MISSION: THE TRINITY 1

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The most fundamental thing we can say about God, is not that God is love or God is light (or any other simple statement from John), but rather 'God is Trinity'. You won't find this simple statement in the Bible, but the truth of God as three-in-one runs through the Bible and underpins everything else.

One of our problems is that we tend to think of the Trinity as a mathematical conundrum to be solved and because we can't solve it, we tend not to think about God as Trinity very often. But we should! What the Trinity demonstrates to us is that God is a God of relationships; Father, Son and Spirit have existed eternally in a loving close communion. It is this relational nature that means we can say, 'God is love'. If God were not Triune he could not have *been love*Â until he created an object for his love. But the Triune God has always been love and always will be love.

This loving relational nature is probably best demonstrated in John 17, where we have an amazing insight into the inner life of the Trinity as the Son pours out his hear to the Father. You walk on holy ground when you read this passage.

> *â€œMy prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,Â Â that all of them may be one,Â Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.Â May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20,21)*

This is remarkable, Jesus prays about his close unity with the Father and, amazingly, prays that his church (that's you and me) should be united in the same way that the Son and Father are united. But Jesus doesn't stop there, he goes on to pray, 'May they also be in us'. Jesus is praying that his followers would be united in some way with the Father and the Son. We are called to participate in the Trinitarian relationship. I have no idea how this works out, but it is an incredible privilege.

Father, Son and Spirit have existed, three-in-one, as the tightest and closest relationship that will ever be. Yet the Trinity is not exclusive. God the Son was sent to the earth to live, die and rise again so that mere creatures could be drawn into relationship with Trinity. A relational God reaches out to draw others into relationship with him.

And that is what mission is all about, following in the footsteps of our relational God to draw people into relationship with him and with us. There is noÂ coercion, no force, just simple self-giving love.

There is an empty seat at the table in Rublev's icon.

This is the third in a series sketching out my broad theology of mission. You can read the first post here:Â