

Response to Steve McCormick, "Holy God, Holy People"

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Important themes to emphasize:

"We must begin with the Holy Trinity, if we are ever to understand what it means to be a Holy People gathered up into the very life of a Holy God, and return God's triune love by the Spirit through the Son back to the Father" (1).

"Often our understanding of holiness has been more deeply ensconced in the doctrine of sin, rather than in the Name and Nature of God. . . . Is it not better to suggest that unless one knows the 'purpose' of the image of God one could never understand the cure, not to mention the disease? Instead of always looking back to the Fall and its results, why not turn to the purpose (telos) of the whole Creation?" (2)

"The goal of holiness is not just sinlessness but the glory of God. Our purpose for having been created in the image of the Holy Trinity is to be as holy as God is holy, to love as God is love" (2).

"In God's story, God's Name is" Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And God's Name is God's Nature, and God's Nature as revealed in the Story is Love. This Love poured into our hearts is how we become as holy as God is holy; it is how we love as God is love. This triune love is not only how we come to know Who God is, but is how we come to know and do God's will" (4).

"Jesus, the eternal Son of God who became incarnate 'for us and for our salvation,' has given us his Spirit. . . . Herein, we have a share in // the name, and yes, in the very nature of God (2 Peter 1:4) because we . . . have been included and 'gathered up' in God's story" (4-5). **but how is this a participation in God's being/nature, unless that being/nature is identical with God's story, i.e., the event of revelation in history?**

"Now that we have been scripted into God's Story through the kenotic surrender of God's Son by the energy of God's Spirit, God's life is open to us. . . . Through the kenotic surrender of triune love we have been given the 'means of grace' in order to share in the 'hope of glory'" (6).

Perichoresis as model of human existence (6). The perichoretic relations are relations of kenotic love (7).

Points of critique:

Steve's argument is that the starting point in doctrine of holiness is DOT, not sin. But if theology is truly systematic, then the starting point is to some extent arbitrary—every doctrine will connect us to all others. Perhaps beginning with one doctrine will cast things in one light, beginning with another doctrine in another light.

Is the concept of participation robust enough? See comment in **bold** above

The following point is not clear and needs explanation: "we are most holy when we love. This is because the nature of holiness is ecstatic love" (7).