

**THE TENSION BETWEEN BEING AND BECOMING IN
WORSHIP:**

A LITURGICAL STUDY ON DEIFICATION FROM A TRINITARIAN PERSPECTIVE



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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Worship is a place of encounter for the divine God and depraved human beings. Human beings express their desire to become like God through diverse liturgical orders. However, due to their sinful nature, human beings are not able to become like God; and God's being is perfect, so that He does not become anything but Himself. Because of this, tension occurs regarding being and becoming. God Himself released the tension between being and becoming through becoming man in the Incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity. The Son became a human being so that the possibility of deification, literally meaning becoming God, is open to human beings. As Athanasius declared, "He was made man that we might be made God".

This dissertation aims to understand and reflect on the tension between being and becoming in worship, with the specific theological term deification. Because the doctrine of deification is still not familiar to the West, we needed to introduce the development of the doctrine briefly. Besides the study on deification, this dissertation employed a threefold structure to achieve its aim. The threefold structure comprises three dialogues: on the Trinity and worship; on deification and the Trinity; and on deification and worship.

In the first dialogue, we find that the Trinity exists as a relational being, inwardly as well as outwardly. The relational God enters into a relationship with us in worship. That God is relational delineates worship as a place of deification. The second dialogue informs us that deification has two dimensions: transformation of our being and relationship with the Trinity, which are proved by biblical and doctrinal study. These theoretical studies call for liturgical study to be vitalised. The third dialogue, consequently, highlights that deification is actualised in worship, starting from this life, and to be continued.

OPSOMMING

Aanbidding is 'n plek van ontmoeting vir die heilige God en verdorwe mense. Mense spreek hul begeerte om soos God te word deur middel van diverse liturgiese ordes uit. Vanweë hul sondige natuur is mense egter nie in staat om soos God te word nie; God se wese is volmaak, sodat Hy niks behalwe homself kan wees nie. Hiervolgens ontstaan daar 'n spanning tussen wees en word. God self het hierdie spanning tussen wees en word deurbreek deur die menswording van die tweede Persoon van die Drie-eenheid. Die Seun het mens geword om die moontlikheid van vergoddeliking, wat letterlik beteken om God te word, vir mense oop te stel. Soos Athanasius verklaar het, is Hy tot 'n mens gemaak sodat ons tot God gemaak kan word.

Hierdie verhandeling het ten doel om die spanning tussen te wees en te word met die spesifieke teologiese term vergoddeliking (deïfikasie) in aanbidding te verstaan en daaroor te besin. Daar die Weste nog nie vertrou is met die leer van vergoddeliking nie, was dit nodig om die ontwikkeling van die leer kortliks bekend te stel. Buiten die studie oor vergoddeliking, is 'n drieledige struktuur gebruik om hierdie verhandeling se oogmerk te bereik. Die drieledige struktuur bestaan uit drie dialoë: oor die Drie-eenheid en aanbidding; oor vergoddeliking en die Drie-eenheid; en oor vergoddeliking en aanbidding.

In die eerste dialoog vind ons dat die Drie-eenheid innerlik sowel as uiterlik as 'n relasionele wese bestaan. In aanbidding tree die relasionele God in 'n verhouding met ons. Daar God relasioneel is, word aanbidding as 'n plek van vergoddeliking aangedui. Die tweede dialoog leer ons dat vergoddeliking uit twee dimensies bestaan: die transformasie van ons wese en die verhouding met die Drie-eenheid, wat deur Bybelse en leerstellige studie bewys word. Hierdie teoretiese studies doen 'n oproep vir die verlewending van liturgiese studies. Die derde dialoog beklemtoon gevolglik dat vergoddeliking in aanbidding gerealiseer word, en in hierdie lewe begin, om voortgesit te word.

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I glorify the Triune God who is the subject and the object of my life. For me, to study Him is to believe Him, to believe Him is to love Him. Thus, what I have done through this dissertation is not just academic research but also confession to my God. I thank God for being my God.

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I am indebted to my precious family. My wife Jiyoung has supported me during this long journey with love, encouragement, and patience. It has been my delight to see my three children Yesong, Yejin, and Yeha growing up in God. While I have been writing this dissertation with the theme of becoming God, they have really become Godlike children in their words and deeds.

Although my academic journey in Stellenbosch is coming to an end, I believe that my theological and pastoral service is just beginning. Glory be to God the Father through the Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit for evermore!

ABBREVIATIONS

- AC* *The Liturgy of the Eighth Book of "the Apostolic Constitutions": commonly called The Clementine Liturgy*, 1900, reprinted by Bibliolife in 2009, tr by Cresswell, R H., London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- ACCS* *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 29 vols, 1999-, Oden, T C (ed) Downers Grove: IVP.
- ANF* *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1985, Roberts, A & Donaldson, J (eds) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- AT* *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 2001, Hippolytus, an English Version with Introduction and Commentary by Stewart-Sykes, A. Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- BDAG* Bauer, W. [1957] 2000. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Rev by Danker, W F, Arndt, W F & Gingrich, W F. 3rd edition. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.
- BDB* Brown, F, Driver, S & Briggs, C 2000. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
- BEM* *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. 1982. Geneva: World Council of Churches.
- BHS* *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 4th edition, 1990, Elliger, K & Rudolph, W (eds) Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
- CD* *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols, K. Barth, 1956-1975. tr by Parker, T H L et al. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

- Inst.* *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols, J. Calvin, 2006. reissued. tr by Battles, F L. edited by McNeill, J T. *The Library of Christian Classics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- KJV* King James Version
- LW* *Luther's Works*, 55 vols, 1960-1974, M. Luther, edited by J. Palikan (vols 1-30) & H. T. Lehmann (vols 31-55), Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- LXX* Septuagint
- Nestle-Aland*²⁷ *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition, 1993, Aland, B., Aland, K, Karavidopoulos, J, Martini C M & Metzger, B M (eds). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
- NIV* New International Version
- NPNF 1st* *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1956, Schaff, P (ed) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- NPNF 2nd* *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, 1999, Schaff P & Wace, H (eds) Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
- RSV* Revised Standard Version
- ST* *Summa Theologiae*, 61 vols, 1964-1981, T. Aquinas, Cambridge: Blackfriars.
- Triads* *The Triads*, 1983, Palamas, G, edited by John Meyendorff, tr by Gendle, N. *The Classics of Western Spirituality*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Cilliers (2009:2 ; cf. ST, I.12.6 co) articulates four tensions in worship which are related to the significance of worship in the lives and assembly of parishioners. These four tensions occur “between being and becoming, between time and space, between awe and expression, and between laughter and lament” (Cilliers 2009:2). The tension between being and becoming occurs in the encounter between two subjects that are incompatible: the divine God and the depraved human being, i.e. human beings desiring to become like God, whose being does not need to become something else, for God is God, i.e. complete. However, in the limitation of being, both physical and spiritual, the tension between being and becoming always exists.

This tension is linked to what Wainwright (1984:85) calls “true humanization versus divinization”. Although his argument is not developed in the context of liturgy, the tension he articulates has common features with the four tensions in worship to which Cilliers refers – all tensions have an eschatological dimension, and neither of the elements in tension can be overlooked.¹ According to Wainwright (1984:85), the tension of “true humanization versus divinization” can be resolved in Christ because He is “the image of God both from the side of God and from side of humanity, both the true revelation of God among humanity and the true human response to the divine

¹ Wainwright (1984:84-85) develops this argument within the role of the Holy Spirit on salvation and sanctification relating it to the adoption to the Son. Regarding the history of reflection on Christ and salvation, he indicates four tensions which have characterized on the matter: “adoptionism *versus* incarnation, the antiochene *versus* the alexandrine school of Christology, the pelagian stress on human freedom *versus* the augustinian emphasis on divine grace, true humanization *versus* divinization as the destiny of humanity in the purpose of God” (1984:85). These tensions are thoroughly eschatological, given that the resolution of the tensions is delayed until the last.

vocation, God-in-man and man-in-God". In other words, humanisation and divinisation does not have opposite directions, though they seem to be antithetical.

This synthesising can be found in Calvin's theology on the knowledge of God and human beings. In the very first chapter of his *Institution of the Christian Religion*, Calvin (*Inst.* 1.1.1) says, we are to turn to God when we look upon ourselves, because to know ourselves knowing God should take precedence. The aim of looking upon God is to know ourselves properly, and the identity of the human being which one encounters as a result of reflection on God is a depraved one (*Inst.* 1.1.2). Being helpless, the fallen human beings stand in front of God being scrutinised – *Coram Deo* (*Inst.* 1.1.3; cf. McKim 1996). Therefore, either looking up to God or looking upon ourselves, human beings are always to head towards God. Thus the tension between divinisation and humanisation might seem to be in opposite directions, but both aim towards the same feature, which indeed is the final destiny of human beings.

Given that tension is a necessary part of earthly liturgy, it cannot be dealt with as something that should be excluded in worship. Rather, such tensions will remain until the end of days, when the final Kingdom comes. Thus, this tension is thoroughly eschatological, having both a present and a future dimension.² We live in the tension until we arrive at perfect communion with God, knowing Him as much as He wants us to know Him. In this regard, our being is in the process of becoming what we should be, i.e. what God intended us to be (Cilliers 2009:3-4). In worship, as we stand before God, address and glorify Him, we experience such becoming. Being before the perfect God, we confess, *Coram Deo*, recognising our own imperfect being. Our being, then, is starting to become what we should be.

Regarding the starting point, worship is a very special time and place in which we are in the process of becoming what God wants us to be, although we still have a confined being. Thus, worship could be seen as a kind of threshold. We still worship God with our earthly bodies and faith, which

² This is such hope that our being will be perfect like God when we see God face to face (1 Cor 13:12, Col 1:27-28).

seems to be eternally imperfect. However, “we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands” (2 Cor 5:1, *NIV*).³ Our being is becoming from here and now, especially from worship, the liminal place within these tensions.

When we see our being through the lens of *Ubuntu*,⁴ which “stems from the belief that one is a human being through others” (Cilliers 2008:1), we acknowledge that our being is defined “only in community, in *koinonia*, in peace” (Battle 1997:5).⁵ Zizioulas (2002:88) explicitly defines our being in terms of relation as he says that “[t]o be and to be in relation become identical”. In other words, one’s being is related with others, and if this is so, one’s becoming must also be related with others, that is to say, becoming must be done in relationship with others. As Lot’s wife was so related to Sodom and Gomorrah that she became those destroyed cities (Beale 2008:285),⁶ we become what we are related to. This concept of relating being and becoming is also found in the theological term *perichoresis* which is a synonym of *emperichoresis* or circumincession (*circumincessio*)⁷ *Perichoresis* refers to co inherence of the Persons of the Trinity, and is also used for the relation of the two natures of Christ (Muller 1985:67; McKim 1996:207). The Three Persons of the Trinity indwell each other and are correlated in their very substances (Muller 1985:102), but at the same time, the Triune God is mystically united, is One. Thus, the being of the Trinity is mutually related with Other Persons.⁸ *Perichoresis* offers much meaning for the proposed study, not only as an indicator of our

³ Unless otherwise stated, all English Scriptures are cited and quoted from *RSV*, the Hebrew from *BHS*, and the Greek from *Nestle-Aland*²⁷.

⁴ The term *Ubuntu* is a South Africa adage which etymologically comes from the Zulu and Sotho version of the aphorism, which implies “I am because you are” which articulates respect and compassion for others. “It does not only describe humanity as ‘being-with-others’, but also prescribes what the relational ethics of this ‘being-with-others’ entail” (Cilliers 2008:1-2). Also see Koopman (2003:199).

⁵ Quoted from Campbell & Cilliers (2012:48).

⁶ Beale clarifies that the being of Lot’s wife became salt as the cities were ruined to salt, because she admired the cities: “Lot’s wife ‘looked back, and she became a pillar of salt’ (Gen. 19:26), just as Sodom and Gomorrah had been reduced to salt (Deut. 29:23; Zeph. 2:9)” (2008:285).

⁷ For the development of the use of the term *perichoresis* and *circumincessio* in Latin theology, see Fantino (2005).

⁸ We find the inner-relation in the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. However, we do not stay with the immanent Trinity alone but will research the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, and ongoing development of the doctrine of the social/relational Trinity as well. By doing so, we can find a connection between liturgy which also has a relational dimension and the doctrine of the Trinity. For extensive research of the doctrinal development of the Trinity, see Grenz (2004); for the development of the social/relational Trinity,

being related to each other in inner-relationships, but also as a way of inviting us to these relationships: Vosloo (2004:86) indicates that *perichoresis* “is a way to prevent the isolation and separation of the divine ‘persons’” and it “enables participation”.⁹ Thus, according to Cilliers (2012:121), the meaning of *perichoresis* can assist our research in that that one can find “his/her identity in the relationship with the other” and, as mentioned previously, becoming must be concerned what one is related to, i.e. to where or with whom we participate.

Tillich (1963:61) articulates the tension between the Divine One and human beings in terms of correlation. Both God and human beings are affected by the mutual relationship that exists between them. However, God is totally independent, i.e. no one can influence God except God Himself. God moves when He is related to human beings, but remains independent; thus, His essential being never changes. As Boff (1989:98) says, the “Trinity has not remained enclosed but has communicated itself, making human life its temple. The Trinity dwells in us and our history, divinizing each of us”.¹⁰ Pannenberg (1991:279) articulates this with the Fatherhood and the Sonship in a Trinitarian perspective: “The Father cannot be thought of as Father without the Son”; and Kärkkäinen (2007:132) further clarifies this point: “the Father’s fatherhood is dependent on the Son”. However, that does not mean the Father’s being is intervened or changed for the Son’s sake or *vice versa*, but that His fatherhood is determined by the Sonship. The Three Persons of the Trinity are totally independent, but at the same time, they are dependent on Each Other. Thus, we can find a clue for resolving the tension between being and becoming in the being of the relational Trinity, which shares the substance (or hypostasis) of each Person without absorbing and, at the same time, not intervening or breaking Its divine essence.¹¹

Theologically, this process of becoming like God, which is God’s intention for us, is known as

see Boff (1989), LaCugna (1991a), Moltmann (1993), Gunton (1993), and Zizioulas (2002); and for the study of relational Trinitarian theology of Moltmann, Gunton, and LaCugna, see Kim (2008).

⁹ For a detailed study of the relationship between *perichoresis* and participation, see Fiddes (2000:71-81), where Vosloo finds the suggestion of the meaning of *perichoresis* in the image of “round-dance”.

¹⁰ Quoted from Grenz (2004:120).

¹¹ In Orthodox theology, this distinction is referred to as “energies” and “essence”; see Mantzaridis (1984), Lossky (1991), Ware (1993), and Clendenin (2003).

“deification” (*theosis*). Deification literally means “becoming God”, which could be misunderstood as if it is a heretical saying, like pantheism. Thus, Fiddes (2000:76) emphasises that *theosis* does not mean “becoming God”, but being incorporated into the “fellowship” of the divine life. For preventing the misunderstanding of deification as pantheism, especially the misunderstanding of Western theologians, Clendenin (2003:130, 158) stresses that all Eastern theologians have repudiated “any hint of pantheism” when they refer to deification; LaCugna (1991b:169) also refers to the Cappadocians who “never tired of repeating that we cannot know what God is, but we know God from God’s ‘operation’ (*energeia* or ‘energies’)”. In other words, deification of human beings is about participating in the divine “energy”, but not in the divine “essence” (Mantzaridis 1984:109; LaCugna 1991a:183; Russell 2011:134). Thus, although “becoming *like* God” might seem more tolerant expression, we are able to keep using the phrase “becoming God” without fear of misunderstanding. When we say “becoming *like* God”, it might mean “resembling God”. However, our concern on deification is not to resemble one Person of the Trinity, but “participating in” the mystical union of the Trinity with doxology (John 17). In this sense, deification is about a relationship, rather than a transformation (Clendenin 2003:130). “Becoming God” is not a strange description, rather, it is God’s promise (Ps. 82:6) for us to become God and to make us the partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Christensen 2008:24). The relationship or tension between “becoming God”, and “participation”, as an explication of the term “deification (*theosis*)” will be one of the main themes in this study.

Deification is the ultimate goal of humankind (cf. McGuckin 2000:156; Louth 2005:229; Russell 2006:4; Kärkkäinen 2008:453). The Greek word *thēosis* (θέωσις) is normally used for the description of the same process (cf. Kärkkäinen 2008:452-453). In the proposed study, we shall employ the word *thēosis* and the term deification without any distinction. Christensen and Wittung describe *thēosis* /deification as follows:

Theosis/deification is the preferred theological term for what the New Testament describes as ‘becoming partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pt 1:4) and Eastern Orthodox theologians refer to as

‘becoming god’. There are other related terms used in scholarly discourse to point to this ancient vision, including: transfiguration, perfection, sanctification, glorification, Christification, sophianization, ingoding, and Divine-humanity (Christensen & Wittung 2008a:15n2).¹²

The possibility of becoming God became a reality through the Incarnation of Jesus. As Athanasius (*NPNF 2nd IV:65*), in his *Incarnation of the Word*, proclaims: “He was made man that we might be made God”. God, whose being is correlated with the Trinity, initiates the correlation with us so that we may participate in the everlasting communion of the Triune God.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

To apply the doctrine of deification to understand and reflect on the tension between being and becoming in worship, we need to acknowledge some issues we are facing: In the West, the doctrine of deification has not been of much concern, and the relationship between worship and deification has also not been studied well.

Because the study of deification has mostly been done in Eastern Orthodox theology, the use of the term deification, even if not as a whole, is lost in Western traditions. Then the question may arise: If the meaning of deification is so important, why has the term deification not been of main concern in Western theology? Two possible answers can be considered in this regard: Firstly, regarding the emphasis on salvation; in the East, salvation, as the final destiny of human beings, is directly related to the doctrine of deification (Clendenin 2003:122). The doctrine of justification by faith, which emphasizes the legal and juridical point of salvation, however, has stood firmly in the West, unlike in the Eastern tradition. Thus, in the West, the doctrines of salvation have been focused on the saints’

¹² Horton (2011:690ff) also deals with deification with the Western term glorification. Also cf. Mosser (2002:36): “Thēosis is described under a number of theological rubrics. These include adoption to divine sonship, participation in God, sharing of divine life, impartation of immortality, restoration of the imago dei, glorification, and consummation of the marriage between Christ and the Church.” Mosser adds “divinization” or “deification” as a translation of theosis, although he considers they are somewhat inadequate.

new position from sinful beings in legal statements, while Eastern theology has emphasised the mystic union with God in salvation (cf. Vandervelde 2001:74). It can be said that, since Augustine, Western theology has been put under the influence of legalistic statements by the saints, although Anselm of Canterbury placed immense impact on this doctrine in his *Cur Deus Homo*. By and large, the works of the reformers such as Luther and Calvin has been considered to settle the doctrine in Western protestant theology. However, it must be mentioned that, for Luther and Calvin, not only the juridical positions of the saints, but also the mystic union with God took up an important place in their theology. The Mannermaa School which emerged at the University of Helsinki endeavours to show that, for Luther, the concept of deification was not a foreign term and justification not merely a forensic concept, rather, it was about Christ abiding in the believers (*inhabitatio Dei*) (Mannermaa 1998a; Mannermaa 1998b; Kärkkäinen 2004:87ff). In addition, Kärkkäinen (2004:37-66) finds a synthesis of justification and deification in Luther's theology. What Luther stresses as dealing with justification of the saints, is, according to Kärkkäinen, "presence of Christ in faith", and Kärkkäinen links this to "participation in God" and "union with God".¹³ Furthermore, Butin emphasises that the theology of the divine-human relationship is of fundamental importance for Calvin's theology, especially in his theology of the Eucharist (see Butin 1995:115-121). Studies investigating deification in Calvin's theology have been published recently by western scholars such as Mosser (2002), Canlis (2004), Billings (2005), Slater (2005) and Ollerton (2011). However, whatever Luther and Calvin really meant, it is clear that many Western theologians still refer critically to deification in their study on the salvation or final purpose of human beings (often expressed with concepts such as *Ordo Salutis*). However, as Clendenin (2003:125) rightly indicates, it must not be overlooked that salvation as the work of Christ, either as mystic union with God in the East or as the legal position of the saints in the West, cannot be reduced to any single metaphor. Justification and deification, thus, stress different points of salvation and are not irreconcilable concepts. Secondly, it seems that a philosophical understanding of substance may make a difference in the acceptance of the term deification in both West and East. According to LaCugna, deification is not a comprehensive term in the West, because

¹³ see Kärkkäinen (2004:45-51).

“becoming God” signifies an ontological changing from creature to the Creator; in terms of substance metaphysics Western theologians do not understand this change, while “[i]n the East, in the absence of a substance metaphysics, the idea of grace as deification presents no philosophical difficulty” (1991a:188).

In short, the West did not develop an argument about deification for theological reasons, and has some difficulty in understanding the concept for a system of philosophical thought. However, the basic concept of deification, viz. the union with God and participation in the divine nature as the final destiny of the saints, if not outwardly, has been and still is prevalent throughout Western traditions (Hallonsten 2008:281, 283). Consequently, some Western theologians omit the word *thēosis* or the term deification from their research, but “others attempt to reconstruct the ancient vision in a new context in continuity with its original meaning” (Christensen 2008:29).

As mentioned previously, deification should be dealt with in terms of a liturgical study, because worship is a locus where we are confronted with God’s being and start becoming God.¹⁴ Becoming is closely connected with what we worship. “[I]dolaters resemble the idols they worship”, instead of “worshipping and resembling the true God” (Beale 2008:16, 284ff). Thus, we are deified when we worship God. This implies a link between deification and worship. The purpose of the creation of human beings is to glorify the Creator. When we say “glorify God”, we assume a close relationship between the One who is glorified and those who carry out the glorifying. It could be argued that a relationship is formed between two subjects that have something in common. Therefore, human beings must have something in common with their Creator to communicate with Him, that is to say, to worship Him. In other words, human beings must be deified to worship God. Deification, thus, is indispensable to worship and a necessary consequence of worship as well.

At first, when we consider the concept of deification in visible relationship, we might automatically bring Jesus Christ to mind and associate Him with the notion. However, deification

¹⁴ It does not mean worship is “the” locus of deification as if the only purpose of worship is deification. Rather, worship has other aims, too. For the various functions of worship, see White (2001:22-25).

must be dealt with in a Trinitarian perspective, not a Christological point of view only, because “God bestows the fullness of divine life in the person of Jesus Christ, and that through the person of Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit we are made intimate partakers of the living God (theosis, divinization)” (LaCugna 1991a:3). Deification is not performed by a single Person of the Trinity, but through the correlational work of the Triune God. Regarding the tension between being and becoming, the being of the Trinity is differentiated from each Person, and, at the same time, there is the unity of the Three Persons. Being a totally independent being, the Trinity does not need to be or become the other being. However, by becoming the Son to human beings, the Trinity allows human beings to participate in the divine sharing and becoming in the correlational structure. A proper relationship with God leads us to deification, but a false relationship leads us into “self-deification”, which Eve committed (Gen 3:5ff).

