

Sermon

Dance on Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Trinity, 1st June, 2015

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Today we have had the privilege of being ministered to by the Elevate Dance Company. The timing was due simply to their being available here. It is also Trinity Sunday. Those two facts don't seem to have much in common. The duration of the dances means I have little time to expound on the Trinity.

However, perhaps there is a point of resonance— stay with me ...

The Doctrine of the Trinity

As people gave more thought to how they should understand Jesus being God and the Father being God and the Holy Spirit being God, they drew certain conclusions - seven statements define the concept of the Trinity. They are not hard to understand. First of all:

- The Father is God;
- the Son is God;
- the Holy Spirit is God.

You can understand that. We could go through scriptures to show why we believe those three statements but given I have only a short time, we shan't.

Now you can see that one could argue that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are just three names for the same thing. The next statements rule that idea out:

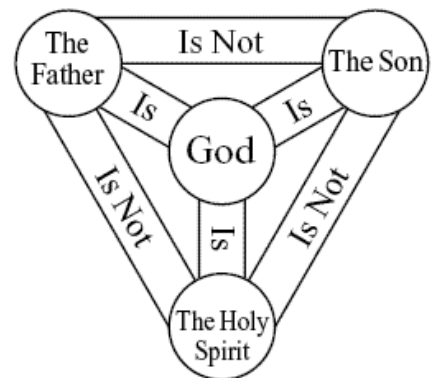
- The Father is not the Son;
- The Son is not the Holy Spirit;
- The Holy Spirit is not the Father.

You can easily resolve that by saying there are three gods, however, the Old Testament thunders that:

- There is only one God;

and the New Testament agrees.

That is the absolute bare bones of the understanding. God is three yet God is one. It is simply a matter of observation. It is about taking seriously what scripture says.



<https://epignosisministries.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/trinity-symbol.jpg?w=1163>

Gregory of Nazianzu, one of the early Church Fathers, helped establish the Church's thinking about the Trinity. He used the term *perichoresis* to indicate the intimate union and mutual indwelling of the three members of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) with each other.

The Father flows into the Son and Spirit; just as the Son flows into the Father and Spirit; and the Spirit flows into the Father and Son. It all happens at the same time. No holding back, no pettiness, no envy, no jealousy – simply and profoundly . . . a pouring of one into the other. ¹

The word *perichoresis* comes from *peri*=around and *choresis*=dance. Eugene Peterson describes it like this:



Trinity Window in Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, Avondale, PA. By Beyer Studio.
<http://www.beyerstudio.com/images/portfolio/SGAP/1.jpg>



A Circle Dance of Three:

<http://www.themosaicnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Circle-Dance-of-31.jpg>

Imagine a folk Dance, a round dance, with three partners in each set. The music starts up and the partners holding hands begin moving in a circle. On a signal from the caller, they release hands, change partners, and weave in and out, swinging first one and then another. The tempo increases, the partners move more swiftly with and between and among one another, swinging and twirling, embracing and releasing, holding on and letting go. But there is no confusion, every movement is cleanly co-ordinated in precise rhythms (these are practised and skillful dancers), as each person maintains his or her own identity. To the onlooker, the movements are so swift it is impossible to distinguish one person from another; the steps are so intricate that it is difficult to anticipate the actual configurations as they appear: Perichoresis²

Do you like that? It is dynamic not static. It is about relationship and movement. This describes the Trinity as always in motion, each person dancing with and around the others.. A photo of the dance kills it, stopping all motion and fixing each dancer in one spot.

Application

But the idea goes even further. Thinking of the Trinity as a dance of three persons means that God the Son stepped out of the circle dance to invite us into the very community of God. The claim that Jesus is God incarnate means that God wants to give us preferential treatment. In other words, God is willing to lay himself down for us. Salvation is an invitation to join in the dance of God. This is a picture of salvation and I am free to dance. The scriptures talk about the Son being in the Father and about the Body of Christ, the church, being in the Son and, therefore in the Father. The scriptures talk about us being one...a community of divine love.



The Circle Grows

<http://succotfestival.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/1/2/10127748/9490498.jpg>

How do you react to the idea of God dancing? How does it change the way you approach God? What would it be like for you to join with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the dance?

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¹<http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/believe-16-biblical-community-michael-deutsch-sermon-on-church-body-of-christ-191580.asp?Page=3>
² Petersons book "Christ plays in Ten Thousand places"