# Trinitarian Glossary

**Trinity**
The one true God eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: one God in three persons.

**Essence / Nature**
What God is. The one indivisible divine being shared wholly by Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Person / Hypostasis**
Who God is. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three real, irreducible personal subsistences of the one divine essence.

***Homoousios***
Greek for 'of the same substance.' The Son possesses the identical divine essence as the Father.

**Consubstantial**
The English theological equivalent of *homoousios*.

**Personal Properties**
The eternal characteristics which distinguish the persons: the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, and the Spirit proceeding.

**Relations of Origin**
The eternal relations which distinguish Father, Son and Spirit from one another.

**Unbegotten**
The personal property of the Father: he is from no other divine person.

**Eternal Generation**
The eternal relation whereby the Son is begotten of the Father. He is from the Father but never after the Father: begotten, not made.

***Autotheos***
Literally 'God of himself.' Used in Reformed theology to affirm that the Son possesses the divine essence fully in himself, while personally being eternally from the Father.

**Eternal Procession**
The eternal relation whereby the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and, in Western/Reformed theology, from the Father and the Son.

***Filioque***
Latin for 'and the Son.' The Western addition to the Nicene Creed affirming that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

***Taxis***
The eternal order among Father, Son and Holy Spirit arising from their relations of origin. It is order without inequality or hierarchy.

***Perichoresis***
The eternal mutual indwelling of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The persons are distinct but never divided or separated.

**Divine Simplicity**
God is not composed of parts. This means the divine essence cannot be divided between the persons. Each person is wholly God.

**Inseparable Operations**
Because God is one, everything God does toward creation is the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit together. '*Opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt.*' The external works of the Trinity are undivided.

**Appropriation**
Speaking of one divine work as especially fitting to one person — for example, creation to the Father or sanctification to the Spirit — while recognising that all three persons act inseparably.

**Immanent / Ontological Trinity**
The triune God considered as he eternally is in himself.

**Economic Trinity**
The triune God considered as he reveals himself and acts toward creation, especially in salvation.

**One Divine Will**
Because there is one divine nature, there is one divine will. Father, Son and Spirit are not three independent agents negotiating or submitting competing divine wills to one another.

**Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 2. Of God, and of the Holy Trinity**
I. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

'The one God eternally exists as three distinct, consubstantial persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — distinguished by their relations of origin, equal in glory, mutually indwelling, and inseparable in all their works.'