Therefore, a holistic approach to the doctrine of deification is required from a Trinitarian perspective and an application of the doctrine to liturgy is also needed to resolve the tension between being and becoming in worship.

1.3 PURPOSE

This dissertation aims to demonstrate from a Trinitarian perspective that worship is a locus of deification to help us understand and reflect on the tension between being and becoming in worship. For this purpose, what is to be dealt with is what the concepts of Trinity, worship, and deification indicate, especially in their relationship to one another. The concept of “relation” is vital for the understanding of the Trinity and worship, as both can be defined as who or what is in relationship. With regard to deification, the term “participation” will have significance. The following question guided the study: Concerning the relationship between deification and participation, are they in a coordinative relationship or are they disparate to one another in their meanings? The purpose presupposes that the faith of the Church must be demonstrated in worship. Thus, this endeavour is

simultaneously linked to a dialogue between practice and theory. The proposed study tried to clarify the relationship between the doctrine of deification, the doctrine of the Trinity, and liturgy.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

This dissertation hypothesises that liturgical studies, which is a field within practical theology, and consequently liturgy, is affected by the doctrine of the Trinity, the meaning of doxology and deification, which comprise a field within dogmatic studies, and *vice versa*. Thus, examining the relationship between them is important in this dissertation.

1) **Worship is Trinitarian.** When we speak of worship, the One whom we worship immediately comes to mind. Because the term “worship”, by itself, can be applied to all religions, whom people worship is also diverse. Besides idolatries in the Old Testament, we recognise this concept of worship in the New Testament when Paul went to Athens. Paul says “you worship as something unknown” after seeing the objects of their worship (Acts 17:23). Thus, what do we mean when we speak of Christian worship; what must be the distinctive character of it? Answering in terms of the revelation, it must be Trinitarian, because God reveals Himself to us as the Triune God. Through the Councils of Nicene and Chalcedon, the Early Church laid the foundation of Trinitarian worship. Then the question is: Why is the Trinitarian doctrine so important to the liturgy of the Early Church and ours as well?

2) **Deification is Trinitarian.** Etymologically, deification is “becoming God”. God is Triune; becoming God thus is to be discussed from a Trinitarian perspective. In other words, resembling Jesus only or seeking to merely take the gifts of the Holy Spirit cannot entail the whole concept of deification. Thus, hypothetically, “becoming God” means that we become the Triune God, which sounds unacceptable or at least strange. So, what does deification mean from a Trinitarian perspective? As mentioned before, the tension or relationship between “becoming God” and “participation in God” must be scrutinised in this regard.

3) **Doxology is the means of deification from a Trinitarian perspective.** The Triune God shares the glory with each Person, i.e. One Person of the Trinity glorifies the Others. By glorifying the Others, the Three Persons of God are united as the One God as we see from “the high priestly prayer” in John 17. Doxology is the mystical means of the holy union of the Trinity to Itself and of the Trinity to human beings. Then, how can we participate in a doxology which is a way to oneness with God and, at the same time, a way to deification, seen from the human being’s side?

4) **Worship is a locus of doxology.** In worship, we participate in sharing the glory with the Triune God by His grace. As depraved human beings, we were not allowed to share in this glory, but in Jesus the possibility of doxology is open to us. We worship God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit and celebrate the Christ event, by which we are able to participate in the glory.

5) **Worship is a locus of deification.** Worship is a locus of doxology whereby we participate in the divine union with the Trinity. Thus, in worship, the mysterious unity of the Trinity with us occurs.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

According to Irwin (1994:46), *theologia prima*, which is an act of liturgy and theology, and *theologia secunda*, the method for liturgy, are correlative and influence each other. Suffice it to note, that this affects the lives of all Christians.¹⁵ We do not start this dissertation with an empirical study observing an issue or a story, as such an issue or story already contains the hermeneutics and analysis of practice, i.e. it implies theory within practice. Our assumption is that practice and theology are correlative, which implies that they influence each other. Thus, our research begins with a dialogue between an act and theory; practice and theology.

Irwin composes his method for liturgical study in two parts: “*context is text* and *text shapes context*” (1994:45). Both happen simultaneously, causing and experiencing an affect. Given that the

¹⁵ Also see Crichton (1992:6) for the relationship between *theologia prima* and *secunda*.

liturgy as an act of the Church cannot be isolated from the faith of the Church, a constant dialogue between context and text and practice and theory is essential. In essence, “liturgy is an act of theology, an act whereby the believing Church addresses God, enters into a dialogue with God, makes statements about its belief in God and symbolizes this belief through a variety of means including creation, words, manufactured objects, ritual gestures and actions” (Irwin 1994:44). In liturgy, as an act of theology, the Church is actualised with its various orders (Lawler 2005:119).¹⁶ Thus, worship is a locus of self-actualisation of the Church (Webber 1994:67).¹⁷ In the interaction between context and text, or practice and theory, the old maxim *lex orandi lex credendi* (the rule of prayer is the rule of faith)¹⁸ is formulated. In *lex orandi* (the rule of prayer), *lex credendi* (the rule of faith) is clarified. Wainwright (1984:218) points out that the maxim is construed in two ways: “what is prayed indicates what may and must be believed” and “what must be believed governs what may and should be prayed”. Thus, “worship influences doctrine, and doctrine worship”. This reciprocal relationship is significant for the dialogues between text and context, act and theory, practice and theology.

From a methodological viewpoint, cross-disciplinary dialogue is mainly used, especially in Chapters 2, 4 and 5.¹⁹ Osmer (2001:163) defines cross-disciplinary dialogue as follows: “[C]ross-disciplinary dialogue is a special form of rational communication in which the perspectives of two or more fields are brought into conversation”. There are four forms of cross-disciplinary dialogue: intradisciplinary dialogue, interdisciplinary dialogue, multidisciplinary dialogue, and metadisciplinary dialogue (Osmer 2001:163-164). We adopt intradisciplinary dialogue for examining the relationship

¹⁶ Cf. Rahner, K, 1972, “Practical Theology within the Totality of Theological Disciplines”, *Theological Investigations* 9:102.

¹⁷ The Christ event is central in Webber’s theology of worship. In worship the Church experiences the Christ event. By recapitulating the event which occurred in the past, the Church actualises herself here and now, and can anticipate the Kingdom of God coming in the future (Webber 1994:67). Müller also says that “liturgy is an exercise in memory and also an exercise in eschatological hope” (2007:450).

¹⁸ The adage is a short form of “*ut legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*” (that the rule of prayer may establish the rule of faith), which was given by “Prosper of Aquitaine” (Fink 1990:321). Pope Celestine I (422-432) initiated the use of the short form we see now (Fink 1990:321; McKim 1996:159). For the development of the maxim in the Roman Catholic Church, see Fink (1990:321); and for the original context of the adage generated by Prosper of Aquitaine, see Geldhof (2010:165-166), Irwin (1994:4-6) and Wainwright (1984:224-235).

¹⁹ We mainly use conceptual analysis in this dissertation (cf. Mouton 2008:175). Conceptual analysis clarifies the meaning of words or concepts in the different dimensions of meaning. We elaborate on the meaning of the Trinity, deification and worship in the reciprocities.

between the theology of deification, the Trinity and liturgy.

Besides intradisciplinary dialogue, a historical-descriptive study is adopted in Chapter 3, which deals with the history of the study of deification (cf. Mouton 2008:170), especially with what Bradley and Muller (1995:30) call the “great thinker model”: i.e. from Irenaeus and Tertullian the Greek and Latin Fathers to John Zizioulas and Norman Russell, the recent notable theologians in the study of deification in the East and West. Furthermore, for hermeneutical accuracy, biblical exegesis will also be applied to some essential passages from the Bible, such as Gen 1:26-27, Ps 82:6, John 10:34, 2 Pet 1:4 and John 17.

1.6 CONTRIBUTION

Firstly, we expect that this dissertation will present some new perspectives in view of further discussion on Eastern theology including the doctrine of deification. Although there are possibilities of standing on the same ground, East and West have been barred from one another in theology and its practice; and Western theologians have not focused much on the idea of deification, so far regarding the doctrine as a heretical or Hellenistic idea which cannot be accepted in Protestant theology. However, the study on deification, especially the historical review of the doctrine in the third chapter of this dissertation, will help unravel the misunderstanding regarding the doctrine; and a comparative study between the doctrine of deification and its doctrinal counterpart from the West, such as justification and union with God presented in the fourth chapter will also provide a good example of the dialogue which can break down the wall between West and East.

Secondly, dealing with deification, we will introduce many resources from Eastern theology and theologians. This dissertation will give much theological insight into Eastern theologians, and interpret them with the lens of Western theology and traditions. By doing so, we will be able to possess more abundant and sound theology that is not closed or biased in theory and practice.

Thirdly, the doctrine of deification has received little attention within practical theology. In this dissertation we will endeavour to pay attention to a dialectic relationship between the doctrine of deification with the Trinitarian perspective and liturgy, then will clarify how the doctrines shape liturgical standards and liturgy influences the doctrines to be firm.

Many studies have already been published regarding deification and Eastern theology. However, most studies have refrained from introducing the concept and the developing history of the doctrine. This dissertation attempts an integrative study of the issue, attending to dogmatic and historical research, as well as the practical application of the doctrine with liturgical ideas. The Trinitarian perspective on deification is for the most part a novel endeavour, and this will be helpful in dispelling Western misunderstanding regarding the doctrine of deification.

1.7 STRUCTURE

The first chapter of the proposed study comprises the background to the research, the problem statement, the purpose, the hypothesis, the methodology, and the envisioned contribution of the dissertation.

In the second chapter, the dialogue between the Trinity and worship in which the doctrine of the Trinity is performed is presented. This chapter does not focus on the method for expressing the Trinity traditionally – economic and immanent –, but rather highlights the social/relational Trinity. Worship will be dealt with in terms of a relational dimension between the Trinity and human beings, rather than in an etymological definition.

The history of studies on deification is explored in Chapter 3. The most important era for this subject is that of the Early Church. The work of the Greek Fathers in particular, e.g. Irenaeus, Clement, Athanasius, etc. is vital for the study, given that, as mentioned above, the majority of the work on

deification was developed in Eastern theology. However, the work of the Latin Fathers, such as Tertullian, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, is also dealt with. Attention is also paid to the contributions of scholars from the Middle Ages, such as Symeon the New Theologian, Aquinas and Palamas, as well as from the Reformation, most notably Calvin and Luther. Subsequently, the study of deification after the Reformation in both Eastern (Meyendorff, Lossky, and Zizioulas) and Western (Mannerrmaa, Kärkkäinen, and Russell) theological traditions is presented.

After dealing with the comprehensive research on deification, an examination of the relationship between deification and the Trinity, which is the second dialogue, is conducted in Chapter 4. This second dialogue proceeds in two ways: biblical exegesis on passages such as Gen 1:26-17; Ps 82:6; John 10:34; and 2 Pet 1:4; and doctrinal analysis between deification and justification. The relationship, as one of the most significant ideas of the current study, is presented through the two approaches. Deification in this sense can be understood as participating in the life of the Trinity. A proper relationship with the Triune God is vital.

In Chapter 5, the aim is synthesise the relationship between worship and deification. Based on the proposition and the notion that doxology is a way of deification, we will conclude that worship is a locus of deification.

Chapter 2

DIALOGUE 1

THE TRINITY AND WORSHIP: THE RELATIONAL GOD FOR US

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main theme of this dissertation is to resolve the tension between being and becoming in worship.²⁰ Before commencing with the in-depth study, we, in this chapter, first deal with the relationship between the Trinitarian doctrine and worship as the foundation of our ongoing study. Because whom we worship and whom we become is God, knowing the attributes of God is significant to our study on deification and worship and its relationship. Undoubtedly, our God²¹ is the Triune God; that is to say, God is one in essence but three in the divine Persons. That God exists and works as the Trinity influences our worship in an important manner. LaCugna (1990:1296) approaches the relationship between the Trinity and worship as follows:

[T]he connection between ‘Trinity and liturgy’ is rooted above all in the economy of salvation. The

²⁰ Generally, “liturgy” denotes an act of worship which occurs in Sunday worship service, whereas “worship” is normally used in more comprehensive way, including Christians’ devotion to God in daily life. Geldhof (2010:158) insists that not every act of worship is liturgical, and at this point he cites Vogel’s notion that worship can be individual or social and can involve ritual or not. Cf. Vogel, D W, *Liturgical Theology: A Conceptual Geography*, in Vogel D W (ed), *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press (2000:6). However, worship by its very nature is a completely congregational and ritual action. Albeit the term worship is in a sense possibly considered as an individual way of devotion to God, the consequence of God’s salvation is the Church within which we worship God together. Thus, in worship we should neither be separated from the God whom we worship nor from others with whom we are called to worship together. Therefore, in this dissertation we do not deal with the worship in the extensive meaning, thus the term “liturgy” and “worship” is used without distinction. Cf. Smith (2009:25n8, 151-152).

²¹ The name “God” is, on the one hand, the representative name for the three divine Persons who are in the divine relationship; on the other hand, it should be admitted that, as Platinga Jr (1989:31; quoted from Kim 2008:24) mentions, sometimes the name “God” is also used to refer God the Father as the origin and representative of the Godhead. However, negation of the monarchism should be achieved as a matter of course.

God we praise is God who comes to us in Christ and the Spirit. The purpose of the doctrine is to articulate the meaning and nature of the God who comes to us in Christ and the spirit.

To proceed with the dialogue between the Trinity and worship, we give answers to four basic questions that are effective in clarifying the relationship between the Trinity and worship in this chapter: 1) What does the doctrine of the Trinity mean? A doctrine should not be too ideal and speculative. The fact that God exists as the Trinity shows us that God is a relational being for our salvation, i.e. the immanent and economic Trinity is a practical doctrine; 2) What is worship? Worship should be defined with relational concepts because the character of worship is derived from the character of God (Hoon 1971:86), i.e. the fact that worship is relational is derived from the relational God; 3) How has the Trinitarian doctrine been shaped in relationship with the liturgy? The history of the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity shows that the doctrine must be related to the worship service; and 4) How is the Trinitarian doctrine confessed in the Christian worship? In every aspect of liturgy, we, and our ancestors as well, confess and experience the Triune God.

2.2 THE TRINITY: GOD FOR US

The Triune God who is the object and the subject of our worship remains a mystery: He is a mystery regarding our comprehension; in other words, God remains a mystery even in our intellectual struggle to understand the being of the Trinity.²² Owing to the difficulty of understanding this doctrine of the Trinity - which is to be the start and the end of all theology and of liturgy as well - it has, to a large extent, at least been neglected and even withdrawn from the centre of theological debates during certain epochs, and in certain contexts.

However, the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity has deep practical meaning in the Christian's

²² This being of the Trinity as mystery and the doctrine of the Trinity are to be distinguished. Although the doctrine points to mystery, it needs to be clear, not vague or mysterious.

life is a truth to be brought out. The Trinitarian doctrine does not merely teach about God, but offers us God's life with us and our life affected by God's life (Fox 2011:282). This presupposes that theology should not end at the text, but that it applies to and should be applied to the context – our life. In this sense, LaCugna (1992:678) starts her article *The Practical Trinity* with the complaint that the doctrine of the Trinity has been regarded as an abstruse and only theoretical concept in Christian life. The doctrine has been wrongly considered as not being such a practical idea. Indeed, she already states that “[t]he doctrine of the Trinity, which is the specifically Christian way of speaking about God, summarizes what it means to participate in the life of God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit” in *God for Us*, which was published a year before she wrote the aforementioned article (1991a:1). She also reminds us of the complaint of Gregory of Nyssa that, for him, it was impossible to do anything and to go anywhere without getting involved in a discussion about whether the Son is the true God (LaCugna 1992:678). Admitting the controversial background concerning the matter of the Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit with which Gregory of Nyssa struggled,²³ it is still true in these days, with the Trinitarian doctrine already firmly and unanimously stabled, that the doctrine of the Trinity should be involved and ultimately shapes the life of Christians (Lewis & Demarest 1996:251). The Church Fathers, as pastors and elders, endeavoured to lead believers to worship the Trinity in a proper way (Johnson 2002:18). Johnson (2002:29) proposes that the Trinity is practical, commenting on Eph 3:14-16, in which God shows how believers experience the Trinity in their life: “The Christian experience is Trinitarian: The Spirit in the inner person, Christ in our hearts, being filled up to the fullness of God”. This experience is and must be experienced by all Christians in everyday life. Thus, the Trinity is vitally practical and its praxis in liturgy and daily life is necessary for all Christians as well.

Since Schleiermacher, who contracts the doctrine of the Trinity in few pages only in his noted book *The Christian Faith*, the doctrine of the Trinity has been regressed to an appendix in modern theology. However, Barth, Rahner, and Lossky, who come from the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Eastern Orthodox tradition, merit being complimented because they not only retrieved the doctrine

²³ Many scholars estimate that Gregory of Nyssa was born around 330-335 and died around 390-395. Thus, it can be said that he lived during the period between the first Council of Nicaea (325), in which the Deity of the Son was affirmed, and of Constantinople (381), where the Holy Spirit was professed as the true God.

from the appendix to the prolegomena of theology again, but also set the stage for the renaissance of Trinitarian theology (Vosloo 2004:73; Kim 2008:13-14; Phan 2011a:11). Then, on the foundation of the Trinitarian renaissance, Moltmann, LaCugna, Pannenberg, and Jenson developed the relational or social Trinity,²⁴ overcoming the speculative dimension of the Trinitarian doctrine. This doctrinal development included the dialectic relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity (Grenz 2004:118).

Thus, the premise of the following discussion is that the doctrine of the Trinity is practical, and not speculative. Two points are to be stressed as we predicate the doctrine of the Trinity; laying an appropriate relation between the immanent and the economy Trinity is significant, and the relational (or social) Trinity is conducive to articulating the doctrine practically and liturgically.²⁵

2.2.1 The Immanent & Economic Trinity

In this section, we survey the two representative concepts which have been used historically to explain the Trinitarian doctrine: the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Our main concern is neither to insist that either one of them could be regarded as a more dominant concept than the other, showing how different they are to one another, nor to introduce complicated theories on the differentiation and common points between them, but to lay the preliminary foundation for the following study of the concept of the relational Trinity, which is an adequate concept for our current

²⁴ Despite the terms “relational Trinity” and “social Trinity”, which are used in the almost same sense, we employ only the former to accentuate God’s relational attribution both inward and outward in this dissertation.

²⁵ It is also noteworthy to compare the doctrinal development in Western and Eastern theology. The West starts from the unity and the essence of the Trinity, while the East first deals with the distinction of three divine Persons of the Trinity. The Western tradition, which accentuates the divine nature or the essence of the Trinity, tends towards underscoring the inner relations of the Trinity (the immanent Trinity), whereas the Eastern tradition of emphasising divine hypostases is more evident in delineating the actions of the Trinity regarding the world (the economic Trinity) (cf. LaCugna 1991b:171-172, 178). Therefore, comparative or relative research comparing the immanent and economic Trinity contains the differentiation between the West and the East as well. Cf. Hallonsten (2013:38). From his point of view, the Trinitarian theology of the West and East meet in the relational Trinity.

study.²⁶

McKim (1996:138) defines the immanent Trinity simply as follows: “The relationships among the three members of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – in and with themselves”. Because its concern is maintained in the inner-relationship of the Trinity, it is totally transcendent on the side of human beings. The Trinity in the inner-relationship is otherness to human beings.²⁷ Thus, the concept of relationship found in the immanent Trinity is the reciprocal relationship of the three divine Persons, which does not allow any other creatures partaking of the relationship.

Again, McKim (1996:86) gives a simple definition of the economic Trinity: “A view of the Trinity, propounded by Hippolytus and Tertullian, that stressed the functions (‘economies’) or work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rather their eternal being in relation to each other”. Working in the world, the Trinity takes part in the history of human beings. Like the immanent Trinity, relationship also plays an important role in the economic Trinity, but being different from the former, this relationship is outwards – towards the world. The three divine Persons are thus in relationship with the world as the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier.²⁸

²⁶ This immanent-economic distinction has the same or a similar dimension to the essence-energies distinction in Orthodox theology, which is especially found in Palamite theology. A detailed study of the theology of Palamas, including the relationship between the essence and energies, is dealt with in Chapter 3, especially in 3.3.3.

²⁷ The “immanent” in the context of the Trinitarian doctrine is not the opposite term of “transcendence”, but refers to the essential and ontological nature of the Trinity.

²⁸ This distinction does not mean that the Father and the Holy Spirit did not care about the salvation of the cross, that the Son and the Holy Spirit were not involved in creation, or that the Father and the Son do not take part in the sanctification (or deification) of human beings. Rather, as Augustine affirmed, all the works of God is equivalent co-working of the three Persons: “With regard, then, to the subject which I have at this time undertaken, first of all I am surprised that you were perplexed by the question why not the Father, but the Son, is said to have become incarnate, and yet were not also perplexed by the same question in regard to the Holy Spirit. For the union of Persons in the Trinity is in the Catholic faith set forth and believed, and by a few holy and blessed ones understood, to be so inseparable, that whatever is done by the Trinity must be regarded as being done by the Father, and by the Son, and by the Holy Spirit together; and that nothing is done by the Father which is not also done by the Son and by the Holy Spirit; and nothing done by the Holy Spirit which is not also done by the Father and by the Son; and nothing done by the Son which is not also done by the Father and by the Holy Spirit” (Letters, in *NPNF* 1st vol.1:229).

2.2.1.1 The Priority?

The need for distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity has not only been asserted traditionally, but has also been held by modern theologians such as Barth and Jüngel “to protect the freedom and independence of God against the forces of natural and human history. They seek to protect the notion that God is perfect, self-sufficient; He is not bound to reveal himself” (Kim 2008:46). Moltmann (1993:151) also argues that the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity is necessary to secure the independence of God’s grace and His liberty; God reveals Himself and saves us not because of necessity, but because of His gratified grace (the economic Trinity) within His self-sufficiency and liberty (the immanent Trinity). Thus, we can say that “even if God’s creatures did not exist God would still be a trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit since creation is an act of free will” (Congar 1983:13).

Beyond the need for the distinction, there have been two standpoints concerning their priority. The priority of the immanent Trinity is linked to ontology and that of the economic Trinity takes precedence according to epistemology.

