

## The Increase of God

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I believe that we can be true to the Deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and yet not be bound conceptually to the classical model of the trinity. I believe we should be free to challenge that theological premise and, indeed, ought to. I am not stridently anti-trinitarian. In fact, I sincerely admire the attempt---operative word, "attempt"--- on the part of the early church fathers to explain the oneness of God while maintaining the plurality and complexity within God, yet properly distancing themselves from pagan polytheism.

I really do not fit in either the trinity camp or the oneness (Jesus only) camp, for I find that trinitarianism, per se, falls short of explaining the nature of God's internal relationship, and the over-reaction, on the part of dear oneness brethren to trinitarian doctrine, very unsatisfying. God is One, to be sure, but that Oneness clearly includes an internal, relational dimension. Deity relates to Itself, and does so with a co-gender, paternal and filial delight.

There clearly, and most certainly, is the oneness factor of God, and yet also, the "and" factor. Jesus said, "I AND the Father are one." As I've said on a number of occasions, "what is it about "and" that you don't understand?

How should our concept of God be structured? I am struck by a sense of artificiality when God is explained as one God in three Persons, and three Persons united by and sharing one divine substance, or essence. It lacks what is implied by the truth that Deity has a Son, not a Son in name only, but a unique, only-single-generated Son.

It does not address adequately, at all, the implicit impregnation, conception and birthing that is intrinsic to God having a Son, and the underlying divine romance that constitutes God's relational disposition, which can be traced as a golden thread from the opening chapters of Genesis where Deity images itself in a man and woman in the Garden of Eden (delight), to Revelation, where the garden has become a community adorned as a bride for her husband.

So allow me, if you dare, to take a fresh approach to how we conceive of the vitality and structure of Deity. The following will obviously have to do with what is called, "Systematic Theology," (though I prefer, "Cohesive Theology.") and not an exercise in biblical exposition. It is what I have to offer at this time, after years of immersion in scripture and being called by the Spirit to reflect deeply on the nature of the One Jesus called, "Father." The following, I assure and pledge to you, is subject to revision as the Spirit directs.

I have chosen as a title for this treatise, a phrase from Col. 2:19, "the increase of God," and my understanding of that expression is that it does not mean merely an increase which is from God as someTHING He has given His church, but very literally, Paul is affirming that, as applied here to the body of Christ, the body grows by the "increase of God," literally "grows the growth of God or, "is growing the growth of the God or, "growing (in) the growth of God." Even if we just take it simplistically as increase from God, since God shares with His Son all that He is, and the Son gives Himself completely to His Body, the church, then increase is integral to Deity.

Deity, rather than being a static threesome in oneness, or oneness in threesome, is Being itself dynamically increasing or growing by the internal communion whereby the Spirit searches out the things of God, yea the deep things of God, and finds a Her to match Him.

Personhood has proceeded out from Pure Relational Being in the unfolding of God. From this divine "knowing," this Spirit- conjugal union, there is a procession out of God, from the Primal Origin (Barth) of Being, or the Ground of Being (Tillich), a growth of God by reproduction, as the Personhood which proceeds from Being becomes Father/Mother by bringing forth an Eternal Son, the first-born of many brethren.

The Father, who includes Motherhood, is greater than the Son, not by nature, but as the Origin of the Son. But since the Son originates from the fulness of the Father, the Son is given equality with the Father as the Father/Mother Deity reproduce in the Son, all that Deity is. "The Father has life in Himself, and gave the Son to have life in Himself." (Jn. 5:26)

Thus, the equality that the Son enjoys with the Father is a matter of the reproduction of Deity. God gives His best to His Son, His best, which is the fulness of Himself, and we, born by the extension of His Seed, share the same Family Oneness. In this light we can begin to understand the apostles definition of the church: "...the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

From Eternal Being proceeds Eternal Personhood, a Personhood that fulfills Being's disposition for conugal union and reproduction, so that Being has become Persons, Persons of a familial nature. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God, and indeed we are."

We are the family of God, by which God multiplies His/Her Being so that by us, in us, God is increased. The commission to "be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it," is rooted in and constituted by "The Increase of God."

For your consideration, and hopefully for your edification.

Standing in awe,