

## Exploring Becoming Christian In Trinitarian Terms As Theosis

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### INTRODUCTION

The process of becoming a Christian is a holy mystery, which is multifaceted and multidimensional as it relates to the ineffable Holy Trinity. While humans are made in the image of God, they cannot fully ascertain God's power and glory, which is fundamentally multidimensional and ontologically triune. Christian theology seeks to increase understanding. In this realm, Maximus, the Confessor of Byzantium, articulates *theologia*<sup>1</sup> as an ineffable and transcendent connection with God<sup>2</sup>. In trinitarian terms, there is a single God with three fundamental natures as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The interrelationships between the one God in three parts seem paradoxical. That is because God's multifaceted glory is beyond human comprehension.

Fundamentally, becoming a Christian is a process that centrally relates to the Holy Trinity and is in alignment with God's true nature. This process entails developing divine attributes that stem from a right relationship with God that is true to His nature. Such is the only way that knowledge and wisdom of the Christian God can be obtained, and this is what it means to become a Christian in trinitarian terms.

I contend that *becoming a Christian* (as a noun) and *becoming Christian* (as an adjective) are interrelated yet fundamentally distinct phenomena. Becoming a Christian may be viewed as a specific event at a particular time and place, as with public declarations of faith, e.g., a holy baptism. Even so, do such declarations of faith indicate that a Christian has fully realized her Christianity? Certainly not. Rather, *putting on Christ* at baptism demonstrates that she has merely taken a first step in a lifelong process of sanctification and ever-growing closeness to God.

Moreover, becoming Christian is a process of personal growth as one receives the gifts of Christ, is anointed by the Holy Spirit, and grows in virtue. This occurs simultaneously and even paradoxically amidst evil temptations as the Christian faces her own utterly depraved and fallen nature throughout her Christian life.

Thus, I argue that *becoming Christian in trinitarian terms* is a process best characterized by *theosis* (i.e.,  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$  in Greek),<sup>3</sup> as understood in Christian Orthodoxy. Therefore, I explore becoming Christian in trinitarian terms as theosis. Theosis is a continuous process characterized by divinization as one grows closer to

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1 Vishnevskaya, Elena. "Divinization and Spiritual Progress in Maximus the Confessor," In *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*. Edited by Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 142.

Vishnevskaya examines the theology of Maximus the Confessor of Byzantium.

2 Vishnevskaya, "Divinization and Spiritual Progress," 142. Vishnevskaya interprets the theology of Maximus the Confessor of Byzantium.

3 Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1963), 236; Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov. "Introduction." In *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*, Edited by Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 1.

God, is glorified in Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. According to Finlan and Kharlamov:

Deification was an important idea in the early church, though it took a long time for *θέωσις* (theosis) to emerge as the standard label for the process. The term was coined by the great fourth-century theologian Gregory of Nazianzus. Theologians now use theosis to designate all instances where any idea of taking on God's character or being 'divinized' (made divine) occurs, even when the term *θέωσις* is not used.<sup>4</sup>

Just as Jesus Christ has two natures, i.e., fully human and fully divine, so is the process of theosis characterized in duality: by redemption from the sinful nature and realizing one's divine potential in the Holy Trinity through Christ. Divinization occurs in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. In other words, as the Christian grows in her Christianity, she will be redeemed and sanctified by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Such is an intimate process. God is a person, not a mechanism. Thus, *becoming Christian as theosis* involves a personal relationship with God as the Holy Trinity and is mediated through Christ.

### ***Four Propositions***

Becoming Christian in trinitarian terms as theosis is a lifelong process that entails four fundamental elements. I label these as four propositions: a) Filial love of God (as the Holy Trinity) amidst ecclesial love as a community of believers in Christ; b) the will to overcome sin through love of Christ; c) sanctification and regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and d) A synergistic process of triune Christian theosis by the ineffable Holy Trinity.

### *Proposition A: Filial Love of God (as the Holy Trinity) Amidst Ecclesial Love as Community of Believers in Christ*

Becoming Christian as theosis involves a filial relationship with God and being adopted into God's family. Various scholars such as Ware<sup>5</sup> and Byers<sup>6</sup> point to ecclesial theosis resulting from a filial relationship with the Father through the Son, thus divinized as God's children. Such is particularly well articulated in the Gospel of John, where theosis manifests as a community adopted into God's family and sanctified in an ecclesial sense.<sup>7</sup> Such manifests in those who are redeemed as Christians become members of the *Body of Christ* or as the *Bride of Christ* and thus take on God's divine attributes. Byers contends that the specific type of filial and ecclesial theosis contained in the Gospel of John is "explicitly *Johannine*."<sup>8</sup> In other words, the Gospel of John uniquely captures filial and ecclesial theosis as Christians

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4 Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov. "Introduction." In *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*, Edited by Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 1.