On the one hand, there is the insistence that the immanent Trinity takes priority because a being antedates a work of the being. LaCugna (1991b:171) indicates that, after Nicaea, the main theme of theology shifted from the work of God – what God does for us – to the ontological question of who God is in Himself. Thereafter, the economy of salvation is pondered only indirectly, from the immanent perspective. According to Grenz (2004:126), Boff posits the immanent Trinity above the economic Trinity as a result of its ontological priority. He regards the immanent Trinity as the ultimate theme of Trinitarian theology. From the same point of view, Blocher (1997:104-105) prefers the term “ontological Trinity” to “immanent Trinity”. Thomson (1994:25) presents an idea of Torrance, who considers the priority of the immanent Trinity because the being and the act of God in Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is prior to the act of God towards the world;

ontologically, the immanent Trinity has precedence.²⁹ In these perspectives, economy of salvation as God's action *ad extra* is to be corresponded to God's being *ad intra* for ontological and sequential reason (Thomson 1994:25-26, 38). However, the emphasis on the immanent Trinity can result in the Trinitarian doctrine becoming abstract and impractical. LaCugna (1991b:172) implies that the origin of the impractical Trinitarian tendency, which is mostly found in Western theology, has its focus on the internal self-relation of the Trinity, which is incomprehensible to us. Moreover, we cannot presume that God's being is prior to His act because the Bible declares that God is everlasting.³⁰ Thus, sequential prior and posterior does not restrict God's being and acting. The Bible tells us that neither the beginning nor the end of God is perceived in terms of ontology or the sequence of the time.

On the other hand, it is stated that the economic Trinity is prior to the immanent Trinity by reason of the limitation of human cognition and the proof of the biblical redemptive language. Firstly, according to Phan (2011c:18), "the only way to know God is by way of the activities of the Father through the Son and by the power of the Spirit". He continues that the economic Trinity is granted epistemological priority. Secondly, as for being known, the language from which we can pursue the Trinitarian doctrine directly is not found in the Bible. LaCugna (1991b:161-162) indicates that the language of the Bible technically does not contain any Trinitarian words such as *hypostasis*, *ousia*, or *substantia*, but rather that the biblical language on the Trinitarian matter is "economic", focusing on the redemptive history. Thus, in terms of the revelation to us, the economic Trinity has superiority over the immanent Trinity. However, to approach the mystery of the Trinity with human perception has its own limitations, in that God is in Himself beyond our perception. Whether one does or not recognise Him, God always exists.

²⁹ Cf. Torrance, T F, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology*. Belfast: Christian Journals (1980:156-158).

³⁰ Gen. 21:33; 1 Ch. 16:36; Neh. 9:5; Psa. 41:13, 90:2, 106:48; Isa. 9:6, 26:4, 40:28, 60:19; Jer. 10:10; Hab. 1:12 etc.

2.2.1.2 Rahner's Rule

Since the voluminous writings of Rahner, it is not an exaggeration to say that all debates concerning the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity is an interpretation of the so-called Rahner's Rule, which generally declares that "the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and vice versa":

The basic thesis which establishes this connection between the treatises and presents the Trinity as a mystery of salvation (in its reality not merely as a doctrine) might be formulated as follows: The "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity (Rahner 2001:21-22).

One point of dispute is focused on Rahner's use of the verb "is". Rahner himself did not give a clear explanation of what the copula "is" exactly means (Phan 2011b:197). In LaCugna's estimation, what Rahner asserts is to reunite the dimension of scholastic theology of the Trinity and the narratives of the Trinity found in the Bible, liturgy, and creed in history (LaCugna 1991a:216). Thomson also points out two reasons for the identity of the two forms of the Trinity contrived by Rahner: "First, he seeks to link the being of the triune God (immanent) with the mystery of the free grace of God to us and our world (economic). Second, he wishes to emphasize that it is God who communicates himself to us" (Thomson 1994:26). Thus, although Thomson gives two reasons there is one ground of sameness: God's being *per se* and God's ministry to the world cannot be considered separately. Peters draws an implication of the relationship between two Trinities with the concept of "eternal" and "temporal": "the eternal or immanent Trinity finds its very identity in the economy of temporal salvation events" (Peters 1993:97).

From these ideas, we take two standpoints on the interpretation of the Rahner's Rule: In terms of the doctrinal problem, Rahner gives the proper form of relation between the immanent and economic Trinity; and regarding our life and liturgy, he ensures that God who is in Himself is the God for us.

Firstly, relating to the numerical problem of Trinitarian doctrine – one is not three and three is

not one – Rahner’s Rule also has the same problem; are there two Trinities or one? In the relationship with one another, the Trinity does not have any meaning in differentiated from, or precedence above one another. Rather, what Rahner wants to make clear is that there is one Trinity and the one action by God given to us in history, which seemingly comprises two actions – inwards to God Himself and outwards to the world. Thus, Rahner’s point is that the immanent Trinity, which is presumed to be beyond human perception, is not superior to the economic Trinity, God acting in history, and at the same time, the economic Trinity, which is revealed and works for us in the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is equally related to one another in Themselves (Phan 2011b:198). For Rahner, the divine processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit that occur in the inner relations of the Trinity are the same as the missions of the Trinity to the world. That was the way of communicating by the Trinity to the world for salvation (Thomson 1994:27). Furthermore, as Volf (2006:4) indicates, we are authorised to make claims about the immanent Trinity on the basis of the economic Trinity’s involvement in the world. In this way, Rahner’s contribution acquaints us with the immanent Trinity, which was supposed to be beyond our comprehension.³¹ Therefore, there is no priority between the immanent and economic Trinity, but rather two different forms of the Trinity that live and work in a dialectic relationship.

Secondly, it is possible, from the mutual relationship of the Trinity, that we think God’s inner-relationship is not something different from His relationship with us. God’s eternal mutual relations (immanent Trinity) is the same as His self-revelation to us in history (economic Trinity) (Phan 2011b:197). God’s being and action is not to be considered separately, but presents with us and for us the history of salvation (Thomson 1994:25). Peters (1993:97) goes further: “God relates to the Godself through relating to us in the economy of salvation”. Peters’ articulation, however, needs caution because it can be read as if the economic Trinity is superior to the immanent Trinity. The point is: on the side of the human being, the promise to participate in the Trinity is open in that we are able to be one with God as the Father and the Son are one (John 17:11, 22). The Trinity therefore is not to

³¹ Phan (2011b:198) goes even further, saying: “If the economic Trinity is not the immanent Trinity, and if the immanent Trinity is something other than the economic Trinity, then divine revelation has not told us anything reliable and true about God.”

be understood merely as a doctrine for a few theologians' sake, but is to be practised and fulfilled in ordinary daily life of all Christians.

Dealing with the interpretation by two theologians, LaCugna and Moltmann, of Rahner's Rule, we may confirm the practical and relational dimension of the doctrine of the Trinity. Both of them link the Trinitarian doctrine to our salvation, but LaCugna asserts the priority of the economic Trinity while Moltmann indicates there is only one Trinity. Although the results of their denotation differ from one another, the fact is that they assert similarly that the Trinity is a relational being for us.

2.2.1.3 LaCugna: The Economic Trinity

For LaCugna, the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity basically is an unnecessary theological debate and the immanent Trinity has its meaning only in redemptive history – the economic Trinity.³² Rahner's intention, according to her, is not tautology and not an epistemological consideration. In that case, she thinks, the axiom confines the Trinity as "God's inner life", viz. God for God (LaCugna 1991a:216-217). She (1991b:175-176) evaluates the way Rahner's rule is used by Congar, Kasper, and Schoonenberg to indicate that the axiom emphasises God's involvement with the world in history by His self-communication, which was intra-Trinitarian self-communication before the Son was presented to the world, but is now revealed in a new way. By "new way", however, they do not mean that God became something "new", but assert the viewpoint

³² Evaluating LaCugna's contribution to the Trinitarian theology, Groppe (2002:732ff) indicates the limitation of the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity in eight points: (1) "The terminology of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity is imprecise and can be misleading or confusing"; (2) "The paradigm of the immanent and economic Trinity can appear to suggest that there are two Trinities"; (3) "The paradigm of the immanent and economic Trinity hampers the exercise of the doxological character of theology"; (4) "The paradigm of the economic and immanent Trinity hampers the articulation of a nuanced theology of God's freedom"; (5) "The paradigm of the immanent and economic Trinity hinders the articulation of a trinitarian theology that expresses the depth of the mystery of Incarnation and grace without subsuming God into a world process"; (6) "The paradigm of the economic and immanent Trinity inhibits the realization of the practical and soteriological implications of the doctrine of the Trinity"; (7) "The paradigm of the immanent and economic Trinity perpetuates the use of a metaphysics of substance"; and (8) "Finally, the paradigm of the economic and immanent Trinity structures theological discourse with a distinction between God as immanent and economic which can eclipse or become confused with the more fundamental distinction between God and creature that should structure theological reflection".

of historicity that God's mystic Triune has been revealed as an economic being. Thus, she takes the position that there are not two ontologically distinct Trinities, but only the economic Trinity whereby God enters into relationship with us, viz. God for us. She concludes that this was what Rahner's understanding of the Trinity was when he formulated his axiom. Thus, it definitely seems that, for LaCugna, the argument dealing with the immanent and economic Trinity separately, founded on epistemological ground, is not entirely practical.³³

Therefore, it is evident to LaCugna that the economic Trinity has priority because, without relating to the economy of salvation or our experience in salvation, "there is no immanent Trinity of 'God in se' or of 'intradivine relations'" (Kim 2008:89-90). As such, she places the economic Trinity at the base of our knowledge of God, linking the immanent and economic Trinity to *theologia* and *oikonomia*, and "divine essence" and "divine energy", as expressed in Eastern theology (LaCugna 1991b:155).³⁴ This identity is evident for her because "*theologia* (mystery of God) is what is revealed in the *oikonomia* (mystery of redemption), contemplating the mystery of the economy means contemplating the mystery of God". LaCugna, although she does not say so explicitly, radically stresses that *oikonomia* is established on the relation of God towards the world (Kim 2008:211)., Theology therefore is not the independent observation of God. Admitting human limits of understanding, she continues that clarification of the Trinitarian doctrine does not produce a full understanding of God, but remind us of the inadequacy of our ideas of God (LaCugna 1991b:155).

Grenz (2004:152) sums up her standpoint about the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity clearly; the essential being of God and His salvation, *theologia* and *oikonomia*, as follows:

In a nutshell, the LaCugna corollary postulates that theology (proper) and soteriology are intertwined. As she declares in *God for Us*, "theology is inseparable from soteriology and *vice versa*". In her essay for the *Christian Century*, LaCugna offers a short explication of the idea: "The doctrine of the Trinity... is a doctrine about God. But because it is a doctrine about the God who shares life

³³ Thus, she insists that we have to find another Trinitarian perspective – the relational God, which we will deal with in the next section (2.2.2).

³⁴ However, she ensures that the immanent Trinity is not similar to the divine essence (LaCugna 1991b:175).

with us in an economy of redemption, it is also a doctrine about salvation”. To reformulate it in accordance with her preferred terminology, the LaCugna corollary means that *theologia* (theological reflection regarding the mystery of God) is indivisible from *oikonomia* (the self-disclosure of and the experience of God in salvation, God *pro nobis*).

2.2.1.4 Moltmann: The One Trinity on the Cross

Unlike LaCugna, Moltmann does not presume any superiority or inferiority of the two forms of the Trinity for ontological or epistemological reasons, but for him the proper relationship between them is “retroactive”. He states: “What this thesis [Rahner’s Rule] is actually trying to bring out is the interaction between the substance and the revelation, the ‘inwardness’ and the ‘outwardness’ of the triune God. The economic Trinity not only reveals the immanent Trinity; it also has a retroactive effect on it” (Moltmann 1993:160). However, the term “retroactive” has the possibility of the chronological misunderstanding that, ontologically, the immanent Trinity must precede the economic Trinity so that the former may have effects on the latter. Indeed he “goes so far as to say that in the order of being the economic Trinity succeeds the immanent Trinity” (Kim 2008:49). Although it is true that one is able to work as long as the one exists, God’s being is from eternity to eternity and such a chronology cannot be implied to God’s being.³⁵

For Moltmann, however, the distinction between the two forms of the Trinity is necessary to understand the doctrine of the Trinity accurately in the light of the theology of the cross (1993:160). That is to say, the need for distinguishing should not mean that they are two, but rather that the distinction between them corroborates one Trinity that functions for redemptive history in two dimensions: God for us and God in Himself. Thus, it is the same Triune God who is “in his saving revelation” and who is “in himself” (Moltmann 1993:151). In this sense, he agrees with LaCugna, but

³⁵ Moltmann (1993:172) distinguishes the Father who is in the relations and the Father who exists and then calls the former “mode of being”: “It is true that the Father is defined by his fatherhood to the Son, but this does not constitute his existence; it presupposes it. Certainly, fatherhood is a relation, a ‘mode of being’”. However, he does not assume that God the Father’s existence should precede His fatherhood, but rather, for him, the relationship between “person” and “relation” is to be understood reciprocally.

whereas LaCugna stresses the economic Trinity as observed, Moltmann endeavours to keep the oneness of the two Trinities. He explains this identity with God's love to the world and Himself: "Love is self-evident for God. So we have to say that the triune God loves the world with the very same love that he himself *is*" (Moltmann 1993:151). His being, as love, and His love for the world, in Moltmann's opinion, is not necessarily distinct. Rather, we realise that God loves the world because He is love. His love culminated in the cross of Christ, and the cross is explicated to the economic Trinity, as well as the immanent Trinity:

The meaning of the cross of the Son of Golgotha reaches right into the heart of the immanent Trinity. From the very beginning, no immanent Trinity and no divine glory is conceivable without 'the Lamb who was slain'. So in Christian art too there are hardly any representations of the Trinity in heaven without the cross and the One crucified (Moltmann 1993:159).

Thus, for Moltmann, the immanent and economic Trinity is synthesised in the event of the cross: "On the cross God creates salvation outwardly for his whole creation and at the same time suffers this disaster of the whole world inwardly in himself".³⁶ The world cannot explain why God so loved the world that he allowed His Son to suffer, but God can do it because He is love. Thus, God's works of salvation and His being itself is to be implemented by one another, not outside of it (Moltmann 1993:158-159).

2.2.2 The Relational Trinity

What can we benefit from the dialectic relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity that we examined in the previous section through Rahner's Rule and its interpretations by LaCugna and Moltmann? Possible answers could be that there are not two different Trinities, but only one and that God in Himself and God for us is the same. The immanent Trinity, who is in the inner relationship,

³⁶ Regarding aspect, some scholars argue that, for Moltmann, there is only one Trinity – the economic Trinity. However, Moltmann himself sticks to the "one, single, divine Trinity", which is not inevitably the economic Trinity (Kim 2008:48-49).

is the same as the economic Trinity, who is in the outer relationship with the world. Thus, an important aspect that must be mentioned from the aforementioned discussion is that God is in relationship – both inwardly and outwardly. As Cunningham (1998:26) states, it seems clear that the claim that God is relational is acceptable and admitted among contemporary Trinitarian theologians.

As a different way of stating what Barth and Rahner postulated regarding the Trinity and the Oneness of God, the doctrine of the relational Trinity starts with three Persons of the Trinity, as the three Cappadocians did (Kim 2008:22). This is also opposite to the Western tradition, which is derived from Augustine, where the tendency is to emphasise the essence of God more than each Person (Thomson 1994:144). Thus, the relational Trinity commences with the unique character of the three divine Persons and Their divine relationship.

At the same time, however the relational Trinity regards the Father as the origin of the whole divinity. Pannenberg (1991:324) stresses the mutual relations among the three divine Persons, and he continues that this mutuality and mutual dependence of the Persons of the Trinity do not destroy the monarchy of the Father. Yet we do not consider this concept of the “font of divinity” in our argument because our main concern in this section is that God the Trinity exists as a relational being for God Himself and for us as well. Rather, we support Moltmann’s statement that “this ‘monarchy of the Father’ only applies to the *constitution* of the Trinity” (1993:176). In other words, formulating the Father as the head of the Trinity is not because of the hierarchism of the Trinity’s inner relationship but because of the outer relationship with us; for our finite cognition of the being of the Divinity.³⁷ Moltmann distinguishes between the constitution and the inner life of the Trinity (1993:183). Johnson (2002:48) also indicates that the Father is the first, because He is the source of the Godhead, but not because He is chronologically ahead of the other Persons.³⁸ To avoid this overemphasising of one

³⁷ Cf. In *Inst.* 1.13.24 Calvin says: “... even though we admit that in respect to order and degree the beginning of divinity is in the Father, yet we say that it is a detestable invention that essence is proper to the Father alone as if he were the deifier of the Son”. The title of the section is: “The name ‘God’ in Scripture does not refer to the Father alone”.

³⁸ The priority of Person(s) is not a novelty for the West or the East. The only difference is that the East considered the Father as the one source of the divinity, while the West regarded the Father and the Son as the source of the Holy Spirit, as we can see from the *filioque* controversy (Cf. Vosloo 2002:94).

Person, the mutual relationship and communion in the unity is vital for relational Trinitarian doctrine (Cf. Vosloo 2002:97-98).

Another dimension of the relational Trinity is its pursuit of practical and soteriological implications (Kim 2008:28). The relational Trinity has its foundation in the economic Trinity rather than the immanent Trinity (Thomson 1994:143-144). However, the human being, who is saved by the economic Trinity, must be exposed to salvation through God's self-revelation, the immanent Trinity. Thus, although the relational Trinity depends upon the economic Trinity, the mutual relationship between the two Trinities should be considered in this regard.³⁹

2.2.2.1 Relational Beings

The immanent Trinity has its relationship *ad intra*, while that of the economic Trinity is *ad extra*; and both are related to one another in that God's ontological being and redemptive work are related. Furthermore, the Trinity is also related to us, His beloved creature; for God is for us, and not solitary or isolated. He has lived in relationship and indeed lived as relationship (Johnson 2002:61). This conception of God and human beings as relational beings is the same in the West and the East. Schlich (2010:168) presents a denotation on the relational ontology of West and East as follows:

The concept of relational ontology proposes that everything that exists exists in, through, and as relationship. In the Western tradition Aquinas explored the idea that existence in and of itself is relational; that to be is to-be-in-relation. In the East the Cappadocians defended the relational essence

³⁹ As a liberation theologian and social Trinitarian, Boff makes the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and human society direct (cf. Grenz 2004:121). He seems to jump over too quickly from the inner-relationship of the Trinity to its social and communal connection, without a thoughtful dealing with the depth of the divine inner-relationship of the Trinity. However, Moltmann rightly states that, with a proper sequence of application of the Trinity to human communities, the Trinity is "the exemplar of true human community, first in the church and also in society", in Moltmann, J, "The Reconciling Powers of the Trinity in the Life of the Church and the World", in *The Reconciling Power of the Trinity*. Geneva Conference of European Churches, C.E.C. Occasional Paper No 15. Geneva: C.E.C (1983:56), quoted from Thomson (1994:106).

of personhood as constitutive of reality.⁴⁰

Although the word “person” for contemporary people means an isolated and independent being, LaCugna points out that, for Zizioulas, “[a] person is not an individual but an open and ecstatic reality, referring to others for his existence” (LaCugna 1991a:260). Athanasius, according to Pannenberg (1991:279), “had developed the thought that the idea of distinct persons already implies relations and cannot be achieved without them”. Yet it is the Cappadocians who introduced a firm foundation of beings within the concept of relation. The Cappadocians identifies “*hypostasis* (ousia)” with “*prosopon* (mask)”.⁴¹ Before them, “*hypostasis*” was not related to the meaning of “mask” or role at all, but rather referred to the individual existence. Through identifying the two terms, the Cappadocians transformed the meaning of person from an isolated being to a constitutive being (Moltmann 1993:171; Grenz 2004:136).⁴² As Zizioulas (2002:88) states: “[t]o be and to be in relation becomes identical”. The word “person” can refer to the divine Persons of the Trinity, who are in the divine relationship, and to human beings, who are also in relationship with the Trinity.

The understanding of a person as a being of communion or relation is also found in the African aphorism *Ubuntu* (Koopman 2003:199).⁴³ In the concept of *Ubuntu*, all is defined in the relationship with others; that is to say, if there is no you, there is no I. Thus, *Ubuntu* is representatively translated as “I am because you are” (Cilliers 2008:1; Campbell & Cilliers 2012:49). However, some scholars who have researched the practical meaning of *Ubuntu* or have lived under conditions where the real concept of *Ubuntu* is practised, agree that the meaning of *Ubuntu* cannot be easily captured within a few words. That means that it is difficult to define a relation-oriented concept within a literal or

⁴⁰ For God the relational being, esp. in Gregory of Nazianzus, see Torrance (2009:58ff).

⁴¹ Zizioulas, according to Papanikolaou, follows this identification to avoid a Sabellian or tritheistic interpretation of the Trinity, and to “express both the distinctiveness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and yet their inseparable unity or *koinonia*” (Papanikolaou 2003:367).

⁴² However, Moltmann himself dislikes using the term “person” in the same meaning as *hypostasis* because “person” is normally understood as an individual apart. Thus, he uses “mode of being” for the alternative of *hypostasis*. Pannenberg (1991:319) criticises the viewpoint of “mode of being”. According to him, the Trinity “must be understood not merely as different modes of being of the one divine subject...”.

⁴³ “The African definition of life and of humanity in terms of *ubuntu* coincides with the trinitarian understanding of human beings as interdependent, vulnerable and caring creatures” (Koopman 2003:199).

textual description. Thus, figurative expressions are at times mobilised to clarify the relation-oriented concept, but those metaphors could contain any possibility of equivocality in it. Surely, the concept of *Ubuntu* cannot satisfy us with regard to describing what “the Trinity is relational” means. Despite this limitation, there is a common point between them; one actually can be defined as one is in relation with others (Koopman 2003:200).

On the one hand, this relationship among the Trinity must not mean the three divine Persons are absorbed or captivated by others, but that all three are distinguished from each other, maintaining the unique positions and functions of each, i.e. they have individual natures.⁴⁴ The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit *is* God, but the Father *is not* the Son; the Son *is not* the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit *is not* the Father. Therefore, the Trinity shares the same divine essence, but does not intrude on the other Person. The individual nature of each Person is manifested in their unique ministries to the world. The Father raised the Son from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit, but not *vice versa*. The will Son ultimately give the glory to the Father, but not *vice versa*. As Rahner rightly indicates, the Son is the only Person who was able to be incarnated, because only He presents God’s image and personality visibly (Sanders 2001:176).

