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A Trinitarian Theory of History

Whether our theology is good or bad, it illumines (or darkens) every field of human knowledge. For example, take History...

Human theologizing tends to be preoccupied with Power---who has it and who doesn't. The main consensus has been that an individual named 'god' has all or most of the power in the universe, and that humans have little or none.

When we approach history from this angle, the relevant question is: "Which historical individuals have been the most successful at bearing this god's image---hoarding and wielding power over and against other individuals?" For this reason, our history books are chronicles of people who more-or-less succeed at using violence to control other people. Our children learn history as a mind-numbing progression of kings, armies, weapons, and treaties, and the dates on which each one occurred.

But what if history's true God is not as preoccupied with power as we are? What if the true God is not an individual seeking to subdue other individuals? What if the universe lives and moves and has its being in the field of self-giving love shared between free persons?

If we approach history from THIS angle, we would surely be aware of wars and kings, but we would understand these intrigues as part of the SETTING of the human drama, but not as the drama itself. Notice how many lines in the gospels are devoted to the Caesars.

When we understand where the true drama lies, different questions become relevant: "In what ways have human communities imaged the Triune Life over time? In what ways has their many-ness danced with their one-ness? In what ways did the great live in solidarity with the small? In what ways was this community 'haunted' by its true self in Christ? In what ways did the Triune Life earth itself in this or that human community? In what ways did the human community resist this earthing? What consequences did they experience as a result? What can we learn from their experience?"

~ John Stoneypher