

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Composers and Arrangers (excluding public domain tunes)

Title	Composer/s	Arranger
Ah, Spirit dear, the sin that's sad	Christine Dieckmann	
Ah, tide of love	Christine Dieckmann	
All of a sudden it caught to flaming	Christine Dieckmann	
Awake my soul! Long sleepest thou	Christine Dieckmann	
Before He planned the world He made	Christine Dieckmann	
Christ to the heart	Christine Dieckmann	
Church of the loving Lord	Christine Dieckmann	
For 'I will restore your hard heart', says the Lord	Christine Dieckmann	
God is all-loving, He is our Father	Christine Dieckmann	
Holy Father, in Your mercy	Christine Dieckmann	
How beautiful Your glory	Christine Dieckmann	
How gentle is His hand upon my life	Christine Dieckmann	
How is it, Lord, my eyes can see	Christine Dieckmann	
I sing the songs that reach my heart	Christine Dieckmann	
Immanuel! Immanuel!	Christine Dieckmann	
It does not yet appear	Christine Dieckmann	
King of all sinners, and King of all saints	Christine Dieckmann	
Let God be God	Christine Dieckmann	
Life of our life, Lord	Christine Dieckmann	
Lord of the loving fire	Christine Dieckmann	
Nothing between us	Christine Dieckmann	
O Cross of Christ, O place of bliss	Christine Dieckmann	
O Lord, You hear my voice each day	Christine Dieckmann	
Oh Christ, we are Yours	Christine Dieckmann	
Out of my nothing I was all	Christine Dieckmann	
Out of the dust Thou madest us	Christine Dieckmann	
Praise now to You, Oh glorious King	Christine Dieckmann	
Such love we never loved	Christine Dieckmann	
The Godhead glows most gloriously	Christine Dieckmann	
Time was when spirit, fallen, human	Christine Dieckmann	
We are the children	Christine Dieckmann	
We cannot live without His Word	Christine Dieckmann	
We have not been knowing	Christine Dieckmann	
Where shall I go if He's not there?	Christine Dieckmann	
Within the home of glory	Christine Dieckmann	
You are our Father loving God	Christine Dieckmann	
Amazing Grace is God Himself	Donald Priest	Christine Dieckmann
Oh Christ our Conquering King	Donald Priest	Christine Dieckmann
Ah strong strong love	Donald Priest	Evniki Hudson
Tell them about the banquet	Donald Priest	Evniki Hudson
The glory of Christ	Donald Priest	Evniki Hudson
Angel wings	Donald Priest	Evniki Hudson
	Kay Robinson	
A silver song is in my heart	Geoffrey Bingham	Christine Dieckmann
Great Caravan of holy ones	Geoffrey Bingham	Christine Dieckmann
He is my own—my only Lord	Geoffrey Bingham	Christine Dieckmann
Praise now to You, Oh glorious King	Geoffrey Bingham	Christine Dieckmann
One day we'll see Him face to face	Geoffrey Bingham	Evniki Hudson
I am not proof	Geoffrey Bingham	Evniki Hudson
	Robert Smith	

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour

Title	Composer/s	Arranger
Oh lift up your heads	Geoffrey Bingham Robert Smith	Evniki Hudson
Love You, Lord	Geoffrey Bingham Rosslyn Meatheringham	Evniki Hudson
Sometimes Your living Presence is so near How is it, Lord, my eyes can see Oh Father! Oh Father! we come Ye men of God	Geoffrey Bingham Gill Webb Kay Robinson Kay Robinson	Christine Dieckmann Evniki Hudson Evniki Hudson
Lord, grant me just one longing plea Show us Your Glory This is the law of You, dear Lord Tell them about the banquet The blood of bonding has flowed Before He planned the world He made Holy! Holy! Holy! is our High Priest, Jesus He is my own—my only Lord Is it nothing to you O Father our Father My eyes ran down fountains of tears	Kerry Schneider Kerry Schneider Kerry Schneider Martin Bleby Martin Bleby Martin Bleby Martin Bleby Robert Smith Robert Smith Robert Smith Rosslyn Meatheringham Kay Carney	 Evniki Hudson Evniki Hudson Greg John Greg John Christine Dieckmann Evniki Hudson Evniki Hudson
Abba! Abba! Father God	Rosslyn Meatheringham Sarah Meatheringham	Evniki Hudson
Is it nothing to you Like a glorious fountain flowing Most holy Father	Rosslyn Meatheringham Rosslyn Meatheringham Rosslyn Meatheringham Donald Priest	Evniki Hudson Evniki Hudson Evniki Hudson
By the breath of His mouth There was a day	Rosslyn Meatheringham Geoffrey Bingham R. Whitbourn	

A selection of Geoffrey Bingham's book titles¹³⁶

As with the other references to his writings, I have kept his language constructs and encourage reframing male-privileged expressions.