On the other hand, the individual nature is determined in relationships with others.⁴⁵ Moltmann, in this regard, states: “In respect of divine nature the Father has to be called ‘*individua substantia*’, but in respect of the Son we have to call him ‘Father’” (1993:172).⁴⁶ The unbreakable communion of the Trinity enables the coincidence of the one and the many “that none of the three can be conceived apart from the others” (Grenz 2004:137-138). In this sense, “being a person” means “existing-in-relationship” (Moltmann 1993:172). Thus, the three divine Persons are independent in divine nature,

⁴⁴ In this regard, Jüngel (2001:77) says God’s being is self-related being. This *perichoretic* relationship is dealt with in more detail when we demonstrate the manner of our union with God in Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ Cf. “... each mode of God’s being becomes what it is only with the two other modes of being” (Jüngel 2001:77).

⁴⁶ Cf. “Now a Father makes a Son, and a Son makes a Father; 104 and they who thus become reciprocally related out of each other to each other cannot in any way by themselves simply become so related to themselves, that the Father can make Himself a Son to Himself, and the Son render Himself a Father to Himself. And the relations which God establishes, them does He also guard. A father must needs have a son, in order to be a father; so likewise a son, to be a son, must have a father. It is, however, one thing to have, and another thing to be. For instance, in order to be a husband, I must have a wife; I can never myself be my own wife.” (Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, in *ANF* vol.3:604)

but dependent in individual natures in the relationship with one another, for they are not autonomous individuals regarding each other. Zizioulas (1995:49)⁴⁷ confirms:

The mystery of the one God in three persons points to a way of being which precludes individualism and separation (or self-sufficiency and self-existence) as a criterion of Multiplicity. The ‘one’ not only does not precede –logically or otherwise– the ‘many’, but, on the contrary, requires the ‘many’ from the very start in order to exist.

Therefore, each Person is “being identified by unique attributes and being in relation with others”⁴⁸ at the same time (Grenz 2004:136). Moltmann uses two verbs to explicate this, saying that “[t]he Trinitarian Persons *subsist* in the common divine nature; they *exist* in their relations to one another” (1993:173).⁴⁹ The distinction lies in and for the relations otherwise it has no meaning (Johnson 2002:51). That is to say, the divine relationship makes God divine (Pannenberg 1991:321).⁵⁰

Dealing with the fact that God is relational, one thing must be confirmed at all times – God the Trinity is not bound by any restriction or condition. Firstly, in the sense of inner relationship, the Triune God is God, although there was no divine relationship among the three Persons. Secondly, the Trinity in the inner communion, which is sufficient itself, invites His people to the divine communion within the history of creation, fall, and salvation. Thus, the economic procession is not necessary for God, but happens in His willing autonomy, which remains a mystery to us. LaCugna (1991a:1) describes this as the life of the Trinity:

The life of God – precisely because God triune – does not belong to God alone. God who dwells in

⁴⁷ Quoted from Grenz (2004:138).

⁴⁸ The above expression is in fact used by Greek and Roman philosophers to give their viewpoint of “being a person”. Although they viewed the above two attributes as something added to “one’s essential nature (that is, one’s *ousia* or *hypostasis*)”, the distinction of “unique attribute” and “relational being” as the explanation of a person, is an adequate description in terms of the two dimensions of simultaneously being both an independent and a relational being.

⁴⁹ The inner-relationship of the Trinity, that the three Persons is One but at the same time are not absorbed or mixed, is a very important concept for the following discussion on deification. In any sense, deification does not mean human elevation to God’s divine essence or becoming God in essence, but participation in the “divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4), keeping our own beings as creatures.

⁵⁰ Cf. Thomson (1994:144): “[T]he unity of the Trinity is basically related to the being in communion of the three persons. The unity of God is thus neither in being nor in persons as such but in the being of God as expressed in the persons who in themselves and in their interrelatedness constitute the divine Trinity.”

inaccessible light and eternal glory comes to us in the face of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Because of God's outreach to the creature, God is said to be essentially relational, ecstatic, fecund, alive as passionate love.

Shortly, "God is one but is not alone" (Johnson 2002:47); thus, God's invitation to the life of the Trinity is not for the communion itself but is God's grace. At this point, His being is in becoming; the Father became the Creator, the Son became the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit became the Sanctifier.⁵¹ However, His becoming always remains the being itself, because God's becoming does not refer to becoming something else. All changes from becoming are under the influence of chronology and imperfection, but God is perfect and everlasting. Then, becoming but unchanged, God invites us into His being again – from the Creator-creature relationship to the Father-Son, i.e. family relationship. We are thus able to call God not only my Creator, but also my Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

2.2.2.2 Soteriology in the Relational Trinity

If the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are to be distinguished, the name of God we call to must not be univocal in nature. That is to say, when we name God in the economic Trinity, we may use the language of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier; however, the immanent Trinity does not allow us to name the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, because these names only belong to the inner-Trinitarian relationship. The Father is the father of the Son, not of us; the Son is the son of the Father, not of us; the Spirit is the spirit of the Son and God, not of us; thus, we cannot call Him the Father, the Son, and the (Holy) Spirit. However, the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are not different or separate, but the same, as discussed previously. We are allowed to call God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit because the three divine Persons draw us altogether into their divine

⁵¹ Two aspects must be ensured for the above statement: 1) the creation, the redemption and the sanctification or deification of human beings are co-works of the Trinity. They do not belong to each Person separately; 2) the becoming of beings cannot be characterised chronologically. If we do so, that means we admit the priority of the immanent Trinity in terms of ontology. However, we have already disproved such a priority. Thus, the order or the sequence of God's being and becoming should be maintained in the mystery.

relationship. When we call Jesus the Son, it does not mean He is our Son, but that He is the Son of the Father. Therefore, we name the Son in the relationship between the Father and the Son, and our relationship with the Father as well. Moltmann should be cited in this matter, stating that “in respect of the Son we have to call him ‘Father’” (1993:172). At this point, the immanent Trinity as well as the economic Trinity is not transcendent or speculative, but the way God enters into relationship with us.

The patristic tradition and Gregory Palamas teach that for one who once believed but lost their faith, God is not “Father” but just becomes “Creator” (Mantzarides 1984:118-119). In other words, the names of the immanent Trinity are rather objective whereas the names of the economic Trinity are relational.⁵² True relationship with God is then only possible for those who have faith in God through the Holy Spirit in Jesus. Without this true knowledge of God, nobody is allowed to call God the Father; Jesus the Son; nor the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. Johnson (2002:76) indicates that he prefers not to use the name of Creator-Redeemer-Sanctifier for two reasons; creation, redemption and sanctification are co-works of the Trinity, and those names are not the language of relationship. The expression “not the language of relationship” can mean two things: firstly, as Johnson states, in the inner-relationship of the three names, for instance, creator is able to stand by itself without the other two and, secondly, in the outer-relationship, anyone can use the name redeemer based solely on the fact of one’s redemption. Thus, relationship is one of the most important dimensions in understanding the Trinity, as well as human beings (Johnson 2002:37).⁵³

This relationship saves us and makes us perfect. According to Kärkkäinen, the Eastern Fathers never regarded the creation of human beings as being perfect before the Fall: “Humans were created imperfect and they had to be tested as free rational beings in order to become perfect through the stages of growth and maturity” (2004:21). The statement that Adam and Eve were not perfect is not

⁵² Gregory of Nazianzus says the Father is, “not a name either of an essence or an action”, the name of a relation (*Orat.* 29.16, in *NPNF* 2nd vol.7 307).

⁵³ Johnson states: “‘At the center of the universe is a relationship.’ That is the most fundamental truth I know. At the center of the universe is a community. It is out of that relationship that you and I were created and redeemed. And it is for that relationship that you and I were created and redeemed! And it turns out that there is a three-fold-ness to that relationship. It turns out that the community is a Trinity. The center of reality is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (2002:37).

incompatible with God's perfect creation, because God's creation is to be understood as perfect in His everlasting council from the eschatological perspective. They had no idea of how God exists, viz., they did not know the Triune God. They knew God the Creator made them out of dust, but lacked the divine knowledge concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit and the relationship of the Three. If they knew the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they might have thought that there were two other Gods besides their Creator; if they knew the three to be one God indeed, they might not have understood why God should appear in various shapes.⁵⁴ Before being saved by God's grace through the Son in the Holy Spirit, we are not even able to approach to the mystery of the Trinity. How can we know God is three and one at the same time but through the redemptive history in which the Trinity has been revealed and through being saved by the work of the Trinity? Thus, the Trinity is God's way of being: God for us – for our salvation and for relationship with us (Johnson 2002:38). In this regard, LaCugna urges that Trinitarian theology is never separated from the doctrine of soteriology (Kim 2008:75). Rahner (2001:21) also states: “[t]he isolation of the treatise of the Trinity *has* to be wrong. There *must* be a connection between Trinity and man. The Trinity is a mystery of *salvation*, otherwise it would never have been revealed”. Therefore, Adam and Eve were imperfect in the knowledge of God the Trinity. Although they were created flawless by the Triune God, after being saved by the Triune God they were able to participate in the Trinitarian relationship, then started to become perfect.

The doctrine and the life of the Trinity always remain a mystery to us. That does not mean that the doctrine is vague and “mysterious”, but means that we are not able to comprehend the mystery of the Trinity fully with our understanding. There, in a sense, are three responses to this mystery: searching for the meaning with intelligence, ignoring it with indifference, or worshipping it with doxology. We are to follow the last.

⁵⁴ This imaginable misunderstanding of God from Adam and Eve actually arose in history with the name of tritheism and modalism. We deal with these heresies in the following discourse.

2.3 WORSHIP: GOD FOR US

God the Trinity does not exist alone or only communicates inwardly, but intends to enter into a relationship with us and is actually doing this. As explored previously, God for God is God for us; God in Himself is God in us. The relationship between God and us is initially manifested in salvation, which has its proper response within worship. Thus, worship is not invented or initiated from the side of human beings, but has its foundation in God's salvation and His willingness to permit us to participate in Him in the salvation of the Trinity. It is the basis and ground of our worship and life in the Trinity.

Therefore, worship at its starting point is the place for the relationship between the relational Trinity and human beings. Because the holy communication of the three divine Persons is sufficient and His glory is perfect, our participation in, or glorification of, God are not required. Rather, because God is for us, worship can be established to be the response from the side of human beings.

On the groundwork of the previous study on the fact that God the Trinity is relational and for us, the approach to worship should also be noted in the Trinitarian perspective. In this regard, criticism of the etymological definition as the methodology of the study of worship is to be presented with two points; that in the etymological definition, our behaviour towards God is stressed while God can be isolated from the worshippers; and the etymological definition cannot highlight the relational attribute of God. We then provide a relational approach to worship based on the relational and soteriological prospective of the Trinity.

2.3.1 Etymological Definition: Delimitation

Generally, four words are employed to define worship in the etymological approach: שָׁחָה and

עֲבַד from the Old Testament, and προσκυνέω and λατρεύω from the New Testament.⁵⁵ Normally, the Hebrew word שָׁחָה is translated προσκυνέω, which means “to bow down” and “to make obeisance before”; and λατρεύω is regarded a synonym for עֲבַד in the meaning of “to serve” in *LXX* (Nakarai 1973:282; Martin 1976:11-12; Hurtado 2000:65-69; White 2001:25-28; Niccum *et al* 2009:118; Dunn 2010:8-12). Thus, two significant conceptions are extracted from the etymological observation: Worship is a certain action of “prostration in obeisance”, and worship is a “service”. Regarding the former, a somewhat similar meaning can be found in the origin of the English translation. The English word “worship” comes from the Anglo-Saxon *weorthscipe*, which literally means *weorth* (worthy) and *-scipe* (-ship) afterwards developed into *worthship*, and then into worship. Thus, worship, according to the transmission from Anglo-Saxon, basically means to attribute worth to someone (Martin 1976:10; White 2001:25); and the latter has common ground with the German word *Gottesdienst*, which means “God’s service to us and our service to God” (White 2001:25-26).

This etymological approach has strong points: Firstly, these definitions of worship facilitates a contribution to Christian worship in a manner that provides a good model of what worshippers’ attitude should be before God. As Martin indicates, it can be an underlying principle of worship (1976:11). Secondly, this study helps us to estimate how the first worship community in the New Testament performed worship to God.

Although it has some benefit, defining Christian worship from one or two words, however, is insufficient. We provide two reasons for the criticism of this approach.

2.3.1.1 The Limitation of the Word Study

Firstly, to comprehend any meaning from the Bible, more is normally required regarding the

⁵⁵ Other words are sometimes used to refer to worship, for example *epikaleisthai*, *sebein*, *eusebein* (Dunn 2010:13-18); *thusía*, *prospchorá*, *threskeía*, *sébein*, and *homologeín* (White 2001:26-28). However, of the many words that are used the most frequently referred words are the four mentioned above and For this reason we mainly criticise them for this reason.

observation of the context than only concentrating on a word. An error can occur in granting exceeding significance to a few words only and not giving attention to the context in which these words have their fuller meaning.

Luter suggests that one of the meanings of worship is “service”, which does not merely mean that worship should be done on Sunday, but that worship must be part of the believers’ everyday life as a service to God. To construct his argument, Luter relies on the meaning of the Greek verbs. Investigating instances of the employment of προσκυνέω and λατρεύω in the New Testament, Luter (1988:338-339) points out that the verb προσκυνέω is used only once by Paul (1 Cor 14:25) to refer to worship, but λατρεύω is used more commonly, while John normally used προσκυνέω instead of λατρεύω. Thus, in his opinion, John stresses the ritual dimension of worship more with προσκυνέω, while worship, for Paul, rather means service, with a wider spectrum of meaning than the narrower meaning of the formal occasion. However, Luter himself admits that one and four usages in Paul’s writing seem too few to be scrutinised for a final conclusion. It is not enough indeed to estimate Paul’s theology on worship from only four cases. It is necessary rather to observe Pauline writings, consider how services of worship were performed in the Churches to whom Paul sent his letters or how Paul himself attended the worship service in the context and circumstances of his day.

As such, Luter extracts the conception of worship from the Bible through the word λατρεύω and brings it to the present world to apply the concept into our worship. Wallace also researches the concept of worship in the Bible through the word προσκυνέω. Unlike Luter, he then applies his result to the whole of the New Testament and not to actual worship, to interpret the usage of λατρεύω in the New Testament. Luter and Wallace seem to take opposite approaches in terms of their applications; however, their methodology is the same – an etymological or word study.

Wallace (1996:172) denotes that the verb προσκυνέω has different meanings according to whether it has a dative or accusative form as a direct object. In his opinion, a dative direct object is used for deity worship when the worshipper has a true relationship with the one who is being

worshipped, while an accusative direct object is used when a false deity is worshipped. He then adds some exceptions to his theory; if the text is focusing on a personal relationship with false deity, a dative direct object can be used; and an accusative direct object can be employed for true worship when the worshipper has a misconception of God, or worship is at a distance. However, his vindication of the exception seems to be insufficient, as he admits himself: “The explanation given above is only suggestive and cannot handle all of the data” (Wallace 1996:173). Niccum *et al.* (2009) refute Wallace’s suggestion, citing many usages of the verb προσκυνέω in the New Testament, *LXX* and the early Christian literatures. In their estimation, it can be said that a dative and accusative direct object of the verb προσκυνέω was used for divine worship and idol worship without distinction. It is a simpler and clearer explanation of the verb according to *BDAG*, where προσκυνέω is defined with various meanings in the New Testament: “worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before” to human beings and to transcendent beings – deities in monotheistic cults, image worship in polytheistic cults, the devil and Satanic beings, angels, and the risen Lord (*BDAG* s.v. προσκυνέω, 882-883).

Regarding word study with reference to the Old Testament, Nakarai (1973:282) indicates that worship in the Old Testament cannot easily be said to be the same as Christian worship or Jewish worship. The word he adopted is shachah, the Hebrew word used when David worshipped Saul (1 Sam 24:8), Lot worshipped angels (Gen 19:1), and Balaam worshipped the angel (Num 22:31), as well as being used for God-worship (Gen 47:31; Ex 20:5; Deut 5:9; Jer 7:1, 2). Afterwards, he provides other examples of mixed usage of worship-related words such as ‘avad, ‘atsav, segad (Nakarai 1973:283-284). In doing so, he suggests that it is improper to investigate the meaning of worship in the Bible from only a few words. Therefore, a word in the text is not to be assigned one meaning, but must be interpreted diversely according to the context.

Word study as such has limitations, while cautious observance of the context that encloses the word is able to provide a more intensive and accurate meaning of the word in each text. It is noteworthy to listen to the warning by Nida, one of the most influential persons in the field of Bible translation, concerning narrow translation which relies on the meaning of the word only. He

articulates this stance as “word worship” (Nida & Neff 2002:46).

2.3.1.2 No Differentiation with Worship in Other Religions

Besides the limitations of the word study, the etymological definition of worship has another shortcoming in that it defines worship in other religions in the same way. Thus, it is insufficient to articulate the uniqueness of Christian worship with the meaning of “prostration” or “service” through a study of some Greek and Hebrew words.

Firstly, “prostration” or “bowing down” to an awe-inspiring being is not exclusive to Christianity, but is very common and natural behaviour in many religions. In Buddhism, for instance, prostration is a very typical method used to show one respect to Buddha;⁵⁶ *Salah* is the special type of Islamic prayer, which is to be repeated five times each day with the action of “prostrating and touching the floor with the hands and forehead” (Abdul-Rauf 1992:71-72); in Hinduism, neem trees are regarded as goddesses, thus, bowing down to the trees is not a strange thing (Haberman 2010:182); and bowing down to pay obeisance is also found in the ancestor worship of Confucianism. Such bowing down is very common behaviour indeed for showing respect to others, especially to idols, nature, or gods in ancient Far East Asia.⁵⁷

Secondly, “service” is also a common term in other religions and even the rites in the service can be similar. Buddhism uses the term service to depict their rite (cf. Hur 2010:79, 84, 86) and any effort taken for their members (Kim 2009:157) or even for oneself (Reynolds 2002:335). Pye (2002:126-127) describes the rite of Won Buddhism, which has recently risen in South Korea and has the same religious and ideal foundation to Buddhism in spatial and ritual dimensions. It seems to be

⁵⁶ For instance, see Cattoi (2008:119): “The Buddha is effectively transfigured into the Lord of the cosmos, to whom the individual devotee pays homage as the entire universe bows down in obeisance.”

⁵⁷ It might have seemed, for Western missionaries in Korea a hundred years ago, that bowing down to the dead ancestors is absolute idol worship, but for the Korean people it is just the usual action to take towards ancestors, whether they are alive or dead (Oh 2010:329).

rather similar to the rites of Christianity,⁵⁸ and in Islam the term service has the same meaning as worship: “The root meaning of the word *'ibadah* is the same as that of the word *'abd*, and of the term *'ubidiyyah*, i.e. servitude and humility to Allah, and devotion and full commitment to his service and worship” (Abdul-Rauf 1992:75).

For the early Christians, John and Paul alike, whom they worshipped was more significant than how they conducted this worship.⁵⁹ The rite of Christian worship had not yet been developed in that era. This means that how they worshipped or what worship was might have had less significance to them than that it does to us today. Finding the etymological meaning of worship in the Bible and applying it to today’s liturgy therefore has intrinsic limitations. Furthermore, we cannot attain evidence of a connection between God and worshippers through the etymological approach. Thus, worship must not be described using a one-sided definition, which is a human being’s action or determination, but as a reciprocal concept, like when we explored the notion of the inner – and outer – relationship of the Trinity. God, who is worshipped, is relational and worshippers, who were created by the relational God, are also relational; thus, the divine action between them, worship, must be relational. We now turn our attention to a relational definition of worship to examine how the relational God enters into relationship with His people in worship.

⁵⁸ The detail of the rite of Won Buddhism is as follows: “The complete procedure takes one hour. Of considerable importance, too, are the regular assemblies in the local temples or ‘teaching halls’ (*kyotang*). These have something of the appearance of a plain Methodist or Presbyterian church. The congregation sits on benches like church pews, while to the front is a raised platform for preaching. Behind the place where the preacher stands is a large version of Il-Wön-Sang. The service consists mainly of silent meditation, preaching and hymn singing and is followed by refreshments and social interaction. These assemblies evidently strengthen the community spirit of the participants and encourage them to order their daily lives in accordance with the moral aspects of the teaching of Won Buddhism” (Pye 2002:126-127). As the author points out, the rite of Won Buddhism is almost the same as the worship service of Christianity. However, the obvious difference is that there is no relationship with the being that they worship, which we will discuss soon.

⁵⁹ In the passage in John 4, what the Samaritan woman asked is about where we worship, which indeed refers to the matter of how, but Jesus’ answer is “worship the Father in the spirit and truth”, i.e. following the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the passage, Jesus opened up a new perspective on worship and the answer was about whom we worship – the Trinity.

2.3.2 Relational Definition

2.3.2.1 Monotheism vs Trinitarianism

As we explicated previously, the God we worship is the Triune God who exists in the relationship among the three divine Persons and who is willing to enter into a relationship with His creatures. This Trinitarian worship involving the conception of the relational God and worshippers is found only in Christianity. A concept on the opposite side is monotheism, according to which a lone god exists, sometimes even apart from the worshippers, with no relationship with them.

Monotheistic worship definitely is not Christian. Although the Bible states that we believe in one God, we indeed worship the Triune God – one and/but three. Volf argues, in an interview with Galli, that Muslims, Jews and Christians worship the same God as long as they believe in one God, who is distinct from the world and created all things except God (Volf & Galli 2011:30).⁶⁰ Focusing on how we live peacefully with others who belong to different religions, such as Muslims, Volf endeavours to find the commonality of gods in each religion, viz. monotheism. In Volf's articulation we discern the significant characteristic of monotheism as that the god in monotheism is distinguished from the world because that distinction affirms the god's uniqueness. In Islam, worship and obedience to only one god is related to the sin *shirk*. For them, "[t]o witness to the oneness of God is to reject every idea of a similarity between God and creature" (Migliore 2008:318). The *Shirk* is to be rigorous in its enforcement, and once committed, cannot be forgiven. This shows Islam is a form of radical monotheism (Migliore 2008:318-319; Volf 2011:129). Thus, in Islam, the god's total otherness is dissociated from its worshippers, forbidding them to come near, whereas the Triune God allows us access to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, and the same God invites His people into communication through worship (Thomson 1994:7).

Therefore, deification, becoming God, is impossible for monotheistic religions like Islam; in

⁶⁰ Volf also argues that Christians, Jews and Muslims worship one and the same God, but that their understanding of God is different: Christians believe in one God in the Trinitarian way, but Jews and Muslims do not (2011:188-191).

Christianity, however, it is possible to speak of deification in the relationship with God which is initiated by God who created His people in His image and likeness. Muslims, like Christians, do not seek an earthly blessing through worship, but they, unlike Christians, strive to be worthy servant slaves of Allah (Abdul-Rauf 1992:74-75), while Christians are adopted as God's sons.⁶¹ In other words, only in the Trinitarian faith is an intimate relationship between God and people possible.