5 Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1963).

6 Andrew J. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 169.

7 Andrew J. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John*; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1963).

8 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 169.

are redeemed as disciples of Christ and brought into God's divine family.

There is a unique dynamic in the Gospel of John where followers of Christ enter a familial bond with God the Father through the Son and then sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the exact order of operations seems unclear, as it appears that the Father acts first to allow access to the Son, as illustrated in John 6:65, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it was given unto him of my Father."<sup>9</sup> Such paradoxes can perhaps be attributed to God's ineffable multidimensionality. Nevertheless, God chooses people out of the world to establish filial relationships with them.

Correspondingly, Ware examines the notion of *theosis* in the Gospel of John in which the disciples of Christ become participants in God's divine glory through unity with God the Father through the Son.<sup>10</sup> In analyzing John 17:22-23<sup>11</sup> Ware contends that Christ "has given His disciples a share in the divine glory, and He prays that they may achieve union with God."<sup>12</sup> Jesus Christ prays the following: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us... And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."<sup>13</sup> Ware asserts that the Greek Fathers of the early Christian church interpreted such passages of scripture literally and viewed divine unity with God as *theosis*.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in theosis, man is "called to become by grace what God is by nature."<sup>15</sup> Hence, becoming Christian is a continuous process of ever-increasing participation in the glory of the Holy Trinity, which is seen as theosis in Christian Orthodoxy.

Theosis can occur as "individual exaltation or soteriology"<sup>16</sup>, as with Moses, whose face "radiates with divine glory"<sup>17</sup> in the Old Testament context. By contrast, "Johannine theosis is communal, and thus ecclesial."<sup>18</sup> In the Christian context, theosis occurs as a community of believers in Christ and, by extension, in the Holy Trinity.

In this way, God extends His covenantal relationship beyond the children of Israel to anyone who follows Christ. Byers contends that divinity in the Gospel of John is a "*divine interrelation* between Father and Son... communally open, creating the possibility of a divine society of human family members."<sup>19</sup> This example is evident in the dialogue between Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well. "If thou

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9 John 6:65 (KJV).

10 Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 29.

11 John 17:22-23 (KJV).

12 Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 29.

13 John 17:22-23 (KJV).

14 Ware, 29.

15 Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 29. Ware interprets the theological position of the Greek Fathers in terms of deification and man's unity with God.

16 Andrew J. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 169.

17 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 179; Exod. 34:20-35

18 Byers, 179.

19 Andrew J. Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 169.

knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”<sup>20</sup> This verse demonstrates how Christ opens up the possibility of giving the gifts of God, in this case, “living water,”<sup>21</sup> to someone outside of the Jewish community.

This example defines what it means to become Christian in a trinitarian sense, which begins with a relationship with the Son. Therefore, perhaps one key area that separates the Christian movement from its Jewish origins is that Christianity is not defined by an ethnic family but rather a spiritual family of God united in Jesus Christ. Such examples show how Christ ministered to Gentiles (e.g., a Samaritan woman). Christ tells the Samaritan woman that His water is the source of “everlasting life.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the gift of eternal life is rooted in Christ and manifested in the Holy Trinity.

Becoming Christian is characterized by a filial theosis with the Father through the Son. Byers articulates ecclesial *theosis in John* as participatory “*filiation* and *association through oneness*... ‘filiation’ refers to their participation in the Father-Son interrelation; ‘deification’ is the ontological transformation,”<sup>23</sup> wherein, “association with the ‘one’ God entails some form of divine status.”<sup>24</sup> Such could be compared with entering a mythical world through John’s Gospel.

