UNITY AND MISSION IN JOHN 17

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Category: Observations

I've long thought that John 17 is one of the most important passages about mission in Scripture, though it is rarely explored in that light. These comments from Abide and Go: Missional Theosis in the Gospel of John (The Didsbury Lecture Series)Â strike me as particularly apposite.Â

According to John 17, the deepest desire of Jesus is to create a community of disciples who participate in and manifest the unity of God, who continue the mission of God, and who will one day know the full glory of God. More specifically, we can say:

1. The unity of disciples is both a parallel to and a participation in the divine unity of Father and Son.
2. Mutual indwelling, unity, and mission are inextricably interrelated; there cannot be one without the other. The relationship of the disciples to the Father and Son, this â€œsharing in the life of the triune God .Â .Â . spawns the mission.â€ The discipleså€™ love for one another â€œis shaped by and participates in the relationship of love between Jesus and the Father.â€
3. Unity is the prerequisite for mission and mission the natural fruit of unity.
4. The discipleså€™ similarity to Jesus consists of â€œother-worldlyâ€ belongingness and holiness combined with â€œthis-worldlyâ€ sentness and mission, meaningâ€”above allâ€”love.
5. The missional shape of this participatory communal holiness, unity, and love is cruciform.
6. The purpose, or perhaps even the content, of sanctification/holiness is covenantal loyalty to and intimacy with God in community, loving unity with one another in God, and joyful participation in the *missio Dei*.