The oneness of the three Persons of the Trinity is ensured, as even from our side it is true that one Person is totally related to others. Thus, we cannot consider one Person separate from the Triune God.⁶² As Newbigin argues, there is no way "to preach Jesus without reference to the Trinity" (Johnson 2002:18). This relationship is the same as the revelation of the Holy Spirit that no one can say that Jesus is the Lord except through the insight of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3).

2.3.2.2 Worship is a Covenantal Event

One of the most notable discrepancies between monotheism and Trinitarianism occurs in terms of relations.⁶³ A god in monotheism is alone and not necessarily related to other beings, but bestows all things that worshippers need by dominating over them. However, the Triune God, who is an ontologically related being, is related to His creatures, uniting them with Him. This relating character is not inevitable for God but lies in His mysterious economy. His relationship is not unilateral, but reciprocal and covenantal. McKim's simplest definition of covenant is: "A formal agreement or treaty between two parties that establishes a relationship and in which obligations and mutual responsibilities may be enacted" (1996:64). The covenantal relationship, which is initiated by God

⁶¹ In their worship, Hindus ultimately aim to be aware of god in all forms of nature (Rambachan 1990:10-11). Thus, all nature can possibly become god in Hinduism, which is exactly opposite to Islam.

⁶² In this regard, Gregory of Nazianzus once says: "No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One. When I think of any One of the Three I think of Him as the Whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking of escapes me. I cannot grasp the greatness of That One so as to attribute a greater greatness to the Rest. When I contemplate the Three together, I see but one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the Undivided Light" (*Oration* 40.41, in *NPNF 2nd* vol.7: 375).

⁶³ However, this does not mean that the types of social Trinitarianism is the only Christian option. For the development and the current study of various types of Trinitarianism, see Grenz (2004).

and was fully revealed in the cross of Jesus, is also maintained through the Holy Spirit in the life of His Church, especially in worship. In Christian worship, unlike in other religions, the God who is worshipped first asks to His people to worship Him. By doing so He manifests His attribution that reveals that He intends to enter into a relationship with His people.

The Methodist Church holds a special service called the “covenant renewal service” on the first Sunday of each year. The service was started by John Wesley on 11 August 1755 for church members to rededicate themselves to God (Tripp 1986:197; McKim 1996:64). However, participants in the service raised questions, indicating that the rededication to God should be affirmed at all worship services and not only on the first Sunday of the year, and by all Christians, not only by Methodists (Tripp 1986:198). It is indeed right that every worship service is and must be covenantal. In worship, God renews His relationship with us, and we are to rededicate ourselves to Him. In the Son’s blood, the God-human relationship can be maintained and renewed through the Holy Spirit. Giving thanks to the Father, we participate in the Son’s blood, ask the Holy Spirit to come and be with us, and then instantly praise the Trinity. The entire process is conducted in every worship service.

As Jeremiah prophesied (Jer 31:31-33) the old covenant that was broken by people is now put into the heart of God’s people. As the agent, God makes a new covenant with His people; the flesh and the blood of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:20, 1 Cor 11:25).⁶⁴ Therefore, at first, the Eucharist has its significance as the new covenant.⁶⁵ From the time of the Early Church,⁶⁶ the Eucharist has not only

⁶⁴ We do not intend a supersessionist way of reading the Bible here by using an old-new covenant frame. The covenant of God is never revoked, but the old covenant is fulfilled and perfected with the new covenant (Brueggemann 1998:292; 2007:191). Rata (2007:27) summarizes Brueggemann’s view on the relationship between old and new covenant as follows: “He [Brueggemann] articulates the promises of the new covenant emphasizing that the new covenant concerns the Christian community as well as the Israelite community. He sees both similarity and contrast between the old and the new covenant, and acknowledges the tension between Jeremiah and the book of Hebrews, asserting that the New Testament text must be read with the Old Testament and the Jewish background in mind”.

⁶⁵ For the significant recognition on the Eucharist of the Early Church through the history of the covenant, see Witvliet (1997:100-101).

⁶⁶ The reference to “the Early Church” does not mean that there was a coordinated or unified liturgy in that era among all the churches. It is a known fact that the actual rites on the Eucharist, for example, must be understood as being differentiated at each local church according to its particular social and regional background. However, due to lack of resources of liturgy of that time, it is impossible to draw a clear picture of the liturgy of those days. A few resources like *Didache*, *AT* and *AC* representatively show us liturgies of certain areas of certain eras. Thus, the expression “the Early Church” does not intend to suggest that one, unified liturgy of all the churches from

been one of the elements of the worship service, but has been the essence of the service in Christianity (Grisbrooke 1986b:501). Thus, it is settled that the place of the Eucharist should be in the worship service. The Eucharist is not performed outside of the worship service, and there has been no time in which the Eucharist was excluded from the worship service since the time of the Early Church.⁶⁷ It is impossible, therefore, to regard worship as not being covenantal while the Eucharist is covenantal. Witvliet (1997:105-107) summarises the essential components of covenant theology in five statements, all of which can be applied to aspects of worship: 1) “God is a God of action and promise”: In worship we celebrate and recapitulate God’s action, which is culminated in the cross of Christ, according to His promise (Webber 1994:67). God’s promise is activated through the liturgy of the Church; 2) “Israel’s God is one who apparently desires relationship, not separation. Thus, a covenant worldview is one whose metaphysic is more relational than absolute”: We have already observed that the Triune God is relational – in terms of inner and outer relationship – and have affirmed that in Trinitarianism, unlike monotheism, God intends to enter into a relationship with His people. God comes to our worship service in the word and the Sacraments; 3) “In the covenant relationship, it is God who is primary. It is God who initiates relationship”: Worship does not originate from human beings, but from God. It is God who commands His people to worship Him according to His willingness. Worship “is *first and foremost* something the triune God does, our actions initiated and encompassed by his” (Letham 2002:94); 4) “A covenant relationship is completed by faithful and thankful obedience. This obedience does not establish or effect covenant relationship, but is a response to it”: We gather on a Sunday according to the day of Jesus’ resurrection in the hope of our resurrection as well. In worship and in the Eucharist we give thanks to God, for He gave His only son for us, in the hymns and the offerings. This obedient thankfulness cannot make God come to us or fabricate any benefit to us. Rather, we indeed need to do nothing except show gratitude as a response to what God has done for us; 5) “A covenant is sealed by ritual ratification”: All divine liturgies are

2nd century to 4th century existed, but merely represents a collective description of some elements from the liturgy of some of the churches in question.

⁶⁷ Zwingli split the service of the Eucharist and of the Word at Maundy Thursday, 1525, and the result is still seen in some Reformed churches today. However, in the light of available resources, the Eucharist was generally not excluded from worship in the Early Church.

not something invented by people, but what God commands us to keep. In the order of liturgy, God confirms His gracious promise and firmly enters into the relationship.

The consequence of the new covenant is a proper relationship between God and us in that God will be our God and we will be God's people. Because the appropriate relationship between worshippers and the God who is worshipped is a decisive aspect, Christian worship can be described as a place of making a new covenant with God. In this relationship, the participants are united with God by eating the Son's body and drinking His blood.

2.3.2.3 Union with the Trinity

For Calvin, the union with God started with the forgiveness of our sins (*Inst.* 4.1.20). However, the forgiveness does not come free, but requires holiness or righteousness, which inherently does not belong to us. Thus, we are to be dependent on Jesus' righteousness, which is imparted to us through God's mercy (*Inst.* 3.6.2; 3.14.6; 3.15.1). Thus, we sinners are able to be righteous in the relationship with Jesus. Dunn (1988:40-41) finds that "in Hebrew thought צְדָקָה // צְדִיקָה [righteousness] is essentially a concept of *relation*",⁶⁸ Johnson (2002:53) also states that righteousness simply means "right relationship". "Right relationship" with Christ signifies that one must be united with Him. For Calvin, therefore, salvation and the sanctification of the saints are bestowed on those who are in the union with Christ: "there is no sanctification apart from communion with Christ" (*Inst.* 3.14.4). Being inscribed in the book of life means being bound in the union with Christ (*Inst.* 3.24.5).

The union with Christ is a mystery because it is incomprehensible by its very nature;⁶⁹ thus, Christ shows its figure and image in visible signs for us (*Inst.* 4.17.1). This visible signs definitely refers to the Eucharist, in which we are drawn to the secret power of the Holy Spirit who is "the bond

⁶⁸ Cf. Cremer, H, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, 2nd ed. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann (1900:34-38).

⁶⁹ "'Mysterium hoc arcanae Christi cum piis unionis natura incomprehensibile est'. The 'mystery' is not treated by Calvin as an intellectual puzzle. It is indeed inexplicable, but the emphasis is on the effectual transformation of the believer, through union with Christ" (*Inst.* 4.17.1n5).

of our union with Christ” (*Inst.* 4.17.33). As we observed previously, the Eucharist can never be excluded from worship and must not be performed outside of worship. Thus, White (2001:23) understands that for Calvin, “[t]he ultimate purpose of Christian worship is union with God”.⁷⁰ Then, Christ leads us to “a firm union with God” (*Inst.* 2.15.5).

Thomson applies the union with God as only by Jesus’ righteousness. He states that God accepts our worship not because of our being worthy, but because of Jesus’ righteousness. Then he articulates that the union with God is Trinitarian: “By his Spirit we are united with Christ, adopted as children in the Son and so brought to the Father” (Thomson 1994:100). This neither means that the ultimate destiny of the union is God the Father while the Son and the Holy Spirit are merely mediators for the union; nor that worship is to be granted only to the Father. In a sense, the Father is “the source and goal of the liturgy” because He is “the source and end of all blessings of creation and salvation” (Wood 2011:383).⁷¹ Nevertheless, the fact that the union with God is Trinitarian presents God’s aim for us: our partaking of the life of the Trinity in worship (Butin 2001:98). We now turn to how the Trinitarian doctrine has been formed in the liturgical context and practically performed in worship as well.

2.4 THE SHAPING OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: *LEX ORANDI LEX CREDENDI*

The misunderstanding and denial of the Godhead of the Son and the Holy Spirit appeared in the process of the constitution of the doctrine of the Trinity and instantly forced the Church to define its faith explicitly. In many cases this explication was manifested in their worship services, because, as we see from the old adage *lex orandi est lex credendi*, the rule of prayer is the rule of belief, and *vice*

⁷⁰ White (2001:23) cites Calvin’s commentary on Ps 24:7 for this matter in which Calvin says: “We are lifted up even to God by the exercise of religion. What is the design of the preaching of the Word, the sacraments, the holy assemblies, and the whole external government of the church, but that we may be united (*conjungant*) to God”.

⁷¹ We have observed the headship of the Father as the “font of the divinity” to denote the concept of relational Trinity, and have confirmed that this does not imply any hierarchism among the three divine Persons.

versa. On the one hand, the Church's beliefs regulate and shape its celebrations, otherwise the faith would be abstract and impractical; on the other hand, the liturgy generates belief, that is to say, the liturgy is a source of faith (Phan 2011a:10).⁷² Therefore, regarding the development of the Trinitarian doctrine, the right confession of the Godhead of the Son and the Holy Spirit should have its place in worship; and right faith in the Trinity is generated in the appropriate order of worship.

LaCugna (1991a:1) starts her book *God for us* with the statement: "The doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a practical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life". Recent revival of the doctrine of the Trinity shows that Trinitarianism must not be dealt with in a speculative way. At the council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), the Godhead of the Son was confirmed and that demonstrates that the doctrine or theology is not an exclusively scholastic possession, but it is an intrinsically ecclesial activity on behalf of the Church (Phan 2011a:9). It is not an exaggerated articulation that the Trinitarian doctrine was developed as a solution to "various theological controversies which were generated by different interpretations of Christian worship" (LaCugna 1990:1295). Thus, from the old debate of *filioque* to today's controversy over the fatherhood (or motherhood) of God, theoretical or doctrinal disputes always entail liturgical implications, which should be presented with the proper rites in Christian worship.

The two distinctive matters of Christianity's succession from Judaism are the institution of the Eucharist and the faith in the Trinity. The Old Testament does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity, although many passages seem to infer a shadow of the Trinity.⁷³ Thus, the proper starting point for the Trinity should be the New Testament, where Jesus, who worshipped God, distinguished God from Himself by calling God His Father, but at the same time identified Himself as God, stating that God the Father and He is one. The matter that Jesus is God and that He and the Father are one, stirred up a liturgical problem for the Early Church, whether they should worship Jesus or not. At this

⁷² Johnson (2010:30) also says: "There is a mutually edifying relationship between worship and theology: worship is ritualized theology; theology is reflective worship", which he quotes from Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox (2005:410).

⁷³ For example, Gen 1:26, 11:7; Isa 6:3.

point, Arius urged that if God the Father alone is not generated, eternal, and without beginning, then the subordinated Son and Spirit must be either created or generated. The point is that if this is the case, then they must not be honoured or worshipped by the believers who were also created from God the Father. Such worship for Arius instantly meant idolatry. What is confirmed from this is that the doctrine of the Trinity neither remained a doctrine itself or a speculative theological dispute; it was the result of the practical and liturgical controversy concerning whom we should and should not worship.

2.4.1 Worship the Son

The Godhead of the Holy Spirit has significance for the Christian faith and confession. It can be said, however, that the debate and consequent affirmation of the divinity of the Son is weightier in terms of laying the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁷⁴ The crisis that the Early Church was confronted with was the denial of the Godhead of the Son. Many heresies in that era emerged in the form of monotheism. Phan (2011a:6) recapitulates the monotheistic heresies of the Early Church related to confessing the Son as the Divinity as follows:

It [monotheism] takes two main forms. The first, attributed to Theodotus, Artemon, and Paul of Samosata, is called *dynamic monarchianism* or *adoptionism*, and according to this Jesus is a human being whom God adopts as his son at his incarnation or baptism. The second, attributed to Neotus, Praxeas, and Sabellius, is called *modalism*; according to this the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three ‘ways’ or ‘modes’ or ‘faces’ in which the one God acts in history but there is no real distinction among them. Another version of modalism is *patripassianism*, which holds that Jesus is God the Father who is incarnated and suffers as the son.⁷⁵

As such, the heresies that threatened the worship of the Son mainly arose from a monotheistic background, as was also the case with the denial of the Holy Spirit. Within the monotheistic

⁷⁴ LaCugna (1991b:154) indicates more plainly: “The doctrine of the Trinity is a summary statement of faith in the God of Jesus Christ”.

⁷⁵ However, the distinction between “patripassianism” and “modalism” is unnecessary; they can both simply be regarded as modalism (González 1984:77; Moltmann 1993:135).

confession of the Jewish religion, admitting that the Son and the Holy Spirit are the same God as the Father is unacceptable.

2.4.1.1 *Contra* Arianism (Subordinationism)

From the perspective of Arius, Jesus existed before the Creation but does not exist eternally; this is condensed in one statement: “there was a time when the Son was not”. Jesus, according to Arianism, was created as a mediator for communication between God and the creatures, because the one God by definition is an incommunicable being. Consequently, the Son cannot be the same as God the Father, who is the only everlasting being and the Creator of all things, although the Son is also divine in a sense.

In Arianism the distinctive three divine Persons are admitted, but the equality of the three is denied. The divinity is given from the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit, and their divinity is not the same in ability or power as that of the Father’s. Because the priority of the divinity belongs to the Father only in this thought, it is also called subordinationism.⁷⁶ For Arius, God’s essence cannot be shared or given to others, including the other Persons of the Trinity. Thus, a polytheistic problem could emerge in that, if the Father and the Son were of the same essence, there would be two gods. In Arianism Jesus therefore cannot be the true God, but only a perfect creature created because of the communication between God and other creatures. Thus, it can be said that Arius’s delusion is derived from a persistent idea of persistent adherence to one God. From this point of view, “Arianism is monotheistic Christianity in its purest form” (Moltmann 1993:133). Thus, in the light of Arianism, the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot be worshipped or praised, for the Son is a creature and the Holy Spirit is not a concrete being, but all honour and glory must be given to God the Father.⁷⁷ One of the most

⁷⁶ Broadly speaking, adoptionism reveals the same error as Arianism in terms of the denial of the divinity of the Son. According to adoptionism, Jesus was adopted by the Father through the Holy Spirit so as to be the first fruit of all successive believers.

⁷⁷ However, in this case, God cannot be called the Father because the Father is a relational name in the relationship with the Son – the immanent Trinity, as observed previously. Therefore, Arius’s statement that there

effective defences against Arianism for Christian worship and faith was Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*. According to Basil, all the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification takes place "through" the Son and "in the Spirit" (Wainwright 1997:238). In other words, without Them, God does not work for us. Therefore, God is worshipped through the Son in the Spirit (John 4:23-24).

The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) condemned Arianism by the affirmation of the Son and the Father being of the same essence (*homoousios*). Therefore, the Son is fully divine and equal to the Father. It is important that the affirmation of the Son as God, the same as the Father, was made in the creed, which is confessed in worship by believers: "God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father".⁷⁸

As observed in the controversy with Arianism, LaCugna estimates two results with reference to liturgy: Firstly, "the liturgy quickly became an arena in which various doctrinal stances struggled to establish themselves". Secondly, just after the Council of Nicaea in Antioch, "some Christians for polemical reasons began to pray to the Father *and* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit"(LaCugna 1991b:164). In both cases, the rule of faith shapes the rule of prayer, viz., the doctrinal development was reflected in liturgy and the liturgy reinforced by the doctrine; this generates the true faith. Therefore, although many specific terms were developed in the discourse against Arianism like *hypostasis*, *subsistentia*, *ousia*, and most of all, *homoousios*, the main contribution of the battle was the constitution of the Church's public prayer to the Son. Because Jesus is one with the Father in essence, He must be worshipped and glorified with the same honour and glory as the Father in the rites of worship.

2.4.1.2 *Contra* Modalism

Modalism basically belongs to monotheism, and, as seen in the discussion of Arianism, is caused

was a time when the Son was not, consequently means that there was a time when the Father was not. This demolition of the immanent Trinity soon leads to the denial of the economic Trinity.

⁷⁸ However, the term *homoousios* causes another serious problem concerning the origin of the Holy Spirit which indeed became the main theological ground of the great schism between West and East in 1054.

by the lack of affirmation that the three divine Persons are one. In modalism, unlike Arianism, people may agree with the fact that Jesus is truly God, but from this perspective Jesus is just a “mode” of God’s appearance. In other words, there is only one God in modalism, the same as in Arianism, and this God incarnated Himself in the flesh of Jesus, suffered on the cross and then God raised Himself from the dead: patripassianism. It is also Sabelius’s insistence that one God manifests Himself in different modes in the history of salvation: In the Old Testament as the Creator in the form of the Father; in the New Testament as the Saviour in the form of the Son; and in the Church era as the Giver of Life in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Moltmann (1993:163) criticises Barth for understanding the Trinity through the concept of Monarchianism, another type of monotheism. According to Moltmann, Barth’s statement that “God reveals himself as Lord” is rooted in the concept of God as the supreme Lord. “The idea of self-revelation secures the ‘autosia’ the ‘subjectivity of God’”. This “subjectivity” is the nature of God which does not allow being ascribed in relationship with other Persons. Thus, in this regard, the remaining possibility is “three modes of being” in God, says Moltmann (1993:140-141). Thus, Moltmann’s criticism of Barth starts from monarchianism and ends with modalism.

As such, from the perspective of modalism, the divine relationship between the three Persons is lost, in that the Triune God is no longer relational – the Father is actually not the father anymore, but becomes a lone god like the gods in other religions. This kind of god does not allow any participation, because this god is inherently alone; its uniqueness would be destroyed when anyone intrudes from the exterior. Thus, with regard to the liturgical issue, the two masked gods in modalism cannot be worshipped because they do not have substances.

2.4.2 Worship the Holy Spirit

The affirmation of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit materialised to subdue the new heresy at the

First Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). With reaffirmation at the Council of Nicaea, therefore, the foundation for the worship of the Trinity was established. However, the insertion of *filioque* into the Nicene Creed in Toledo, Spain (A.D. 589), with the purpose of speaking out against Semi-Arianism, regarded the Holy Spirit as a creature of the Son. This caused conflict between the West and the East, and eventually became one of the reasons for the Great Schism (A.D. 1054).⁷⁹

Following the Eastern Orthodox theology, Moltmann (1993:169) asserts that the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father, and not “from the Son (*filioque*)”, on the ground of the Father as the font of the divinity. If the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, there would be two origins of the divine Spirit. With regard to this, Moltmann goes even further, insisting that *filioque* in the Western Church’s would destroy the unity of God and the personal distinctions between the Father and the Son.⁸⁰ The insertion of *filioque* was rejected by the Eastern Church, not for doctrinal reasons only, but also for liturgical application. The Greek Church especially denounced the injected word from their rites as it was regarded as “endangering monopatrism” (Phan 2011c:21). From these chains of events, the adage *lex orandi est lex credendi* was actualised and gained a central position in reaching the liturgical conclusion of the doctrinal debates.

Unlike the Son, the Holy Spirit never insists or states that He is God or articulates the relationship with the Father and the Son. The Father, however, is always the father of the Son, and the Son is the son of the Father in this father-son relationship, the validation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity is not easy to be verified. The Holy Spirit never speaks to the Father or to the Son in relation with them in the Bible, so that it is difficult to say in which relationship the Holy Spirit was placed in both the immanent and economic Trinity. Thus, Western

⁷⁹ Although the insertion of the term *filioque* in the Creed was one of the main causes of the Great schism, *filioque* does not seem to be a barrier between East and West under the present mood of ecumenicalism, any longer: “Today, thanks to historical research – especially on the unionizing councils of Lyons (1274) and Florence (1439) – and ecumenical dialogue, *filioque* is no longer seen as an unsurmountable obstacle for union between the Latin and Greek churches but as a legitimate theological development proper to the West, and it may be excised from the creed as long as its refutation of Arianizing and modalist errors is honored” (Phan 2011c:21).

⁸⁰ At the same time, Moltmann (1993:176) ensures that the Father’s character as the origin should be used only in speaking of the constitution of the Trinity, not for the monarchy of the Father. The *perichoretic* relationship among the Trinity is a vital aspect in Moltmann’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

theologians such as Augustine regard the Holy Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son; when the Father and the Son love one another, the Holy Spirit plays a role as the love that enables them to connect. It may seem as slighting the weight of the Holy Spirit, but that is exactly what the Bible reveals, especially in John 17, where Jesus asks the Father to unite with no mention of the Holy Spirit. Because of this concealed attribution of the Holy Spirit, She is not regarded as a recipient of worship in the New Testament era, although worship is offered *in* the Holy Spirit (Hurtado 2000:63-64).⁸¹

2.4.3 *Contra* Tritheism

As such, the affirmation of the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit was in need of protection from the monotheistic misunderstanding of the Trinity. Practically, especially liturgically, there is caution about monotheism for it is conspicuous and explicit, but the threat of a tritheistic way of worship can be overlooked because it is not observed in many cases. The confession of the former is expressed in many ways, whereas the latter is camouflaged and the confession thereof in a sense indiscernible. Denial of the Son and the Holy Spirit can be criticised publicly, but one's faith in God might not be suspect in naming the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as long as one conceals one's belief that God is three. That is why Johnson indicates that, although tritheism never gained official status in Christian history, "[m]ost popular teaching on the Trinity comes out in the end looking like there are three Gods" if we are not careful and aware of the doctrine of the Trinity (2002:44). Therefore, it is insufficient to affirm the divinity of the three divine Persons, one also needs to profess the oneness of God.

