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# CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF DESIRE

Adonis Vidu

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

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# CONTEXT OF THE PAPER

- What does it mean to participate in the Trinity?
- How may the Triune God be experienced?
- A dogmatics of the Christian Life as Nuptial Union with Christ

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# THESIS

- Broader thesis of current research: We participate in the Trinity through spiritual marriage to Christ. Two consequents follow: (a) adoption by the Father; (b) the fruit/offspring of the Spirit.
  - Paper thesis: Since God is desired in and through the desire for a human Other, our disoriented desire for God is repaired through the appearance of God in human form. In his humanity, Christ is both the object and instrument of a new desire for God.
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# # LOVE OF GOD THROUGH LOVE OF ANOTHER

- The desire for God as the Supreme Good works through desire for those finite goods which reflect his goodness, particularly human beings. (Love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor).
  - In desiring another human being, we are in fact desiring God.
  - The premier symbol of this is the marital relation, which is inherently open to the divine gift of children. Marriage as fruitful comprehensive union.
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# # DESIRE FOR THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

- God transforms our embodied desires by coming in the flesh, as a “carnal” object of love (Bernard of Clairvaux)
  - In Christ God can finally marry Israel/Church, because he has become connatural with her
  - The proper adoration of Christ’s humanity: In Christ the two desires meet: the desire for a human Other, and the desire for the Supreme Good!
  - The dynamic of disclosure and hiddenness; Christ teaches us to love him without seeking to possess him (do not cling to me; it is better that I go to the Father, etc.).
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# # THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN TRANSFORMATION

- Not a mere imitation of Christ. The invisible mission of the Spirit as the *intrinsic fruition* of the union with Christ – as love.
  - The particularity of the Spirit's mission is to transform our affections on the basis of a heart-to-heart knowledge of Jesus Christ.
  - The Spirit can do this because he is the Spirit of Christ and thus genuinely extends to us the presence of Christ's humanity.
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# MINISTRY TAKEAWAYS

- Focus on the humanity of Christ.
  - The use of imagination.
    - Spiritual readings of Scripture; Contemplative prayer; Liturgy and sacraments. *The Chosen* TV series.
  - Cultivate a chaste nuptial affection for Christ the Bridegroom.
  - Avoid possessiveness and triumphalism: Suffering and the absence of Christ.
  - Love of God through love of Neighbor: Without love of neighbor, the love of God is empty; but love of neighbor without love of God is blind.
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