

The Universal Man, Part 2
John R. Gavazzoni

I feel strongly that we need not, as they say, re-invent the wheel in re: to the necessity of affirming generally the true Deity and true Humanity of Jesus, our Lord, though the origin of humanness needs much more careful defining and explanation.

It is my conviction that the presumption by the early post-apostolic fathers that His Deity and Humanness existed in His Person in some hard-to-explain combination, or mixture, or blend or mingling was a mistake. The truth lies more along the line of one unfolding out of the other rather than a combining; but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Their presumption predisposed them to misunderstanding the relationship of the two. Their presumption that the origin of humanness belonged solely to God's creative act---that humanness is not grounded in the Divine Nature, but only to an act of the Divine Nature, and not to Its very unfolding, led to some very esoteric intellectual contortionism; or as my friend, Eddie Browne, said recently, a fascinating theological tap dance. I kind of view it also as the wild, frantic broken-field running of a football quarterback who's trying desperately not to get sacked.

It is my burden in this writing to confront Christian orthodoxy, AND theological paradigms that have merely reacted to orthodoxy, with the undeniable implications of the incarnation. I posit this seminal question: Do we have in the incarnation of Christ, the unfolding of the Divine Nature, or merely an act of God quite distinct from the Being of God?

I, for one, am immutably informed by the principle that God DOES what God IS, and the One who is the "I AM" moves forward into the destiny of Deity by BECOMING, out of the depths of the Divine Nature, more and more of that which is Deity. The promise of Jesus that the water He would give us would become a well of water springing up into aeonian life gives us a metaphorical picture not only of the nature of the believer's spiritual life, but of the nature of the living God.

The Pauline revelation that it is in/by humanness---yes, full-blown bodily humanness---that God realizes the dynamic of His own expansiveness is too hot a potato for orthodoxy to handle. In effect, they presumptuously sweep the truth of "the increase of God" under the rug.

Paul was not so timid, in fact he was bold in declaring that what God is really up to is increasing Himself in, by, and as our humanity, which humanity is His. Yes, Paul's expression, "the increase of God," as conventionally translated, really does mean God's own increase, not merely an increase from God. To nail the point firmly, he makes it clear that it is the redeemed humanity of the church which "grows the growth of God," or "increases the increase of God." (Col. 2:19) And this church (better translated, this gathering) will eventually include all humanity.

Jesus Christ--yes, the "historical Jesus"-- was/is Deity fleshed-out, Deity embodied. Come on brethren, let's take scripture seriously; Jesus Christ was/is the bodily fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), and we all, the whole body of humanity, are His body. Jesus Christ was/is the perfect expression of the Humanness of Deity, and His Humanness is our humanness. He includes us, and the constitution of our humanness in Him, and His Humanness in us is-----the glory of God. That's what I said; the constitution of our humanness is God's glory. That's why Paul could say that "the man is the glory of God." Man equals human; human equals man.

Do your biblical homework. The Personhood that issues forth out from the Divine Nature is essentially, intrinsically and irreversibly Human. The Man, Christ Jesus, is the radiance of God's glory, the express image of His Person, the Image of the invisible God. All through scripture we are faced with something that we only understand very dimly, and that is that it is by His glory that God both reveals and conceals Himself.

Glory blinds and it gives sight. It disorients before it orients. It faces us with the fact that we must be caused to connect with our internal glory if we are to live in the atmosphere of glory. It is the story of humanity's descent and ascent in Christ. In our descent we sink beneath all that we are not, in order to be fully connected with all that

we are. It is of the essence of glory that it submit itself to the indignity of humiliating hiddenness on the Way to full exposure. Glory must endure deprivation in order that its supply, as the constitution of all things, be fully released.