It is the economic Trinity in which the persons of the Trinity are confessed according to the

⁸¹ Worshipping the Holy Spirit as God should be distinguished from the overemphasis on the Spirit in the doctrine and worship in Pentecostalism or the Charismatic movement. Sometimes, it is unclear whether the Holy Spirit is worshipped as the giver of life, as the Nicene Creed affirmed, or as the giver of gift only. Such overemphasis may break the dialectic relationship of the Triune God.

works of the persons. In this case, each person is treated separately. However, as has been observed, the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity is not to be considered separately, but the work of God to the world should be grasped in the mystic union of the Trinity; and the inner relationship of the three divine Persons is to be explicated in the redemptive story. Rahner's Rule, "the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and *vice versa*", can also be described with LaCugna's corollary: "God for God is God for us". Therefore, in the affirmation of the dialectic relationship between the two Trinities, the disposition to tritheistic worship can be ousted from the Christian worship.

If we follow Gregory of Nazianzus's articulation: "no sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One" (*Orat.* 40.41, in *NPNF 2nd* vol.7: 375), we must admit that monotheism and tritheism cannot endure in the Christian worship. In the divine relationship among the Triune God, one Person is not to be honoured or worshipped apart from the other Persons (LaCugna 1990:1294). As has been observed, Trinitarian worship does not signify adoring each Person separately but to confess that the One God we worship is always the Triune God. As Jesus states in John 4:23-24, we worship God in the truth and the Spirit. It is hardly rejected that the truth in John's gospel directly indicates Jesus Himself; and the Spirit, without doubt, is the Holy Spirit. Worship is only possible as led by the Word of the Son and the light of the Holy Spirit. Thus, worship which stresses only One Person of the Trinity is not genuine Christian worship and, in fact, is a virtual denial of the true God (Thomson 1994:95).⁸² The distinction between the exaggerated worship of one Person of the Trinity and the worship of the Father in the Holy Spirit through the Son in dialectic relationship with Them should be made. The vital aspect is that the three divine Persons must be worshipped in the unity and diversity of each Person, which is the essence of the Trinitarian doctrine – One God, Three Persons.

⁸² From this point of view, charismatic worship in which worshippers are mainly longing for the descent of the Holy Spirit and the divine gift should be criticised. The Holy Spirit as the giver of life always works within the Trinity, not alone. Furthermore, Webber representatively insists that regarding worship only as the "Christ event", can also be criticised if it obfuscates Trinitarian worship (cf. Webber 2006b:27-31). Christ does not work for salvation on his own; it is the co-work of the Triune God. Therefore, when we anticipate the Holy Spirit descending, as well as praise Jesus' redemptive work, we worship the Trinity.

2.5 THE TRINITARIAN FORMULAS IN LITURGY

By defeating heretical ideas of monotheism as well as tritheism the Early Church was able to lay the foundation of Trinitarian worship as such. We now turn to how Trinitarian worship has been performed in the Church's liturgy. Regarding the practical correlation between worship and doctrine, especially the Trinitarian doctrine, Thomson (1994:94)⁸³ introduces the basic attribute of Trinitarian worship simply, as follows:

It is in our *worship* that most of us become aware of the *doctrine* of the trinity. We all sing hymns that address each of the three persons in the one Godhead and in the more liturgical traditions, we end our recital of the Psalms and Canticles with a threefold ascription of glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Wainwright (1997:239) sums up the Christian worship clearly with the cycle of "from the Father, through Christ, in the holy Spirit, to the Father".

Albeit we have stressed the fact that the Trinitarian doctrine is indeed practical, it is still true that the doctrine is incomprehensible. In liturgy, however, as Morozowich (2010:157) contends, the mystery of the Trinity is conveyed in the more accessible explanation that we, in worship, do not try to understand the Trinity but glorify Him. The Triune God is not dismantled via intelligence but worshipped via doxology.

Although Christian liturgy is to be Trinitarian as a whole, observing the implication of the Trinitarian formulas in the orders of worship is effective for examining how the formulas have been concretely settled in Christian worship.

⁸³ Quoted from *The Forgotten Trinity: The Report of the B.C.C. Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today*, vol 2. London: British Council of Churches, Inter-Church House (1989:5).

2.5.1 Creeds

As is well known, the primary usage of creeds in worship comprises the baptismal confession and Eucharistic celebration (Phan 2011a:10) for which candidates who want to be baptised are tested on their faith in public by having to confess the creed, then being baptized, and afterwards being permitted to participate in the Eucharist.

It is important that candidates should confess their belief in front of the congregation because they worship and live together with the congregation, and in shared confession of what they believe the candidate can enter the proper relationship with the congregation. It is evident that God wants to unite them and ultimately unite them with Him through the process of creed. As such, through confessing the proper creed, one is able to become a member of the Christian community; being baptized, then participating in the Eucharist. Thus, the creed is the first stage of Trinitarian worship.

In its early form, the confession of one's belief was rather simple and focused mostly on professing the Godhead of Jesus. However, the Trinitarian affirmation at the Council of Nicaea and reaffirmation at Constantinople were set forth in visible symbols such as the Nicene Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (Phan 2011a:9). Then, in Western creeds, including the so-called Athanasius Creed and Apostles' Creed, a more technical language and function as summary statement of the Trinitarian faith were confessed. Consequently, creeds were established as a symbol to distinguish Christian communities from other religious traditions (Phan 2011a:10).

2.5.2 Baptism

Initially, baptism was used in the name of Jesus only and not in the name of the Trinity (Wood 2011:385). It is evident in New Testament passages such as Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5; and from early Christian rites it is possible to see that baptism initially was Christological (Bradshaw 1996:12).

However, the Didache,⁸⁴ one of the earliest manuals on Christian belief, proves (7:1-4) that the Early Church, in the later development and practice of baptism, performed the Sacrament in the name of the Trinity: "... pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (7:3). In *AT*, then, the Trinitarian formula in baptism was more explicitly performed. According to *AT*, the candidate on going down into the water, was asked a triple set of questions: "Do you believe in God the Father the Almighty?", "do you believe in Christ Jesus", and "do you believe in the Holy Spirit". Following each question, the candidate should answer "I believe" (*AT* 21:12-18).⁸⁵

With regard to Matt 28:19 as the passage giving proof for Trinitarian baptism, LaCugna indicates that "[m]ost scholars think Matthew 28:19 reflects early baptismal practice" (LaCugna 1991b:163).⁸⁶ Although some scholars, like Thomson, have doubts about Matt 28:19 being the "*ipsissima verba* of Jesus" (Thomson 1994:98),⁸⁷ it is evident in any case that, with this passage from Matthew, the Church began to define its faith more fully (Bradshaw 1996:8-9).

As Wainwright (1997:49) agrees; "The Trinitarian creedal structure clearly matches the 'command to baptize' recorded of the risen Lord in Matthew 28:19". Thus, baptism in the name of Jesus was extended and fulfilled in the name of Trinity through authorisation by Jesus Himself (Thomson 1994:98); and further completed by being approved by the Father and guided by the Holy Spirit. This later Trinitarian development in baptism identifies the Godhead of Jesus as the Son of the Father and giver of the Spirit (Wood 2011:385). This is the reason for Moltmann (1993:129) regarding

⁸⁴ The text of the Didache is cited from the translated and annotated copy by Kleist, J A, *The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, The Epistles and the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, The Fragments of Papias, The Epistle to Diognetus*, ed by Quasten, J & Plumpe, J C, *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*. London: Longman, Green & Co (1957).

⁸⁵ According to *AT*, a long and various explanation is followed, on the question about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, unlike on the Father, from which the Apostle's Creed was later constituted: "Do you believe in Christ Jesus the son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and Mary the virgin and was crucified under Pilate and was dead [and buried] and rose on the third day alive from the dead and ascended in the heavens and sits at the right hand of the Father and will come to judge the living and the dead?"; "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the holy church and the resurrection of the flesh?"

⁸⁶ See also Wood (2011:384): "Scripture scholars are generally agreed that this represents a later development of the text and clearly reflects a liturgical tradition already in place in the Matthean community".

⁸⁷ *ipsissima verba* (the very words): "A term for the exact words spoken by Jesus. The question is raised because the Gospel accounts appear in slightly different forms (e.g., Matt 5:1-12; Luke 6:17, 20-23)". It is normally used as the opposite in meaning to *ipsissima vox* (the very voice): "The sense conveyed by the words of Jesus, rather than his exact words" (McKim 1996:148).

baptism in the name of the Trinity is the source for evidence of the Trinity in the New Testament.

2.5.3 Eucharist

One of the purposes of participation in the Eucharist is to remember the paschal mystery of Jesus. By eating His flesh and drinking His blood, the Church remembers Christ and offers herself to Him; anamnesis. However, anaphora, the Eucharistic prayer, includes not only anamnesis, but also epiclesis, the prayer for the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The anaphora starts⁸⁸ and ends⁸⁹ within the Trinitarian doxology (Grisbrooke 1986a:21). Therefore, the Eucharist is not to stop with the remembrance of the Son, but extends to the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and to the Father who sent Them to us. This Trinitarian interpretation of the Eucharist is also found in the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry report (BEM), in which the five points of Eucharist are indicated:⁹⁰ thanksgiving to the Father; anamnesis or memorial of Christ; invocation of the Holy Spirit; communion of the faithful; and the meal of the Kingdom.⁹¹ The Son initiates the Eucharist for us to invoke the Holy Spirit giving thanks to the Father.

The simplest explanation of how the Eucharist is Trinitarian, is: “it is trinitarian, for the Father sends the Son who lives, dies, rises, and sends the Spirit that we, too, may ascend to the Father

⁸⁸ “The grace of the Almighty God, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (AC 54).

⁸⁹ “... And now, having arrived at the light of evening through your grace, we give you praise and glorify you through your child Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom to you be power and honor together with the Holy Spirit, now and always and to the ages of ages. Amen” (AT 25:8-9).

⁹⁰ Regarding the covenantal aspect of the Eucharist, Witvliet regrets that the covenantal image from BEM has not been applied to sacramental theology: “Tucked away in recent ecumenical discussions and in the catalogue of images in BEM is the image of covenant. Calling the Eucharist the ‘meal of the New Covenant,’ BEM contends that in the Eucharist, ‘united to our Lord and in communion with all the saints and martyrs, we are renewed in the covenant sealed by the blood of Christ.’ Recalling the words of institution that refer to the ‘blood of the covenant,’ this image taps a rich vein of biblical narratives, poetry, and cultic activity that provide a fascinating window into biblical theology, as well as holding, I will argue, rich potential for theology today. Nevertheless, the image of covenant has been largely ignored by many recent contributions to sacramental theology” (1997:99). Indeed, the BEM report, which was published in 1992, indicates that the Trinitarian image of the Eucharist is approved unanimously in various denominations (1992:60-69), but the report does not contain any response to the covenantal image of the Eucharist.

⁹¹ Also see BEM E.14: “Yet it is the Father who is the primary origin and final fulfillment of the eucharistic event. The incarnate Son of God by and in whom it is accomplished is its living centre. The Holy Spirit is the immeasurable strength of love which makes it possible and continues to make it effective.”

through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Wood 2011:387). Thus, the Trinitarian Eucharist invites us into fellowship with the Trinity: The Son, who was sent from the Father, enables us to share fellowship with Him and to participate in His own communion with the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit (Thomson 1994:99). This life-sharing with the Triune God should be extended to the world. LaCugna takes notice that the Eucharistic celebration concludes with the missionary charge to “go in peace to love and serve”, from which she infers that “Trinitarian faith is incomplete until what is confessed in faith is enacted in life” (1991b:187).

2.5.4 The Sermon

In the New Testament era, the purpose of preaching was that people may confess the truth that Jesus is the Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead; the result of the preaching would be that they may then call on the name of the Lord and be saved (Rom 10:9-13) (Wainwright 1997:47). Thus, the preaching in the early Christian community was not, at least, explicitly Trinitarian, although it was implicitly Trinitarian (cf. Thomson 1994:96).

It is true, however, that it is not possible to preach Jesus without reference to the Trinity (Johnson 2002:18). In the Gospels Jesus constantly insists that He is the Son, and without referring to the relationship between the Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit who reveals the divine relationship to us, we are not able to know Him at all. Furthermore, the sermon is the proclamation of the God’s salvation through Jesus Christ, which can be interpreted, understood and be fruitful only under the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, from the Church Fathers to contemporary preachers, the sermon is performed in the Trinitarian perspective as revealed in the redemptive story.

2.5.5 Hymns

Like the other aspects in worship examined previously, the earliest Christian hymnody is also Christological rather than Trinitarian, because celebrating the work of Jesus and admitting the Godhead of Jesus has much significance for the earliest Christians (Hurtado 2000:87, 89).⁹² Yet the conflict with Arianism and other heresies been noted earlier resulted in the hymnody becoming more Trinitarian. As such, the hymnody gained the new role of refuting opponents' teachings on the one hand, and promoting one's instructions didactically on the other (Burnett 2001:83).

Liturgically, the hymns or congregational songs are not about the emotional expression of how one loves God passionately, but the expression or confession of what the congregation believes in. Burnett gives some examples from the 4th century East and West, especially the expansion of the repertoires of songs in the congregations under Ephrem, Chrysostom, Hilary, and Ambrose (2001:84-90). In those communities, the mystery of the Trinitarian doctrine was merged with the doxology. Luther also believed music to be an ideal means to reveal and proclaim the mystery of God (Loewe 2013:69-70).⁹³ Burnett (2001:90) insists that the role of hymnody as a vehicle of the congregations' confession has to be retained, even in contemporary liturgy:

Although the issues confronting the churches are different from those with which our fourth-century ancestors struggled, some of the basic questions facing twenty-first century clergy, church musicians, liturgical officers, and hymn writers are similar. Who are we, and what is the faith that we want to sing? Does our existing repertoire adequately express all that we believe about God?

Thus, as long as God is Triune, the hymnody as the musical confession of a congregation is Trinitarian.

⁹² However, it should be added to the Christological hymns that the hymns in the Early Church always refer to God the Father as well (Wainwright 1997:51).

⁹³ Cf. *WA* 50:38-39, 371.

2.5.6 Benediction

In contemporary Christian worship, the benediction⁹⁴ is generally regarded as a concluding rite for the dismissal of the congregation.⁹⁵ According to *AC*, however, the bishop saluted the congregation with 2 Cor 13:14 at the beginning of their gathering (*AC* 37), unlike in current worship, in which the benediction occurs at the end of the service. As Jansen (1965:38) indicates, the benediction and salutation are different; together, however, they surround worship, symbolising that God leads, accompanies, and follows His people. Thus, in signifying a blessing, the benediction can even open worship, but is liturgically placed at the dismissal of worship in general.

Because the benediction is short and placed in the last part of the liturgy, the rites can easily be viewed as minor and not an essential procedure in Christian worship (Chinchar 2002:45). Furthermore, like other traditional elements of liturgy in the contemporary worship service, the benediction also “runs the risk of becoming a cliché whose meaning and function in the act of worship are either lost or simply ignored” (Miller 1975:240). However, the significance of a procedure in worship is about how deep a meaning it has, not how long it takes. Through the benediction, God not only assures us that we may have confidence and believe that the Triune God will be with us, but also enables us to serve in the world with all the blessings of the Trinity (Jansen 1965:35). For this reason, the benediction is to be regarded as the bridge between the worship service and service to the world (Miller 1975:249-250). In other words, by means of the benediction, God sends His people to the world to enter into relationship with those in the world so that they would enter into relationship – the relationship He has made with the worshippers – with Him as well. Thus, the Trinitarian life is shared and accomplished in the rite of the benediction.

⁹⁴ In the Roman Catholic tradition, the term benediction may refer to the action that blesses through the Blessed Sacrament (Lang 1989:60-61) or the reserved Sacrament (Walsh 1986:89). However, in this section the same word only means the ritual action of the minister, which is normally performed at the closing of the worship service to proclaim God’s blessing to the congregation.

⁹⁵ For a brief overview on the development of the concluding rites in Roman Catholic worship, see Szczapa (2003:156-159). There are five elements in the concluding rites in the Roman Catholic liturgy: “brief announcements, greeting and blessing by the priest, dismissal of the assembly by the priest or deacon, veneration of the altar by all ministers, and recession” (Szczapa 2003:158); and see Jansen (1965) for the benediction in UPUSA rites.

The benediction is a blessing from the Triune God through a minister; in other words, its effect or authority comes from God and not from a human being. For this reason, Jansen urges that the benediction should keep its biblical forms (Jansen 1965:39).⁹⁶ Many Bible passages used the Benediction, but 2 Cor 13:14 and Num 6:24-26 can be regarded as the most quoted ones;⁹⁷ both have a threefold blessing, viz., they represent the blessing of the Trinity:

The LORD bless you and keep you

The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you

The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace (Num 6:24-26)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and

The love of God and

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor 13:14)

It is not that the single name LORD in the Old Testament ensures the oneness of the Trinity while the name of each person of the Trinity in the New Testament confirms the personality of the Trinity. Rather, this distinctiveness and unity of the Trinity should be undivided. Ambrose comments on 2 Cor 13:14, emphasising the oneness of the three Persons: “If there is one grace, one peace, one love and one fellowship on the part of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, surely there is one operation, and where there is one operation, certainly the power cannot be divided or the substance separated” (*The Holy Spirit* 1.12.13, in *ACCS NT-VII* 311). Yet in Chrysostom’s commentary on the same passage, a more balanced view of the unity and the distinction of the Trinity is found: “Where the fellowship is of the Spirit, it is also of the Son, and where the grace is of the Son, it is also of the Father and the Spirit”, but he continues “I say these things without confusing the distinctiveness of the Persons but recognizing both their individuality and the unity of their common substance” (*Homilies*

⁹⁶ In this regard, Jansen (1965:39) critiques that many ministers are fond of improving the benediction by adding “[t]he Lord be with you on your homeward way; in quiet walk, in friendly talk, may you be near to God ...”. This fondness is also found in Korean ministers, where many of them want to improve the benediction, in many cases, by modifying the Holy Spirit as “... and the fellowship, grace, inspiration, influence, fullness of the Holy Spirit...”, and by modifying people as “... be with you all who are deciding to love each other and help one’s neighbours according to the today’s sermon...”.

⁹⁷ Other passages are used for the same rites. For instance, Heb 13:20-21 in many American Presbyterian Churches, with 2 Cor 13:14; and in American Lutheran Churches, the former is used for Sunday services, while the latter for minor services like Matins or Vespers (Drach 1952:212).

on the Epistles of Paul of the Corinthians 30.3, in ACCS NT-VII 311).

2.6 CONCLUSION

We have to admit that it is insufficient to state that the full explanation of the deep meaning of the being of the Trinity is relational. The Trinity is not something that can be analogised from nature or rationality. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Trinity is the doctrine which can be understood or be believed as it is experienced. We experience God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our liturgy and life. On the one hand, it is obvious that liturgy has been conceived and formulated in the Trinitarian perspective, and on the other hand, the doctrine of the Trinity is oriented to liturgy. Theology should be “liturgical” (Geldhof 2010:156). The doctrine of the Trinity is understood in the liturgical context with delight and gratitude for salvation, and the liturgy presents the doctrine of the Trinity in its rites. This liturgical experience of the Trinity does not mean that we experience the Trinity in our intellect or comprehension, but in mystery and doxology. Thus, Moltmann (1993:152) states: “Only doxology releases the experience of salvation for a full experience of that salvation”.

God the Trinity, the worship of God, and we who worship the Trinity are relational and the study on deification can be drafted on basis of the fact that God is relational. God is not alone but always in relationship, inwardly (the immanent Trinity) and outwardly (the economic Trinity). While gods in other religions do not allow becoming god in order to keep their solitariness, our God created His creatures in His image with one purpose; He wants them to become God as much as possible. Thus, we locate the foundation of the following study on deification on that becoming God must be concerned with the relationship with God, lest it falls to the heretic idea of pantheism. The relation of divine-human communion, which is the key of relational Trinitarianism, was mainly developed in the West, and is the fundamental axiom of Eastern Orthodox theology (Papanikolaou 2011:253). It is thus time for us to move to the next dialogue between the Trinity and deification, but before that, a general, but not very extensive, study of deification is to be accounted for in the following chapter in order to

understand the doctrine theoretically, as well as practically.

Chapter 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF DEIFICATION: WEST AND EAST ON COMMON GROUND?

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“Becoming God” is known as the doctrine of deification in the Eastern Orthodox Church. According to Mosser, there have been two reasons for the doctrine of deification not being accepted, and even being regarded as antithetical to Western theology by Western theologians: The first is that the doctrine is regarded as incompatible with Augustinian theology and scholasticism, and the second is because of the influence of Harnack on Western theology (Mosser 2002:37). It seems obvious that Harnack believes the doctrine of deification to come from “the corrupting influence of Greek philosophy upon Eastern Christianity”.⁹⁸ Ollerton suggests this reaction from the West is as a result of both fear and pride. The fear is of embracing what has been falsely labelled ‘Eastern’. The antidote to this must be to trace deification back beyond the East-West divide to the patristic era and the Scriptures themselves. By pride, he further means that, as human nature is corrupt, it is our pride that we can only stand in grace. In this view, becoming God provides too positive an insight for human beings, thus this is not regarded as a term that can be matched with the Western theology of the sinful nature of humanity (Ollerton 2011:253). Canlis (2004:169) quotes Murdoch, who once said that “in order to understand a philosopher, you must know what he feared.” It seems that Western scholars fear using the Eastern terminology of deification. Inurement, however, cannot mean meaninglessness; in

⁹⁸ See Harnack (1961:163-166). Regarding Augustine, we will try to detect what Augustine really says about deification, indicating that it is a preconception that Augustinian theology and the doctrine of deification are incompatible.

other words, to consent to what a term contains is to presuppose ahead of that whether to use the term. Thus, to speak of the doctrine of deification without bias, the barrier between West and East should be broken down. To achieve this, the preconception that deification is spoken about only in the Eastern Orthodox Church and has never been dealt with in Western theology must be corrected.