Overviews

Living Faith Series, volumes 1–5 nos. 1–50	1981
Things We Firmly Believe, The	1986
For Pastors and the People	1989
All Things Are Yours	1996

Jesus Christ, atonement and reconciliation

Person & Work of Christ, The	1983
Christ the Conquering King!	1985
Saving Work of Christ, The	1986
Christ's Cross over Man's Abyss	1987
Beyond the Cross	1987
Come! Let Us Go to Calvary!	1997
Christ and The Triune Glory	2001
Word and the Words of the Cross, The: 7 Bible Studies	2003
Wrath of His Love, The: Studies in the Wrath of God and of Man	2004

God the Father and the Trinity: families and communities

I Love the Father	1974, 1990
Meaning and Significance of the Trinity, The	1974
Father! My Father!	1977
God and Father of Us All, The	1982
Oh, Father! Our Father!	1983
Trinitarian Theology: Human Unity and Relationships	1991

Spirit of the living God

Spirit's Harvest, The	1978, 1987
Spirit-Baptism: Spirit-Living	1981, 1990
Dry Bones Dancing!	1983, 2003
Day of the Spirit, The	1985
Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, The	1985, 2009
God and Man in Signs and Wonders	1988
Holy Spirit Creation and Glory, The	1999
Baptism in the Holy Spirit, The	2003
River of God, The	2004

The reign of God

Dominion of Darkness and the Victory of God, The	1977
Clash of the Kingdoms, The	1989

¹³⁶ Geoffrey Bingham's books are available via 'New Creation Teaching Ministry Resource Library'. His doctoral thesis on *Trinitarian Theology: Human Unity and Relationships* is not available online.

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The Revelation of St. John the Divine (Commentary)	1993
Salvation History	1997, 2008

Gender and marriage

Role and Purpose of Man and Woman, The	
Man, Woman and Sexuality	1980, 1986
God's Glory, Man's Sexuality	1988
Heavenly Vision, The	1987
Profound Mystery, The	1995

Creation, re-creation, humanity and covenant

I, the Man	1983
Man of Dust! Man of Glory!	1986
Meaning and Making of Man, The	
Studies in Theological Anthropology	1996
Love's Most Glorious Covenant	1997
Creation and the Liberating Glory	2004

Love, holiness, grace, mercy and presence

Liberating Love	1960, 1969
Constraining Love	1978, 1985
Splendour of Holiness, The	1985
Great and Glorious Grace	1988
Everlasting Presence, The	1990
Ah, strong strong Love	1993
Glory of the Mystery and the Mystery of the Glory, The	1998
Everything in Beautiful Array	1999
All Cry, 'Glory'	1999
Magnificence of Mercy, The	2000

The people of God

True God or New Guru?	1979
Sons of God are the Servants of All, The	1982
Church, Life and Relationships, The	1984
Christ's People in Today's World	1985
Way and Wonder of Worship, The	1990
Beautiful City of God, The	2001
Beloved Community of God, The	2002

Ministry and counselling

Wounding and the Healing, The	1980, 1982, 1990
Practical Christian Counselling	1981
Biblical Way of Counselling, A	1985
Proclaiming Christ's Gospel in Today's World	1986
Wonderful Counsellor	1987, 2004
True Preaching – the Agony and the Ecstasy	1988
Wisdom of God and the Healing of Man, The	1998
God and Man in the Mission of the Kingdom	2003

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Law, authority and truth

Oh, No, Lord! Not Law, Lord?!	1979
Truth – the Golden Girdle	1983
Sweeter than Honey: More Precious than Gold	1995
Law of Eternal Delight	2001

A selection of New Creation Publications Inc. seasonal schools

This list only covers summer and winter schools at which I spoke.¹³⁷ As with other references to Geoffrey Bingham's anthology, I have kept his language constructs and encourage reframing male-privileged expressions.

