

The Possibility of a Postmodern Trinitarian Theology and Its Appropriations

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Abstract

In this paper, I endeavor to expound on the thoughts of the American Theologian Prof. David Cunningham as I grapple with the following inquiries: How does Postmodernity inform and challenge theological reflections on the doctrine of Trinity? How does Trinitarian theology inform and critique salient aspects of postmodern culture? Lastly, how is it possible to speak of postmodern Trinitarian theology, especially in the context of Mindanao? This paper is primarily designed to expound on Cunningham's way of bridging Postmodernity and Trinity. As such, it can be seen as starting from a westernized perspective. Fully aware of the dangers of facile syncretism, the caveat however is the discovery of the surprising resonances that Cunningham's arguments convey when linked to my third-world context. The attempts to appropriate and recontextualize is however beyond the scope of this paper for it only succeeds in provoking pathways for discussions.

Introduction

Postmodernity and Trinitarian theology are two seemingly polarized domains, the former reflecting the contemporary concerns of today's society while the latter being an archaic albeit fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. The contemporary American theologian and ethicist David Cunningham, however, links these two discourses revealing how both inform and enrich each other, ultimately warranting the development of postmodern Trinitarian theology. While it can be argued that liberationist, Decolonial, and postcolonial lenses, as opposed to and alongside postmodern viewpoints, are more akin to the global south context, and in this case in Mindanao, this paper is of the arguments that the overarching realities described in the postmodern condition can't be dismissed even in the Filipino-Mindanaon context. Hence, instead of employing a more critical "hermeneutics of suspicion" that most postcolonial discourses employ, this paper proceeds with "appreciative inquiry" that deals with the gap that is often dismissed when binary differentiations (i.e., global north vs. global south, west vs. east, colonized vs. colonized, etc.) are established. Far from being merely a "position" and true to what a "condition" signifies, Postmodernity connotes otherness that can only be described more that

defined. This has significant repercussions on what can only be described as postmodern thinking.