In many respects, this is akin to the *Chronicles of Narnia*<sup>25</sup> by C.S. Lewis in that the reader is invited to enter a mythical world as a narrative process. Byers contends that “John offers what could be called ‘narrative theosis’ because it is along the plot sequence of the Gospel that believers are gradually included as participants of divine reality.”<sup>26</sup> One clear example of this that I identify in John’s Gospel of the hypostatic union is evident in John 6:54-57 as a union with Father and Son through eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Such passages present a sort of an ‘if-then’ paradigm. If she, the reader eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ, then Christ will dwell in her, and “narrative theosis”<sup>28</sup> manifests as a “divine reality.”<sup>29</sup> Such divine promises are made in John to the reader. Relatedly, Byers refers to notions of divine unity in John as creating a new breed of humanity.<sup>30</sup> In such a paradigm, the new humans become the sons and daughters of the Holy Trinity. Moreover, “the prayer for oneness in John 17,”<sup>31</sup> goes

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20 John 4:9-10 (KJV).

21 John 4:9-10 (KJV).

22 John 4:14 (KJV).

23 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 169.

24 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 169.

25 Lewis, C. S., *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (United States of America: Harper Collins Publisher, 1980).

26 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 175.

27 John 6:54-57 (KJV).

28 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 175.

29 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 175.

30 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 179.

31 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 199.

beyond divine ecclesiastic affiliation to an actualized state of participatory theosis.<sup>32</sup> Such oneness is the hallmark of becoming Christian in trinitarian terms.

Nevertheless, is it sufficient to become a Christian to be pulled out of the world by God? What sort of obligations does the Christian have after initial faith in Christ is attained? Saint John Chrysostom describes the two fundamental dimensions whereby one's Christianization as theosis is actualized.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, theosis is based on God's love for humanity. Secondly, theosis is contingent upon man's intense love for God.<sup>34</sup> St Chrysostom writes of both types of essential love: "For God doeth every thing that We may love him, and owing to this he spared not even His Son. But we are unbending and savage. Yet let us become gentle at last, and love God as we ought to love Him, that we may with pleasure enjoy virtue."<sup>35</sup> This implies that divinization is actualized by loving God. Next, St Chrysostom points to St Paul's intense love of Christ as a source of Christian theosis, as follows:

Paul was a man who partakes in the same nature as us and everything else in common with us. But because he shewed such great love toward Christ, he went up above the Heavens, and stood with Angels. And so if we too would rouse ourselves up... and kindle in ourselves that fire, we shall be able to emulate that holy man.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, in trinitarian terms, the love of Christ is the gateway to the heavenly virtues of the Holy Trinity. Hence, in terms of becoming Christian, it is not sufficient to accept the gifts of God merely passively; expressing an intense love for God is required in accordance with St Paul's example.

The secondary ecclesial love towards the community of believers is illustrated in John as: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."<sup>37</sup> Thus, becoming Christian entails theosis manifested through filial love for God amidst ecclesial love towards fellow Christians.

### *Proposition B: The Will to Overcome Sin Through the Love of Christ*

The role of Christ in the soteriological and eschatological role of becoming Christian and being Christian could be compared to the keystone in a Roman arch. The Christological function performed by Christ as the Mediator between the Father and the Holy Spirit is essential. Myk Habets contends that Calvin's view of theosis, while trinitarian in nature, emphasizes the crucial role of "hypostatic union"<sup>38</sup> in Christ, and "theosis is only possible because human nature has been deified in the theandric person of the Mediator."<sup>39</sup> Relatedly, Ware asserts that "Now if this 'being made god',

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32 Byers, *Ecclesiology and Theosis*, 199.

33 St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (d. 407). The homilies of S. John Chrysostom.

34 St John Chrysostom, *Romans*, Homily XXIII, 404.

35 St John Chrysostom, *Romans*, Homily XXIII, 404.

36 St John Chrysostom, *Romans*, Homily XXIII, 509.

37 John 13:34 (KJV).

38 Myk Habets, "Reforming Theosis," in *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. by Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 149.

39 Habets, "Reforming Theosis," 149.

this *theosis*, is to be possible, Christ the Saviour must be both fully man and fully God. No one less than God can save man; therefore, if Christ is to save, He must be God.”<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, an intimate relationship with Christ as Mediator is established in the love of Christ. But how is the love of Christ properly defined?

In St John proper love of Christ is defined as follows:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Christ as Mediator is based on an ‘if-then’ paradigm. If Christ’s disciples love Him, he will advocate on their behalf to the Father. Such proper relationship dynamics with the Holy Trinity through Christ is the basis of Christian theosis.

