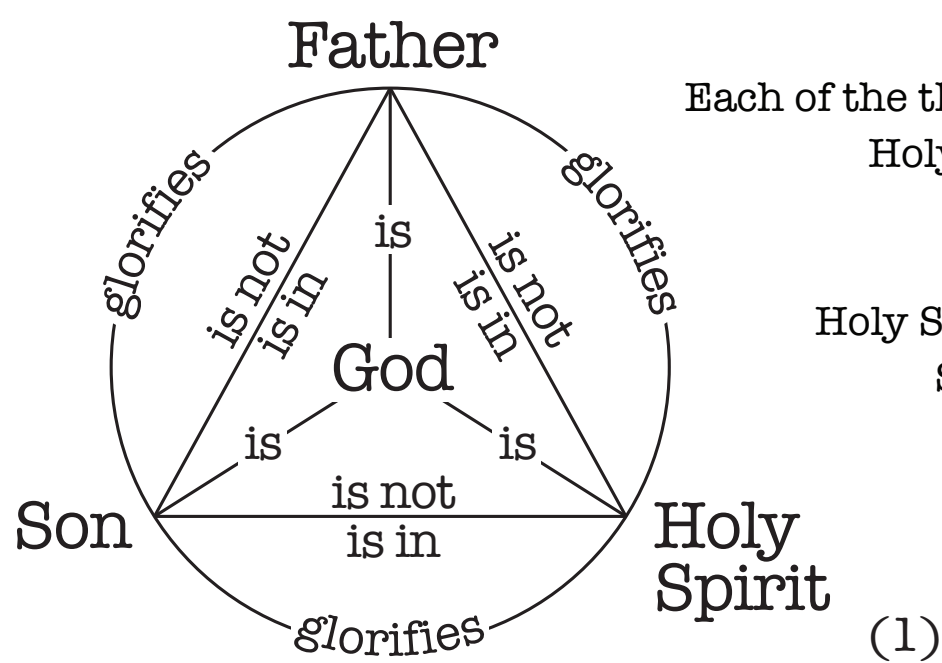




# The Least Heretical Analogy for The Trinity

by Clark Campbell

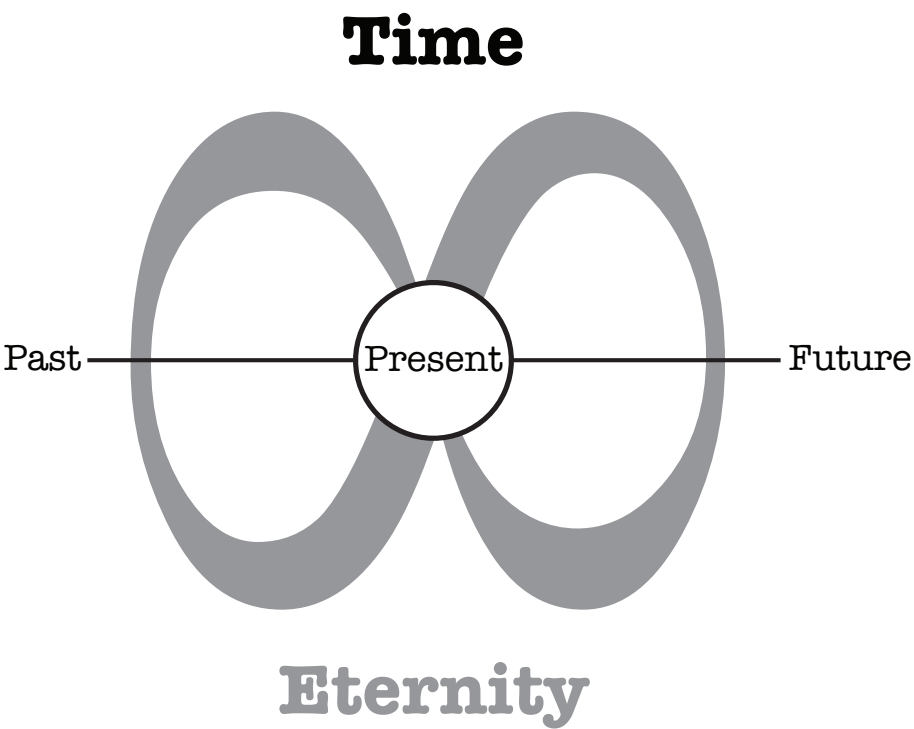
The concept of God being three persons in one essence is not an easy concept for one to wrap his or her mind around. So throughout Christian history, analogies have been used to try and make this concept easier for us to understand. Despite this, many of these illustrations (if not all) are closer to heretical views of God than accurate depictions of the Trinity and this is because the Trinity is unique. There is one analogy that I think comes close to representing the Trinity accurately, although it is not perfect, I have found it to be the greatest of imperfect analogies (though perhaps I am wrong). The following is a Biblical illustration of the Trinity:



Each of the three persons of the Trinity glorifies the other.  
Holy Spirit is in Father & Father is in Holy Spirit.  
Son is in Holy Spirit & Holy Spirit is in Son.  
Father is in Son & Son is in Father.  
Holy Spirit is not Father & Father is not Holy Spirit.  
Son is not Holy Spirit & Holy Spirit is not Son.  
Father is not Son & Son is not Father.  
God is Holy Spirit & Holy Spirit is God.  
God is Son & Son is God.  
God is Father & Father is God.

**Time as an analogy for the Trinity.** Any given point in time can be, is, and was all three (future, present, and past) but each is never the other at the same time. Yet all forms of time itself (past, present, and future) exist simultaneously in eternity. Similarly, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not the same person but they are all the same God.

Future is in Past & Past is in Future.  
Present is in Future & Future is in Present.  
Past is in Present & Present is in Past.  
Future is not Past & Past is not Future.  
Present is not Future & Future is not Present.  
Past is not Present & Present is not Past.  
Time is Future & Future is Time.  
Time is Present & Present is Time.  
Time is Past & Past is Time.  
Each of the three tenses of Time is eternally connected to the other.



**Where this analogy may seem weak** - Partialism is the heretical view which says the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are parts of God. Some may argue that this analogy of the Trinity commits this heresy; with time (as it flows), each moment changes from future to present and present to past. In the Biblical view of God, each person of the Trinity is never One of the others; God the Father is never God the Son, God the Son is never God the Holy Spirit. Now, for this analogy not to be heretical, it is important to note the specific phrasing: **Any given point in time** can be, is, and was all three (future, present, and past) but each is never the other **at the same time**. From our human perspective of time at a specific given moment, time is a good analogy for the Trinity but if you think of time as it flows, then it is no longer an accurate depiction of God's triune nature.

1. Trinity illustration taken from <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2012/07/11/using-a-diagram-to-illustrate-trinitarian-relationships/>