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a deep investigation into previous and current studies on the doctrine of deification, but to prove how, from the era of the Early Church to the present, the doctrine has been supported by Church Fathers, also from the Greek and the Latin worlds, as well as the theologians who succeeded them, and to show how the concept of deification, though not maintained as a rigid doctrine, has contributed to the practical life of the Church. We do not focus on the particularity of each theologian's teaching on deification, but rather aim to prove how theologians have had similar ideas on the topic, so as to make the basic ground for dealing with the doctrine in the following chapters more firm.⁹⁹

One of the difficulties in attaining the purpose has to do with language usage – with whether one uses the language of deification, or *theosis*, directly or not. The language problem delineates the boundary of the study. However, if we do not adhere to the use of the traditional Orthodox terms, other terms, which are more familiar in the West, like justification, sanctification, participation, adoption, filiation, and the union with God, can be adopted to signify the same, or at least a similar, meaning as the Eastern term.

Kharlamov says that the term deification did not comprise exotic language in the fourth-century Church; however, he warns that we must be careful not to over emphasise the popularity of the language of deification, because, outside of Alexandria and Cappadocia, the term was only used by a

⁹⁹ For the deeper study on deification and the Greek Fathers, see Gross (2002:99-255), Russell (2006:79-295), Christensen & Wittung (2008b:93-159), Kharlamov (2008b), Yoo (2008); on the Latin Fathers, see Russell (2006:321-332), Meconi (2013); on the Middle Age theologians, see Meyendorff (1974), Mantzaridis (1984), Williams (1999), Alfeyev (2004:116-122), Russell (2006:296-320), Christensen & Wittung (2008b:163-188); on the Reformers, see Braaten & Jenson (1998), Mosser (2002), Billings (2005; 2008); on recent study, see Papanikolaos (2003), Christensen & Wittung (2008b:233-310), Russell (2009); and for the study on deification in the East in general, besides the above references, also see Lossky (1974:97-110; 1983), Ware (1993:231-238), Staniloae (2000:esp.191-200), and Clendenin (2003:117-137).

few patristic writers. Yet he emphasises that the patristic writers either used the term strongly or cautiously, and even if they did not use it, it is apparent that “we do not have any patristic author who would openly object to the use of this notion until Nestorius” (Kharlamov 2008a:115).¹⁰⁰ Norris also presents the idea that both East and West have the same promise of deification from God (Norris 1996:428):

We Christians have the promise of participating in the divine nature. We are gods, united with Christ through baptism in his death and resurrection. We participate in his body and blood through the Eucharist. Not only Eastern Orthodox but also Western theologians find solace in a sense of deification. Such restoration does not mean that we become God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are God. Our participation in the divine nature is in God's energies, not the essence, a participation through grace accepted in faith which includes being participants in Christ's sufferings.

Shortly, deification has to have a more general meaning that is not exclusively Eastern, as long as deification does not mean “becoming God in essence” (cf. Olson 2007:193-194).¹⁰¹

The “great thinkers model” (Bradley & Muller 1995:30) is employed in this chapter to explore how the same idea occurs in scholars from various times and places – the Greek and the Latin Fathers, the representative theologians of the Middle Age from East and West, the Reformers, and the scholars from the East and West currently leading the study of the theme. We will not focus on how they promote their own ideas concerning deification, but on how they have the same idea concerning the theme in order to construct common ground on which we are able to proceed with our study.

¹⁰⁰ In this regard, Kharlamov (2008a:116) says that the language of deification was used as a rhetorical tool in fourth-century Christian theology. He urges, however, that the rhetoric was only one of the facets of the complicated and multidimensional notion of the term deification. That is to say, although it was not a main idea of the Greek Fathers, the meaning of the term had significance for them and has a theological contribution for us.

¹⁰¹ What Norris distinguishes is participating in God's energies and in God's essence, which is normally called the “Palamite distinction” in Eastern theology. This will be dealt with in more detail in dealing with the teaching of Palamas and the interpretation of it afterwards.

3.2 THE CHURCH FATHERS

3.2.1 The Greek Fathers

3.2.1.1 Irenaeus (c. 130-c. 202)

Many scholars who survey the use of the term deification in the Early Church agree that Irenaeus does not use the word deification technically. It is normally accepted, though, by the same theologians, that Irenaeus is the founder of the doctrine of deification (Russell 2006:105; Buchan 2008:146; Hallonsten 2008:285; McGuckin 2008:96-97; Aagaard 2010:312), because they derive the main idea of deification from Irenaeus' writings. Thus, comprehensive understanding of the language that Irenaeus used on the issue is required.¹⁰²

Although there is no direct use of the term deification in Irenaeus' writings, the reason many regard him as the founder of the doctrine is that he frequently mentions that deification is the purpose of the Incarnation (McGuckin 2008:96-97): "The Son of God became the Son of man" so that "man" "might become the son of God" (*Against Heresies, ANF vol.1:448*); Christ "became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself" (*Against Heresies, ANF vol.1:526*); Humans are able to become assimilated to Jesus for He became assimilated to man (*Against Heresies, ANF vol.1:544*). This "Incarnation-deification" formula¹⁰³ explicates the purpose of salvation (*Against Heresies, ANF vol.1:424*): Jesus unites man to God through Himself (*Against Heresies, ANF vol.1:417*), and this union makes man, being deified, truly one with God (*Against Heresies, ANF*

¹⁰² Although he ministered and became well known as the bishop of Lyon, France, his home town was Smyrna and he grew up there; we therefore group him under the category of the Greek Fathers, following Hans von Campenhausen's category.

¹⁰³ In Ephrem of Nisibis, the Syriac Father, we find the formula articulated in a somewhat different way as "exchange formula": "He gave us divinity, we gave Him humanity" (Hymns on Faith 5.17., quoted from Alfeyev 2004:115). Louth (2008:34) recounts that this exchange is what the Latin Fathers called *admirabile commercium* (wonderful exchange). On the other hand, the term "exchange" means a fair trade under an equal condition. There is nothing, however, that human beings have done for the process of the "Incarnation-deification" formula. God the Trinity is the genuine planner of the Incarnation of the Son and is accomplishing the human deification through the Son in the Holy Spirit so that all His people might be united in the Father.

vol.1:448). As such, salvation and deification is a closely connected concept for Irenaeus. Being united with Him who is immortal and incorruptible is the only way for human beings to become immortal and incorruptible. Because He became mortal and corruptible as we are, we are able to be immortal and incorruptible as He is (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:448).

The mortal and corruptible human beings are able to “become gods, God’s children, who may call God ‘Abba, father’”. Because God has adopted us as His children, human beings enter the family of God (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:419; Mosser 2005:45). One positive thing for fallen human beings, according to Irenaeus, is that it is not just God’s will that human beings be deified, but it is also the human anticipation. Humans, as His best creatures, wish “to be even now like God their Creator” (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:522). The creatures are willing to receive growth, and the final station of the human growth is to see God, which gives human beings the immortality and incorruption (Vogel 2007:447).

The fact that the Son came in a visible body is a vital aspect for human salvation and deification. The redemptive work of Jesus, according to Irenaeus, is “visible to all flesh” (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:424)¹⁰⁴ and one remarkable sign of heresies is denying that the Word of God was made visible flesh (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:427). Salvation, for Irenaeus, is indeed to see God who cannot be conceived (Ex 33:20) by any, but allows His people to see Him in visible form (Aagaard 2010:312; Lashier 2012:359). That we see God’s face means that we also participate in His nature. It is forbidden to human beings to see God with their fleshly eye, however, not only because of His invisibility but also because of a human being’s fallen sight. Irenaeus links Ex 33:20, where God’s face (essence) is hidden from the fallen humans in despair, to John 1:18, where human beings are still sinners and unable to see the Son who is one in essence with God the Father (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:488-489). The invisibility became visibility, but depraved people did not see Him. To see God is thus the purpose and the ultimate consequence of the creation of human beings (*Against Heresies*,

¹⁰⁴ This stress on the visibility of the saviour in Irenaeus is probably affected from his teacher Polycarp, who was the last disciple of John. In the gospel of John we can find many passages on the visibility of Jesus: For instance, 1:14, 18 and the Epistles of John as well in 1 John 1:1, 3.

ANF vol.1:522).¹⁰⁵ Thus, Salvation is to see the perfect God,¹⁰⁶ through the Son, who is one in essence with the Father and was invisible but became visible for our sake, in the Holy Spirit. The one who participates in His salvation is thus already deified for they are seeing God the Trinity.

In Irenaeus' understanding, that we are made in God's image and His likeness does not have an immaterial or intellectual meaning (Bouteneff 2008:82). Rather, "Irenaeus understands that an image presupposes both *form* and *material substrate*" (Bouteneff 2008:83). This material understanding of God's image in a human body pushes Irenaeus to insist on the underlying significance of the visible form of the Son. The problem for Irenaeus concerned how corporeal human beings are the image of incorporeal God. To solve this problem the Word was made visible flesh. On behalf of the Incarnation, we are able to say that the human person is made in the image of God (Bouteneff 2008:83). Irenaeus' perspective of the material understanding of God's image is grounded in the Incarnation of the Son, which was planned in the eternal council of the Trinity. Until the Word was made flesh, the image of God in human beings was not shown. By becoming visible flesh, Jesus confirmed two expectations: He showed the true image of God and "re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word" (*Against Heresies*, *ANF* vol.1:544). Seeing Jesus enables human beings to imitate the Son and then to be perfected. For Irenaeus, therefore, that salvation comes with the visible image opens the possibility of human perfection – deification (Aagaard 2010:310-312).

To drink and eat the Son is the concrete means to being perfected. "The Eucharist attests to the goodness of God's creation while at the same time affirming the creator's will to give life and humankind's ability to receive it." (Kurz 2009:13).¹⁰⁷ By this, Irenaeus articulates that granting life or

¹⁰⁵ "Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord" (*Against Heresies*, *ANF* vol.1:522).

¹⁰⁶ To see God should, of course, be understood in the eschatological dimension. Irenaeus did not mean that humans see God in God's fullness (*Against Heresies*, *ANF* vol.1:490; Jensen 2008:22). Because we will be like God, when we will see God face to face (1 Cor 13:12) we shall know who we truly are. Then, at last, as Irenaeus says, we shall be "fully alive" (Jensen 2008:37).

¹⁰⁷ "... the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the

immortality is enabled by taking the bread and the wine, which indeed are the body and the blood of the Son. Thus, “humankind’s ability” that Kurz spoke of is not such active actions of human beings, but rather passive grace that comes from God. The union with God is the means for granting the ability of receiving the given life. Dwelling in us, the Son accustoms human beings to receive the ability from God (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:450).

As such, Irenaeus adopts the conception of salvation, deification, and perfection without differentiation. The perfection is also to be linked to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s will that human beings are perfected in the Holy Spirit (Aagaard 2010:311). Those who are perfect have “the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father” (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:531). Then Irenaeus quotes from 1 Cor 2:6: “we speak wisdom among them that are perfect” (*KJV*) in which he regards those who are perfect as having received the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸

Likewise, via the Incarnation of the Son, sharing His flesh and blood and having had the Holy Spirit poured out, human beings can participate in immortality and incorruption. Thus, deification is totally Trinitarian in Irenaeus, although he never mentioned it explicitly:

Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:527).

3.2.1.2 Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215)

Clement of Alexandria is the first of the fathers who used the term “deification”. He used verbs

Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity” (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:486).

¹⁰⁸ The Greek word τοῖς τελείοις is more frequently translated into “the mature” (*RSV, ESV, NIV, NASB, NLT*) in English. In Bibles with other languages, however, it is translated into “the perfect” as Irenaeus did: “*les parfaits*” (*à la Colombe*), “*perfectos*” (*VUL*), “*den Vollkommenen*” (*LUT*), while in Afrikaans it is “*geestelik volwasse Christene*” (*NLV*).

like θεοποιέω, θεοποιος, ἐκθεόω, and θεω in the context of Christian soteriology and eschatology (Nispel 1999:292; Mosser 2005:57). First of all, deification for him is part of God's economy that saves the saints through His Word. Those who dwell in the Word and in whom the Word dwells become beautiful, for God is beauty; and become God, for it is God's will (*The Instructor*, ANF vol.2:271).

The "Incarnation-deification formula" that we observed in Irenaeus is also found in Clement: "[T]he Word of God became man, that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God". We are "fully perfected after the likeness of" Jesus by obeying the Lord. As such, the perfect God and perfected human beings are in the relationship of the model and obedience. Human beings become god but are "still moving about in the flesh" (*The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies* 7.16.101, in ANF vol.2:553; Chadwick 1954:159). Therefore, for Clement, becoming God is not "monstrous". If we reject deification, we "spurn His kindness and reject salvation" (*Exhortation to the Heathen*, ANF vol.2:174). Clement ensures the possibility of deification from the Word: "it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master" (Matt 10:25) (*The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, ANF vol.2:506). Thus, that by His heavenly teaching the Lord makes us immortal is not a strange thing:

He hath changed sunset into sunrise, and through the cross brought death to life; and having wrenched man from destruction, He hath raised him to the skies, transplanting mortality into immortality, and translating earth to heaven... .. having bestowed on us the truly great, divine, and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying man by heavenly teaching, putting His laws into our minds, and writing them on our hearts (*Exhortation to the Heathen*, ANF vol.2:203-204).

This heavenly teaching, i.e. the Word "by whom wild beasts are tamed, and fishes caught, and birds drawn down", transforms man as well (*The Instructor*, ANF vol.2:295).

Irenaeus said that the possibility of restoring the image of God was opened when the Son became flesh, reckoning Him as the mere image of God. Although the theology of Irenaeus is not succeeded directly in Clement, the thought that is found in Irenaeus is continued in Clement. God's image and

likeness is restored when Christians become “righteous and holy and wise by Jesus Christ” who is “so far already God” (*Exhortation to the Heathen, ANF vol.2:206*). Thus, Clement also believes that the image and likeness of God in human beings can be restored, as it is the will of the Creator through the incarnation of the Son. Clement distinguishes between the image and the likeness in that Christians still have the image but the likeness, which is linked to a moral aspect, is lost. Thus, restoring the image and the likeness is linked to morality.¹⁰⁹ God’s purpose in creating man in His image and likeness is to transform human beings into “a holy and heavenly being” and that was fulfilled in the incarnation. The perfect image and likeness of God is only revealed in Jesus. In Christ the “humanity is conceived as being created merely in His image” (*The Instructor, ANF vol.2:234*).

With regards to Christians, Clement urges to “fulfil Father’s will, listen to the Word, and take on the impress of the truly saving life of our Saviour”. This fulfilment is possible when Christians meditate the fact that we “have been deified” to live “on the heavenly mode of life” (*The Instructor, ANF vol.2:234*).

The process of human deification or perfection is performed in the Sacraments: the baptism and the Eucharist. As Jesus, the perfect one, was baptised by John the Baptist and thereby manifestly obtained perfection, we are also perfected by being baptised in the same Spirit who descended on Jesus as He was in the water. “Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal” (*The Instructor, ANF vol.2:215*; Christensen 2008:25). For Clement, the bread and the wine in the Eucharist is the spiritual food, thus when we eat and drink of this we “become partaker of the Lord’s immortality” (*The Instructor, ANF vol.2:242*). While Irenaeus mentions the Eucharist as the way of deification or perfection, Clement adopts the two Sacraments. This attempt to apply the doctrine of deification to the liturgy of the Church and not leave it in mystery, reveals the doctrine as rather practical.

¹⁰⁹ “Wherefore also man is said ‘to have been made in [God’s] image and likeness.’ For the image of God is the divine and royal Word, the impassible man; and the image of the image is the human mind. And if you wish to apprehend the likeness by another name, you will find it named in Moses, a divine correspondence. For he says, ‘Walk after the Lord your God, and keep His commandments’” (*The Stromata, or Miscellanies, ANF vol.2:466*).

Clement does not understand deification as ontological change, i.e. a change in essence. It is the participation in God to assimilate to “God as far as possible” in the progressive order of salvation (Christensen 2008:25). This assimilation to God is achieved by “a participation in moral excellence”, and in this process “we must not retrograde into carelessness and sloth. But labour, and faint not” (*The Instructor*, ANF vol.2:235). Likewise, “to be incorruptible is to participate in divinity” while the ignorant of God is in corruption. Then the fruit of the participation is the infinite and immortal life. To know Him is the eternal life and the revolt against the knowledge is corruption and death (*The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, ANF vol.2:459).

The divine knowledge and the divine life are bound in love. One who is in “respect of knowledge and of the life” is also one “who is destined to be divine (θεῶν)”; one who “is already being assimilated to God”; and loves God. “For as he who honours his father is a lover of his father, so he who honours God is a lover of God” (*The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, ANF vol.2:524).

3.2.1.3 Origen (c.185-253/254)

Origen also articulates the incarnation-deification formula: Christ has “become as they that they might become as He” (*Commentary on Matthew*, ANF vol.10:465). Christ, through the Incarnation, revealed His Godhead and showed miracles. For Origen, Christ also revealed to us the divine power that enables human beings to be God according to God’s humanisation (*Against Celsus*, ANF vol.4:475). Therefore, from the prior humanisation of Christ, human deification in a progressive procedure became possible. The human soul is being perfected in the earthly time and continues the pilgrimage until all is reconciled, as “God is all in all” (Christensen 2008:25-26). Human deification is “a real *change*” for Origen, but this “real” does not indicate ontological change of the creatures. Rather, it is real restoration of the soul to the state in which it was created (Louth 2008:36-37).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Louth attempts an explanation of the real change according to Origen: “for him [Origen] [it is] a change that is the result of coming to share in the life of God. This change involves a kind of reconstitution of our humanity,

Under the influence of Plato's idea that the soul was given the condition of immortality in its origin, deification in Origen is the return to its unfallen condition (McGuckin 2008:100).¹¹¹ The soul created in God's image, thus intrinsically good, can be perfect as "our Father in heaven is perfect". Pârvan (2012:231) says that "Origen maintains that it is the inner man, the soul, that is created in God's image and that this inner man is immaterial". The Son restored the distorted image of God in soul by making Himself empty and taking upon Him the form of a servant (Phil 2:7) and humiliation (Phil 3:21) so that the human soul might look forward to being assimilated to Him as much as possible (*Commentary on Matthew, ANF* vol.10:465). At the same time, however, it is not true that the body is completely negative for Origen. The body, which was formed in materiality, is not regarded as His image, but it is called "the temple of God" because it possesses the soul, "the traits of God's image" (*Against Celsus, ANF* vol.4:602).¹¹² Albeit he mentions the positive aspect of the human body in a sense, it is still that "[i]n Origen's opinion only the inner man can reach perfection" (Pârvan 2012:213).¹¹³

Origen addresses human deification with the concept of "virtue". Although human nature is fallen, deification of human beings is possible for the "virtue" of ours and God's are identical. If we, according to Origen, are virtuous, then we are able to be perfect like the virtuous God. Being virtuous simply means that we "act according to reason" (*Against Celsus, ANF* vol.4:509). The highest good that all rational natures are seeking is to become God to the highest degree possible. This conception

a reshaping, a straightening out of all the distortions and corruptions that we have brought upon our humanity by missing –abusing– our human capacities, and by living out our lives in accordance with values and principles that fall a long way short of the values and principles inherent in creation as God intended it" (Louth 2008:37).

¹¹¹ Again, under Plato's dualism of soul and body, Origen separates the incorruptible condition of soul and body: "The expression, then, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption,' is as if the apostle had said, 'This corruptible nature of the body must receive the clothing of incorruption – a soul possessing in itself incorruptibility,' because it has been clothed with Christ, who is the Wisdom and Word of God. But when this body, which at some future period we shall possess in a more glorious state, shall have become a partaker of life, it will then, in addition to being immortal, become also incorruptible" (*De Principiis, ANF* vol.4:271).

¹¹² This concern regarding the soul and separation from the body is linked, for some, particularly in North-Atlantic culture, to the idea that "distinct soul can/does exist independently of any corporeality (be it single or multiple)", which causes some to understand that Origen indeed insists on the "pre-existence of soul" and "reincarnation" as well. The concept of "reincarnation" means that "immaterial conscious self can (and does) transmigrate from one successive bodily garment to another". However, Origen denies such a conception of "never-ending transmigration" of the soul which is found in Buddhism or Hinduism. For Origen, history has its beginning and end in God's creation, the human fall, and God's judgement (Wohrer 2012:96).

¹¹³ See Jacobsen (2008) and Pârvan (2012) for the idea that "both the leather sandals and the leather coats denote the material and mortal corporeality which covers the inner nonmaterial and immortal man".

is not a philosophical or pagan idea for Origen, because the Bible indicates it by saying that we are created in God's image and likeness (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:344).¹¹⁴ For Origen, thus, the possibility of deification with the concept of virtue commences with being created in God's image.

It is generally assumed that Origen came under the influence of Clement of Alexandria. In terms of participation in divinity, Clement's lead was also followed by Origen in that he made the concept of participation an integral part of Christian thinking (Russell 2011:133). Participating in the divine nature is to imitate Christ as far as possible (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:378). As such, Origen articulates resembling God "as much as possible" in terms of "virtue," as well as "participation in". In other words, deification in his opinion is a process that entails the whole of life, not an instant change, but human deification, at the same time, never means an ontological change.

The imitating of Christ does not only mean that we have communion with Him but also that we have "unity and intermixture (ἑνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει)" with Him through which we receive "the highest powers". After participating in His divinity, we are "changed into God" (*Against Celsus*, ANF vol.4:480). The union with Christ therefore is more than imitating. It makes human beings to be one with Christ. Origen quotes 1 Cor 6:17 in this regard (*Against Celsus*, ANF vol.4:595): "... he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him". Partaking of Christ (Heb 3:14) is right away identified with that we are "also partakers of God" (*Letter of Origen to Gregory*, ANF vol.10:296; *A Letter from Origen to Gregory*, ANF vol.4:394). It is true that Christ is the first partaker of the divine nature;¹¹⁵ however, human participating in the divinity is to be separated from the participation of the "Very God (ἀὐτοθεός, God of Himself)": "all beyond the Very God is made God by participation in His divinity, and is not to be called simply God (with the article), but rather God (without article)" (*Commentary on John*, ANF vol.10:323).

¹¹⁴ Alviar articulates the coincidence and differentiation between "the image (*imago*)" of and "assimilation (*similitudo*)" to God: "On one hand, *similitudo* coincides with *imago*, in the aspect of likeness to a model (God or His Word). On the other hand, *similitudo* contains an important difference from the *imago*, as it represents an arrival point in the process of acquiring virtues" (Alviar 1993:71).

¹¹⁵ It is different, however, in that Origen says Christ is the partaker of the divine nature prior to human beings and Arius regards Him as the first creature of all. The Son in Origen is the true God.