Finlan and Kharlamov argue, “The believer must reject corruption, learn about Christ, and take on his virtues. This is a *virtue soteriology*: one is saved by, and for, virtue. But it is virtue mediated through Christ.”<sup>42</sup> Maximus, the Confessor of Byzantium, argues that divinization in Christ requires both praxis and the *ria*, and praxis “involves both purification from passions and attainment of virtues.”<sup>43</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (d. 407), articulates the will to overcome sin in tandem with the perfection of virtues using the love bestowed by Christ.<sup>44</sup> All Christian salvation begins with and is contingent upon Christ’s love as a doorway to Christian salvation and the manifestation of all good gifts of virtue in the Holy Trinity.

### *Proposition C: Sanctification by the Holy Spirit*

The next phase of becoming Christian takes place by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Theosis in the Christian context cannot occur apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Webster asserts that the Holy Spirit plays a fundamental role in intellectual regeneration: “The telos of that divine work is our sanctification: the cleansing and enrichment of our corrupt and impoverished nature by the Holy Spirit in which our life, including our intellectual life, is renewed.”<sup>45</sup> This sort of intellectual renewal is evident in the Gospel of John, articulated as follows, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”<sup>46</sup> This demonstrates the renewal of the intellectual faculties.

Man is created in God’s image. Therefore, it could even be said that forgetfulness

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40 Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 29.

41 John 14:15-16 (KJV).

42 Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov. “Introduction.” In *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*, 1.

43 Vishnevskaya, Elena. “Divinization and Spiritual Progress in Maximus the Confessor,” In *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*. Edited by Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 138. Vishnevskaya interprets Maximus the Confessor.

44 Saint John Chrysostom, *Corinthians, Homily XXII*. London, England: Oxford, John Henry Parker, 1848, 254-255; Saint John Chrysostom, *Romans, Homily XXXII*. London, England: Oxford, John Henry Parker, 1841, 405.

45 John Webster, “What Makes Theology Theological?” *Journal of Analytic Theology*, Vol. 3 (May 2015): 20. 10.12978/jat.2015-3.091413220417.

46 John 14:26 (KJV).

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or the decline of intellectual faculties could be seen because of a fallen nature. Therefore, the Holy Spirit works to restore morality and intellectual faculties. In other words, Christian theosis involves sanctifying and restoring the intellectual powers of man in line with God's original creative purpose. Evidence of such power of intellectual redemption by the Holy Spirit could be attributed to the many great Christian intellectuals and theologians throughout the ages, beginning with the holy apostles.

Once a Christian is adopted into the family of God in Christ, the Comforter, i.e., the Holy Spirit, is bestowed upon that person, which begins the process of divinization and theosis. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth."<sup>47</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit in becoming Christian is essential. Therefore, The Holy Spirit testifies to God's truth and brings a holy unity with the Father and Christ, the Son. Habets illustrates a unity with Christ through the Holy Spirit: "This partaking of the divine nature, or more specifically of Christ, is then experienced and further developed through the sacraments and the life of piety lived out in the Spirit's power."<sup>48</sup> Thus, an ineffable synergy occurs between the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Webster articulates the synergistic roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit as follows:

For it is the office of the eternal Son to terminate corrupt nature and in its place to create a new nature; and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to make this new nature actual and operative in creaturely conduct. Through the Spirit's 'physical' work, the new nature is imparted and its course governed, so that the spirit of the mind is indeed renewed."<sup>49</sup>

Labeling the Holy Spirit as the connective tissue that binds the Christian to the Father and the Son would be a crude analogy. Nevertheless, the power of the Holy Spirit could be seen as such in mechanical terms. The Holy Spirit plays a unique role in regenerative divine theosis in the life of the Christian.

### *Proposition D: A Synergistic Process of Triune Christian Theosis by the Holy Trinity*

While I have focused on individual aspects of the Holy Trinity in a compartmentalized fashion, it is important to reiterate that it is one God. Therefore, in simple terms, the will and power of the one true Christian God allows one to become Christian. An analogy would be to look at a person created in God's image. While this could be thought of as in the image of God's essence or non-physical attributes. For a moment, though, think of a person's physical attributes as a physical, symbolic representation of God. The person has one body and two arms. The left arm is the person. The right arm is also the same person. The same blood flows throughout the entire body. Even if a single cell of the person were extracted, it would still be that person. The DNA in that single cell taken from an individual would have the same genetic code as all the

<sup>47</sup> John 14:16-17 (KJV).