Summer Schools

God Sends Revival	1984
The Power and Preaching of the Cross	1985
Christ the Conquering King	1986
Proclaiming the Gospel in all the World	1987
Life in Father, Son and Holy Spirit	1988
Living in the Last Times	1989
Christ's Cradle, Cross and Crown	1990
Going with Christ to the Nations	1991
Sons and Heirs of God	1992
The Day of the Spirit	1993
Christ's Church in Today's World	1994
Christ our Prophet, Priest and King	1995
The Presence and Power of Love	1996
The Message of God and the World	1998
The Clash of the Kingdoms	1999
All Cry Glory!	2000
God's Unfailing Love and Mercy for all Creation	2002
On to Maturity	2003
Living in the Great Revival	2004
Faithful Creator	2005

Winter Schools

The Glorious Liberty of the Children of God	1990
God's Word: Man's Life	1991
The Kingdom of Love	1992
Immanuel: God with us	1993
The Fullness of the Family	1994
Christ and the Nations	1995
The First, the Present and the Last Things	1996
Living in the Days in Faith, Hope and Love	1997
Them He also Glorified	1998
From Eden to Eden	2000
Living in Grace and Holiness	2001
Living in the Kingdom	2002
Law of Liberty: Law of Delight	2003
One God, One Lord, One Spirit	2004
God is really among you	2005

¹³⁷ I have published most of my sessions in Priest, *In Triune Community*.

Conversations along the way

Conversations along the way records ideas and perspectives exploring biblical themes written over many years as rough drafts or more revised documents. I hope my thoughts may be enriching and encouraging. Where my writing suggests ideas and frameworks that vary from those held by other Christians, our common faith can keep us in community and help us explore and possibly reconcile our differences. I hope readers with non-theistic and/or secular understandings can find some helpful common values, even though I have used what might seem to be merely a discussion of literary narratives, symbols and imaginations. Those with other religious belief systems may find fresh insights by sharing in my journey of faith-seeking-understanding, including where collisions of thought and practice emerge. To all readers, please forgive my short-comings and my inevitable and unhelpful biases, and may your reading bring you peace, joy and hope.

In this series

Learning to Love Wisdom includes a version of my Master of Theological Studies dissertation while *In Triune Community* and *Living in Love and Freedom* cover earlier and later ministry resources.

Meditations on Hope and Peace and *Meditations on Resilience and Renewal 1 and 2* are edited collections of sermon preparation notes. *Living Love, Travelling Together* and *Towards Eternity* include edited study series plus reflections. *Meditations on Hope and Peace* and *Living Love* were written first.

Redefining outlines some of my understandings of *Meaning and Scripture*, *Inclusion and Hierarchies*, and *Community and Leadership*. *Trinity – Worship and Wonder* reviews literature that has significantly influenced my trinitarian theology.

A Quiet Revival Reviewed responds to a book about Geoffrey Bingham's life and ministry.

Songs of Joy and Peace is a collection of my music with reflections. *The Vinedresser Revisited* and *On Earth as in Heaven* respond to documentation about my involvement in church and related groups.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Ibid.; Priest, *Learning to Love Wisdom*; *Living in Love and Freedom*; *Meditations on Resilience and Renewal*, 2; ibid., 1; Priest, *Meditations on Hope and Peace*; *Towards Eternity*; *Travelling Together*; *Living Love*; *Trinity – Worship and Wonder*; *Redefining – Meaning and Scripture*, *Inclusion and Hierarchies*, *Community and Ministry*; *Songs of Joy and Peace*; *A Quiet Revival Reviewed – a Response to a Quiet Revival*, *Geoffrey Bingham in Life and Ministry* by Martin Bleby; *Vinedresser Revisited*, *The – a Response to The Vinedresser*, *an Anglican Meets Wrath and Grace* by Martin Bleby; *On Earth as in Heaven – Lay Ministry with Martin Bleby* (2024)

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Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour is a reflection on his theological writing. It considers several dominant themes in his theology through the lens of his song-poems and provide some details of his music, books and seasonal schools.

Geoffrey Bingham – Theologian and Troubadour celebrates his interest in people and their stories, along with his focus on sharing his biblically derived perspectives.