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How Do the Different Members of the Trinity Work with Each Other? (Economic Trinity)

One of the terms used to describe the Trinity is economic. Economic, in this sense, means the way things are ordered. Each member of the Trinity has a specific role. Although each is fully God, the roles within the Trinity are distinct for each member.



They Each Are In Full Cooperation

The Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit sets apart. Yet they perform these roles in full cooperation with the other members. In each operation, all three members are present.

Although the Father is preeminently the Creator the Son and Spirit were also involved.

The Son is the Redeemer, yet God the Father and the Spirit are described as sending the Son to redeem.

The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier, yet the Father and Son also cooperate in this work.

They Testify To Each Other

The Father testified to the Son

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ([Matthew 3:17](#)).

The Son testified to the Father

Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does ([John 5:19](#)).

The Son testified to the Spirit

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you ([John 14:26](#)).

Later, the Holy Spirit testified to the Son.

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me ([John 15:26](#)).

God's Historical Work Involved The Trinity

God's plan of redemption began in eternity past. When the work of redemption began in history, the Son entered the world in human form. At this time He was given a new name - Jesus. The Holy Spirit entered the world in a new way as the Spirit of Christ.

Are They Eternally Ordered This Way?

There has been some question as to whether each member of the Trinity has had the same function for all eternity. There are some who believe that Jesus became the Son only when He came to earth. Before that time He was not in the same relationship with God the Father.

Could They Have Performed Other Duties?

There is also the question as to whether each member of the Trinity performs or could perform other duties. Could the Father have come to earth instead of the Son? Could the Son have been the Comforter instead of the Holy Spirit? Is there any reason to believe that each is limited in the role in which they have?

Each Has A Different Role

The general teaching on the subject is that the Father is the head of Deity; the Son is the one who reveals Deity, while the Holy Spirit carries out the work of Deity. In some passages we find that one member of the Trinity seems to carry out the entire process. For example, Paul spoke about the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet Isaiah.

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: Go to this people and say, 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving'" ([Acts 28:25,26](#)).

Summary

While the members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal, they have different roles or functions within the Godhead. This is known as the economic Trinity. Each performs their role with full cooperation of the other members. There have been those who have argued that each member of the Trinity is free to perform any role within the Godhead. Yet it seems more in keeping with Scripture that they have been eternally ordered as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.