<sup>48</sup> Habets, "Reforming Theosis," 149.

<sup>49</sup> John Webster, "What Makes Theology Theological?" *Journal of Analytic Theology*, Vol. 3 (May 2015): 26. 10.12978/jat.2015-3.091413220417.

other cells in that person's body.

Crudely, this could be analogous to the Holy Trinity. Think of God the Father as the head of the body. Jesus Christ is the right arm. The Holy Spirit is the common blood that flows throughout the entire body. The DNA in the head, the arm, and the blood is the same, i.e., the same genetic code. The entire body is unified in thought, deed, and purpose.

Therefore, the workings of the Holy Trinity should also be considered in terms of a unified body with a unified purpose, albeit with individual and distinct parts. I contend that the Nicene Creed<sup>50</sup> accurately depicts the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ is “the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father.”<sup>51</sup> The Holy Spirit is defined as “the Lord and giver-of-life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.”<sup>52</sup>

Thus, I reiterate that becoming Christian in trinitarian terms is best characterized by a process of theosis. Finlan and Kharlamov interpret theosis as a “transformation of mind, a metamorphosis of character, a redefinition of selfhood, and an imitation of God.”<sup>53</sup> According to Webster, “the object of Christian theology is twofold: God the Holy Trinity and all other things relative to God.”<sup>54</sup> The entire premise of proper Christianity is that the Holy Trinity has revealed the truth to humanity through revealed scripture and holy tradition. Thus, theosis is realized in the life of the church through fellowship, sacraments, and the divinization work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup> It is impossible to live as a Christian without the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit will instruct the Christian supernaturally throughout her entire Christian life as she continually becomes Christian.

The Greek Fathers stress the trinitarian nature of God and man's likeness to God in a trinitarian sense.<sup>56</sup> This means that becoming Christian is a trinitarian process that at least involves the divinization of theosis of three facets of the human person. One dimension of this could be the divinization of the physical body. Ware contends that “Orthodox are convinced that the body is sanctified and transfigured together with the soul,”<sup>57</sup> which is why Orthodox revere bodily relics of its holy saints.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, becoming Christian in a trinitarian context sanctifies the physical body, as the Holy

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50 “The Nicene Creed of 325 A.D.--384 A.D.,” University of Washington, accessed Oct 9, 2023, <https://faculty.washington.edu/ewebb/Creeds.pdf>

51 “The Nicene Creed of 325 A.D.--384 A.D.,” University of Washington, accessed Oct 9, 2023, <https://faculty.washington.edu/ewebb/Creeds.pdf>

52 “The Nicene Creed of 325 A.D.--384 A.D.”

53 Finlan, Stephen, Vladimir Kharlamov, *THEOSIS: Deification in Christian Theology*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2006, 1.

54 John Webster, “What Makes Theology Theological?” *Journal of Analytic Theology*, Vol. 3 (May 2015): 17. 10.12978/jat.2015-3.091413220417.

55 Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 1963, 242.

56 Ware, 223-234.

57 Ware, 239.

58 Ware, 239.



Spirit dwells therein. This could perhaps be one area of future research as science could explore the topic of observable alterations in the DNA of saints who have literally transformed their physical bodies through the process of Christian theosis, and such transformation is uniquely part of becoming Christian in a trinitarian context.

### CONCLUSION

I have argued that theosis best characterizes becoming Christian in a trinitarian sense. Becoming Christian in the context of the Holy Trinity is ineffable and multidimensional. Thus, human vocabulary or modalities of expression will never be able to fully explain God's holy mysteries, which are beyond words and other means of human articulation. Nevertheless, I have put forth four fundamental propositions that define becoming Christian in a trinitarian context.

Despite a fallen and depraved nature, paradoxically, man was created for unity with God. Ware contends that "the final goal at which every Christian must aim: to become god, to attain *theosis*... For Orthodoxy, man's salvation and redemption means his deification."<sup>59</sup> I argue that theosis through the Holy Trinity defines the very essence of what it means to become Christian. Each aspect of the Holy Trinity works ineffable ways to forgive, redeem, love, sanctify, enlighten, renew, and bestow the gifts of God upon the Christian throughout her life as she grows in relationship with the one true Christian God throughout her entire Christian life.

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<sup>59</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 236.

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