



EQUIPPER

The monthly e-magazine from the Ministry Development Team of
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Dear minister on mission with God:

The CAD ministry development team hopes your celebration of Easter was joy-filled. Now we continue in the Easter season, which in the Western-Christian calendar ends with Pentecost (June 12, this year).

This season reminds us of the life that is ours in union and communion with the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus. It also reminds us of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who unites us to Jesus and gifts us to participate with our Lord in his ongoing ministry to fulfill the Father's mission.

Just before his ascension, Jesus instructed his followers concerning this participation, commanding them to continue in the patterns of his discipling ministry, relying fully on his authority and presence:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18b-20)

Note the universal scope of this command, and its emphasis on baptism. In this issue of *Equipper*, Jonathan Stepp examines baptism in the light of a Trinitarian, incarnational theology. On our ***It Looks Like This*** blog at <http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/>, we've posted a video showing the baptism of the infant child of a member couple. At www.wcg.org/mindev/Web%20Documents/Infant%20baptism%20policy.pdf, we've posted the GCI policy concerning baptizing the infant children of believers.



Pentecost by Mildorfer

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Easter blessings,
Dan Rogers, CAD director

Ministry Resources

- Looking for help preaching/teaching about stewardship? Check out these resources:
 - The NIV Stewardship Study Bible** (full of excellent short articles!):
www.amazon.com/NIV-Stewardship-Study-Bible-Environment/dp/0310948479
 - Free downloads from **Crown Financial Ministries**:
www.crown.org/Library/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=263
- Free miscellaneous **ministry resources**: www.ChurchLeaders.com/freestuff
- Free **healthy church teams** webinar on May 16: <http://staffinfection.eventbrite.com/>
- **GenMin Life** video discussion starters: <http://genmin.gci.org/GenMinLife.htm>

Outfitting churches, ministries, pastors and ministry leaders for ministry on journey with Jesus.

Baptism in the Light of the Trinity by Jonathan Stepp

Understanding the spiritual reality of baptism requires that we look at who Jesus is in relationship to humanity and the Trinity.

Before his incarnation, the Son of God had been forever “baptized” into the life of his Father and their Holy Spirit. The very nature of the Son of God is a baptized nature in the sense that he lives “in” – i.e., immersed in, baptized in – the Father and the Holy Spirit (John 14:11).

Baptism is the very nature of the Triune Life. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do not just live “with” each other, they live *immersed* into each other’s existence. When the Son became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14), he immersed himself into humanity and thus into our human nature (2Cor. 5:21).

When the Son of God immersed himself into humanity as the man Jesus Christ, it did not undo his existence in which he is immersed in the life of the Father and the Spirit. Even though the Son now lives as man in human nature, he does not stop living as God in the divine nature.

Our human nature is what has changed now that the Son is baptized into our humanity. As he immerses himself in humanity, he also immerses humanity into the Trinity. His immersion in us changes us, baptizing us in the Spirit of his Father. So, in the first instance, baptism is the immersion of the persons of the Trinity in each other. Secondly, baptism is the immersion of the Son in human nature. Thirdly, baptism is Jesus’ immersion of human nature into the life of the Trinity.

So how does this immersion of humanity into the Trinity relate to what we experience with water in the life of the Church? Paul explains in Romans 5-6. In Romans 5, he explains that in the same way that Adam took us all down into sin and death, so Jesus, the Son of God in the flesh, has taken us all up into the life of the Trinity (Romans 5:12-19). This means that human nature has a new source in Jesus. Humanity is no longer “fallen in Adam,” instead, it is “restored in Christ.”

When we understand that our relationship with God is rooted in, and flows from, the Son of God baptizing us in the Triune life through his immersion in our human nature, then we understand that our very nature has been changed by this mutual indwelling of God with us and us with God.

This, then, is the context for Paul’s discussion about baptism at the start of Romans 6. Our baptism is in Christ, our death is a death with Christ, and our resurrection is a resurrection with him. Baptism is about how we are entirely bound up and included in Jesus himself. Baptism is about what Jesus has done to us and our human nature: he has washed it, crucified it, and resurrected it.

When we see baptism as the life of the Trinity extended to us by Jesus, we then realize that baptism has nothing to do with us *earning* a place in the love and life of the Trinity. Our words of faith and our immersion in water (whether by immersion or pouring) are not what make us children of the Father. Humanity has been adopted as the Father’s children because the Son has immersed himself in humanity and humanity in himself.

Jesus is the cause of our adoption and salvation. Baptism is the consequence of our adoption. Since humanity has already died and been resurrected in Christ, we now, in our baptism, reenact what has already happened to us by “dying” in the water and coming back up “resurrected” out of the water.

This article provides a brief excerpt from the class 'Practice of Ministry,' which Jonathan teaches at Grace Communion Seminary. To find out more, go to www.gcs.ambassador.edu.