Thus, we participate in God as the Son did, but Origen distinguishes the Son who is the Very God from deified human beings. Adding to this, participating in the Holy Spirit also confers the benefit to the Christians: “For if any one has deserved to participate in the Holy Spirit by the knowledge of His ineffable mysteries, he undoubtedly obtains comfort and joy of heart” (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:286). The significance of the Holy Spirit in terms of participation, however, should be considered in the reciprocal relationship of the Trinity. Salvation can be obtained with “the co-operation of the entire Trinity”, i.e. “it is impossible to become partaker of the Father or the Son without the Holy Spirit” (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:253). Thus, in Origen’s understanding of the Trinity, participating in God, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit is reciprocal, and is compulsory for the rational creatures:

As now by participation in the Son of God one is adopted as a son (*in filium adoptatur*), and by participating in that wisdom which is in God is rendered wise, so also by participation in the Holy Spirit is a man rendered holy and spiritual. For it is one and the same thing to have a share in the Holy Spirit, which is (the Spirit) of the Father and the Son, since the nature of the Trinity is one and incorporeal. And what we have said regarding the participation of the soul is to be understood of angels and heavenly powers in a similar way as of souls, because every rational creature needs a participation in the Trinity (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:379).

Thus Origen’s understanding on deification is Trinitarian. From the incorruptibility and eternity of the Trinity, all creatures share “the intellectual light”, and consequently become “incorruptible and eternal” by partaking of the eternal Trinity (*De Principiis*, ANF vol.4:381).

3.2.1.4 Athanasius (c. 296-373)

The theology of Athanasius was shaped within the context of his controversy with Arianism and the theology of deification is not an exception. According to Kharlamov, Athanasius used the Greek word θεοποιέω and its derivatives at least 58 times in his works (Kharlamov 2008a:129n5). That use is included in the context of pagan dispute (Kharlamov 2008a:117), i.e. wrong deification, but it is used

35 times with the Christian meaning of deification (Kharlamov 2008a:118). Although Athanasius used the terminology of deification mainly in dispute with Arianism, the conception of deification in the general meaning also played a significant role in Christian spirituality in his writings (Kharlamov 2008a:122). That's why Pelikan (1971:206) calls him "the spokesman for the Eastern tradition" of deification.

First of all, human deification is possible for Athanasius, not because of what human beings deserve, but because God's mercy allows it (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:404). He is "the bond of charity" (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:406). Deification of human beings, however, as we observed from Origen, does not mean that we are changed in essence, but is to be understood as the progress of imitating God in the grace of the Lord (*To the Bishops of Africa*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:492).¹¹⁶ As in the divine relationship among the Triune God, the Persons of the Trinity do not penetrate into the essence of each other,¹¹⁷ and as the Son became man without losing His Divinity, we remain human beings although, after being deified, not losing our "proper substance" (*Defence of the Nicene Definition*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:159).¹¹⁸ Athanasius uses as an example of this the life of Anthony who "without losing his personal identity", changed into, "in some sense, a Christ" (Clebsch 1980:xvi). Anthony could be helped by God-man, i.e. the Son, to be man-God, i.e. deified man, which is what we have already seen in Irenaeus, Clement and Origen – the Incarnation-deification formula (Clebsch 1980:xvi).

For Athanasius, like other Greek Fathers, the descent of divinity through the Incarnation enables the ascent of humanity to the Trinity by deification. The most frequently statement from Athanasius quoted for the demonstration of the doctrine of deification is: "For He was made man that we might be made God" (*Incarnation of the Word*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:65).¹¹⁹ As such, human deification is

¹¹⁶ Cf. Weinandy (2007:97), where he urges that the Son was also deified progressively.

¹¹⁷ "For as the Father is ever Father and never could become Son, so the Son is ever Son and never could become Father." (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, NPNF 2nd vol.4:319).

¹¹⁸ See also, Anatolios (1998:108, 136) and Weinandy (2007:99).

¹¹⁹ He continues: "He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men that we might inherit immortality". Furthermore, he also mentions the same meaning in various writings: "that the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we

another dimension of the Incarnation of the Word. Through being humble to human beings whom He created (Phil 2:6-8), Christ makes human beings partakers of immortality (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:425*). From the fact that the Son became mortal flesh, another truth is derived, namely that “sin might perfectly be expelled from the flesh” (Weinandy 2007:97). Therefore, deification is salvation of the soul and body, otherwise sinners cannot be redeemed from spiritual or physical death (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:331*). Lohse (1985:59) also sees that Athanasius’ understanding of redemption includes a physical idea. According to Lohse, Athanasius considered salvation not merely as freedom from sin and guilt but also as restoration and imperishability of human nature, viz. deification of man. Thus, in the agreement between salvation and deification, human beings are able to be called God. On the human side, salvation is attained as we participate in or join to God (Anatolios 1998:139). The process of participation is often analogous for Athanasius with the process of deification. “God deifies while we participate” (Kharlamov 2008a:119-120).

Yet whether Christ participated in the divine nature was a controversial problem in Athanasius’ day. For those who follow Arianism, the Son is one of the creatures. They said that Christ is not true God, but can just be called God because He also needed to participate in God’s nature like all creatures (*To the Bishops of Egypt*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:229-230*); as all creatures are different from God in essence, so is Christ (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:309*). Athanasius, on the other hand, confirms the divinity of the Son through the conception of participation in the divine nature. The Son was also deified by participating in the Father, but He, at the same time, is one in essence with God, while the deification of creatures is only through the Son and not in essence (Kärkkäinen 2004:26-27). As such, the divinity of the Son according to Athanasius is intimately

partaking of His Spirit, might be deified” (*Defence of the Nicene Definition*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:159*); “He [the Son] took a human body for the salvation and well-being of man, that having shared in human birth He might make man partake in the divine and spiritual nature” (*Life of Antony*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:215*); “Therefore He was not man, and then became God, but He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us” (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:329*); “as the Lord, putting on the body, became man, so we men are deified by the Word as being taken to Him through His flesh, and henceforward inherit life everlasting” (*Four Discourses against the Arians*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:412-413*); and “For He has become Man, that He might deify us in Himself, and He has been born of a woman, and begotten of a Virgin, in order to transfer to Himself our erring generation (πλανηθεισαν γεννησιν), and that we may become henceforth a holy race, and ‘partakers of the Divine Nature,’ as blessed Peter wrote (2 Pet 1:4)” (*Letter to Adelphius*, *NPNF 2nd vol.4:576*).

related to human deification. Furthermore, Athanasius refutes the Arian claim that God never gives His glory to other creatures but Christ, which approves the coessential nature of Christ with God the Father (*Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, NPNF 2nd vol.4:476-7*). Thus, without participation, the Son is still true God:

Therefore, if this be out of place, He must be, not by participation, but in nature and truth Son, Light, Wisdom, God; and being by nature, and not by sharing, He would properly be called, not Like-in-essence, but Coessential (*Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, NPNF 2nd vol.4:477*).

If the Son had been created, He could not deify any other creatures: “For man had not been deified if joined to a creature, or unless the Son were very God” (*Four Discourses against the Arians, NPNF 2nd vol.4:386-387*).¹²⁰ Thus, he proves the Godhead of Christ in the concept of participation, another dimension of deification. Moreover, the Arian assertion that Christ had to participate in God to be God offers counter evidence of the possibility of human deification in that we are able to be god by participation in God. Yet the participation of Jesus and of human beings must be differentiated. The participation of the Son is not in the Holy Spirit like that of other creatures but in the Father. Commenting on the so-called “high-priestly prayer” of Jesus in John 17, Athanasius perceives that uniting us into the Son and the Father is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 17:21): “The Son is in the Father, as his proper Word and Radiance; but we, apart from the Spirit, are strange and distant from God, yet by the participation of the Spirit we knit into the Godhead” (Weinandy 2007:100). Therefore, the Godhead of the Holy Spirit is also confirmed with the idea of participation in that, unless the Holy Spirit is true God, we cannot be deified by the Holy Spirit. The divinity of the Son can also be authenticated in the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. From the Son the Holy Spirit is taken, thus, according to Athanasius, the former cannot be sanctified by the latter (*Four Discourses*

¹²⁰ For Athanasius, the pagan divinisation and creature worship is to be criticised for two reasons: 1) anything made by human beings cannot be god; 2) relating to the first, because human beings are mortal beings, whatever they make cannot be immortal (Kharlamov 2008a:118). The following dispute has significant meaning: “[T]hose who make gods (θεοποιούντες) should themselves be gods, for the maker must be better than what he makes... If then they declare to be gods whomever they wish, they should first be gods themselves. But the remarkable thing is that by dying like men they prove their decree concerning those they deified (θεοποιηθέντων) to be false”, Athanasius, *Contra Gentes; and De Incarnatione*, ed by Thomson, R W, Oxford: Clarendon (1971:26-27), quoted from Kharlamov (2008a:118).

against the Arians, *NPNF 2nd* vol.4:315). At this point, Athanasius says repeatedly that the cause is more than what is caused (Meijering 1984:47). Athanasius indicates that we participate in the Son or the Word,¹²¹ and he also says we participate in the Father.¹²² Thus, participating in the Son and in the Father is not a different process for Athanasius. Rather, “by partaking of Him, we partake of the Father; because that the Word is the Father’s own” (*Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, NPNF 2nd* vol.4:477). By participating in the Holy Spirit and in the Son through the Holy Spirit, we are able to participate in the Father. In short, deification is to participate in the divine life of the Trinity and to share the immortality of the Trinity, calling the Father through the Holy Spirit in the Son.

3.2.1.5 Cyril of Jerusalem (315-387)

Cyril of Jerusalem provided discourses on the deification of Christians in the context of the rites of the Church. In his lectures to catechumens, Cyril encourages them, saying that, as they listen to the lectures and are exercised for the official procedure of catechism, they will “receive the name of Christ, and the power of things divine” (*Procatechesis, NPNF 2nd* vol.7:4). Then, being transformed in their status from catechumens to the faithful, they become “partaker of a title of God” (*Catechetical Lectures, NPNF 2nd* vol.7:29). Thus, for Cyril, joining the members of the holy Church has the same meaning as becoming partakers of the divine nature. The participation in the divine grace of the faithful is embodied in the baptism, as Jesus was baptised in His flesh (*Catechetical Lectures, NPNF 2nd* vol.7:16); and having His body and blood through the Eucharist “we became partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4)” (*Catechetical Lectures, NPNF 2nd* vol.7:151).

The “Incarnation-deification” formula is also found in Cyril. He quotes Heb 2:14: “For *since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same*” (*Catechetical Lectures, NPNF 2nd* vol.7:16), saying that “having been made partakers of His presence

¹²¹ “[W]e may be able to partake of the Word” (*Letter V, NPNF 2nd* vol.4:519).

¹²² “The participation of Christ is in the Father, and so ours are, not Jesus participates in the Father and we do in the Son” (*Defence of the Nicene Definition, NPNF 2nd* vol.4:156).

in the flesh we might be made partakers also of His Divine grace”. As such, Cyril puts his stress on salvation and transformation of the flesh as he considers deification, which is enabled through “the incarnation of the immutable and impassible Logos” (Pelikan 1971:233). He explains the formula from the perspective of the restoration of the “image” of human beings, which is corrupted by sin:

The Lord took on Him from us our likeness, that He might save man’s nature: He took our likeness, that He might give greater grace to that which lacked; that sinful humanity might become partaker of God (*Catechetical Lectures, NPNF 2nd vol.7:75*).

Cyril stresses the Holy Spirit in the process of human deification. For him, salvation is “not merely vivification but deification”, and the salvation is the gift of the Holy Spirit, thus, he is God (Pelikan 1971:216). He uses θεοποιέω and similar terminology to refer to the Holy Spirit as deifier (Kharlamov 2008a:117).

3.2.1.6 Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 328-c. 390)

Unlike Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus used the term deification without hesitation, and even strongly advocated the concept of deification.¹²³ With his rhetorical skill and unique vocabulary he contributed to the development and popularisation of the concept of deification in late antiquity, and explicitly expresses his thinking on deification with an inventive standpoint (Kharlamov 2008a:123; 2008b:163). Furthermore, while the Athanasian argument mainly focuses on the ontological disparity between created and uncreated in terms of criticism to paganism and Hellenistic religions, Gregory emphasises the ethical and epistemological dimension of deification (Kharlamov 2008a:125).

As noted above, Athanasius used the verb θεοποιέω and its derivatives in his writings, but Gregory was the first author who employed the noun θέωσις, as well as its verbal forms such as

¹²³ For the outlook of the strategic approach of deification language to appeal to the circle of readers who adopted the Platonic philosophy, see McGuckin (2008:108).

αποθεαῶ, θεοποιῶ in Christian literature (Torrance 2009:58n30). According to Kharlamov's investigation, however, Gregory's favourite word for deification is the verb θεῶω, which appears in his writings at least 23 times (Kharlamov 2008a:123)¹²⁴

Like other Greek Fathers, the Incarnation of the Word is the ground of human deification for Gregory: "Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become God's for His sake, since He for ours became Man" (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol. 7:203*).¹²⁵ Thus, salvation according to Gregory means the consequential process of the Incarnation and deification (LaCugna 1991a:56-57).

Yet, deification is more than salvation, seeing as it even liberates human nature from materiality by a dynamic transformation, and ensures the full participation in the glorification and the vision of God. Of course, this full and perfect deification is accomplished in the life to come when God will be "all in all" (Kharlamov 2008a:127). Therefore, the deification of the saints has already commenced in this life, and will be fully achieved in the life to come when we have perfect transfiguration in the glory of God (McGuckin 2008:102).

Even after the final process of deification is finished, the distinction between God the deifier and the human being who has been deified still exists. After being deified by God we are able to know God, however, "all that we can comprehend of Him is His boundlessness". Therefore, Gregory does not argue that deification is a change in essence, but believes that the infinity of God and the finiteness of human beings will remain even after the process of deification is finished (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:423-424*). Finding the distinction between God's "nature and his movement", "essence and power", "nature and brightness", and between his "οὐσία and ἐνέργεια" in Gregory,

¹²⁴ Russell (2006:215), however, stresses that the term *theosis* was not popular in Gregory's time but became fully accepted and used by the 7th century, in the time of Maximus the Confessor.

¹²⁵ Alfeyev (2004:112) presents the same formula from other writings by Gregory: "Being God, You became man and mingled with mortals: You were God from the beginning, and You became man in order to make me god, since You became man" (Carm.2, 1, 1; PG 37,971); "Christ... made me god through the image of a mortal (which He accepted upon Himself)" (Carm. 1, 2, 14; PG 37, 762); "The Word of the Father was God, but became man, as we are, so that, having mingled with the mortals, He might unite God with us" (Carm. 1, 1, 11; PG 37, 471); "...As man, He is interceding for my salvation, until He makes me divine by the power of His incarnate manhood" (Disc. 30, 14, 8-11; SC 250, 256); "Since man did not become god, God Himself became man... in order to reconstruct what was given through what is assumed" (Carm. 1, 1, 11; PG 37, 465).

Torrance concludes the following: The imparticipable God can be regarded under the understanding of those distinctions, thus “deified person is not made a trinitarian ὑπόστασις, nor is he subsumed in God's οὐσία (let alone does he become it), but he is nevertheless made θεός” (Torrance 2009:64). Thus, a deified person is called a god, but at the same time he/she is distinct from God in essence.

Gregory refers to the equality of the three divine Persons, articulating the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He regards disrespect of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit as something that cannot be pardoned. The equality of the Holy Spirit with the two other Persons is ensured by deifying power: “I cannot believe that I am saved by one who is my equal. If the Holy Ghost is not God, let Him first be made God, and then let Him deify me His equal” (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:337*). Yet it is to be stressed that “equal” as he used it, is not equal in essence. As such, the matter of the divinity of the Holy Spirit is confirmed through His deifying power.¹²⁶ The Holy Spirit is true God in that He deifies man, and is not deified by God; He does not participate in God, but can be participated in (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:382*).¹²⁷ As Athanasius urges the Son’s Godhead through introducing His deifying power, the ability of deifying is, for Gregory, the inner proof of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. The warrantee of the divinity of the Holy Spirit is also followed by the fact that He is worshipped and honoured:

For if He [the Holy Spirit] is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism? but if He is to be worshipped, surely He is an Object of adoration, and if an Object of adoration He must be God; the one is linked to the other, a truly golden and saving chain. And indeed from the Spirit comes our New Birth, and from the New Birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from Whom it is derived (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:326-327*).

His viewpoint on the deification of the Son is complicated. According to Kharlamov, Gregory believes that Christ’s human nature was deified by the Holy Spirit at the moment of Incarnation. The soul and body of Christ were purified by the Holy Spirit. Thus one Person in two Natures – Flesh and Spirit – is in Christ, then “the latter deified the former” (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:349; 425-426*). The

¹²⁶ Given that Gregory calls the Holy Spirit by the masculine pronoun, we also use the same pronoun here.

¹²⁷ “Therefore He was ever being partaken, but not partaking; perfecting, not being perfected; sanctifying, not being sanctified; deifying, not being deified...”

two natures in Christ, however, is not two indeed but “one by the combination”. It is the same as the three Persons of the Trinity is “One and the same in Godhead” (*Letters, NPNF 2nd vol.7:439-440*). As such, Christ, in the union of the divinity with the humanity, is deifying and deified (θεῶσαν καὶ Θεωθεῖν) as well” (Kharlamov 2008a:125-126).

It then follows that, in the way in which Christ was deified by the Holy Spirit, “the body of every person who attains to deification in Christ becomes transfigured and deified” (Alfeyev 2004:113). Gregory describes this particular conception of human union with the divinity as a “mingled” image. The image of the human being is mingled with God’s divinity. Then human flesh becomes “a new mixture” (*Letters, NPNF 2nd vol.7:441*).¹²⁸ Yet, prior to the human mixture, God, who was unmingled, became mingled in that the immortality became mingled with the corruptible (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:356*).¹²⁹ Moving even ahead of that, the creation of human beings is the work of “mingled dust with spirit” (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:220*). Basically, however, Gregory reckons that the “mingled image” or “new mixture” is not in essence, but that human nature is mingled by God not with God Himself but with His divinity.¹³⁰

“For as long as either remains on its own footing, the One in His Glory the other in his lowliness, so long the Goodness of God cannot mingle with us, and His lovingkindness is incommunicable, and there is a great gulf between, which cannot be crossed; and which separates not only the Rich Man from Lazarus and Abraham’s Bosom which he longs for, but also the created and changing natures from that which is eternal and immutable (*Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:383*).

3.2.1.7 Basil the Great (329-379)

Unlike other Cappadocians, Basil was cautious about employing the term deification directly. Instead, he uses “resemblance to God” by the grace of the Holy Spirit more regularly. In his opinion,

¹²⁸ Cf. Alfeyev (2004:111-112). Also see, *Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:294, 296, 310, 341, and 348*.

¹²⁹ “Therefore the Unmingled is mingled; and not only is God mingled with birth and Spirit with flesh, and the Eternal with time, and the Uncircumscribed with measure; but also Generation with Virginitly, and dishonour with Him who is higher than all honour; He who is impassible with Suffering, and the Immortal with the corruptible”. Also see, *Oration, NPNF 2nd vol.7:361 and 426*.

¹³⁰ In Palamite language it can be said that not “in essence” but “in energies”. We take note of the Palamite theology later at 3.3.3.

the resemblance might be achieved by keeping God's commandments. For Basil, however, the "resemblance to God" is not merely an absolute goal or an ethical standard. The meaning behind the phrase is "supremely desired goal of becoming god" (McGuckin 2008:100). Basil, referring to 2 Pet 1:4, says "[t]hey who are perfect in virtue are deemed worthy of the title of God" (*adv. Eunom.*, quoted from *NPNF 2nd* vol.8:16n218).

Basil, like other Church Fathers, regards the participation of the Holy Spirit in the divine nature as assuring the Divinity of the Holy Spirit (*Letters*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.8:285). In the same way, human beings also reach the state of deification, yet not the same in essence. The superiority of the human creation is based on the fact of being created in God's image, although it is not the same image as God Himself in terms of holiness (*The Hexaemeron*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.8:106).

3.2.1.8 Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-c. 395)

In terms of the terminology *per se*, Gregory of Nyssa used the word deification only once in *The Great Catechism*.¹³¹ Albeit the single usage of the term, the ideas and alternative words for deification observed in the writing of other Greek Fathers are also detected in Gregory's works, for instance the "Incarnation-deification" formula, "participation in", and "perfection of the virtue".

Human deification, according to Gregory, is possible because God emptied Himself and came "within the capacity of the Human Nature" so that "the Human Nature is renewed by becoming Divine through its commixture (*ανακρασεως*) with the Divine" (*Against Eunomius*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:181). The "commixture" or various vocabularies that have similar meanings are employed by Gregory to denote the union with Christ. On the other hand, union, for Gregory, is not an absorption but a true relationship while each element remains itself (Daley 2002:501-502) so that as Christ became man He was still God but in Him the humanity was indissolubly united to God (*Against*

¹³¹ Cf. Billings (2005:333n91), to see how Gregory was cautious about using the terminology directly to avoid any misunderstanding of the literal and essential meaning of deification in his writings.

Eunomius, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:122). Gregory accounts the Incarnation-deification formula other Greek Fathers used with the concept of “transfusion”: “He was transfused throughout *our nature*, in order that our nature might by this transfusion of the Divine become itself divine” (*The Great Catechism*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:494-495).

Yet, the human participation in God (μετουσία θεοῦ) is the language which most frequently replaced the idea of deification in Gregory’s works (McGuckin 2008:104). According to McGuckin (2008:106), the concept of participation in God is the replacement of Platonic term of assimilation, which Gregory developed to Christianization formerly was Origen’s idea. The participation in the divinity is “participation in true being” (McGuckin 2008:107). The Son partook of the human nature without ejection of the Son’s participation in the divinity (*Answer to Eunomius’ Second Book*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:306). Gregory insists, however, that that does not mean the Son is existed by the participation in the Deity (*Answer to Eunomius’ Second Book*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:313). The Son exists Himself. He became the “first-fruits” of a new humanity for our sake so that human beings also participate in that same process of deification through faith, the Sacraments, and the imitation of Him (Daley 2002:502). The only possible way by which human beings can become immortal is to participate in the incorruption (*The Great Catechism*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:505).¹³² As McGuckin (2008:107) indicates, the participation of human beings in God is “nothing short of the entire purpose and point of the creation of mankind, and thus the whole purpose of our individual ontology”.

As such, deification is the purpose of the creation and the life of man. To achieve this magnificent purpose, the progressive process towards human deification entails that there is no limitation to deification or perfection of human beings. For Gregory, deification thus is a lifelong transformation and perfection without limitation (2 Cor 3:18) (Christensen 2008:26-27). Growth without limit is guaranteed because human participation is in the transcendent nature (Geljon 2005:164). The limitless elevation to the perfection of faith is accomplished by a virtuous life. “[T]he Divine Being is the fountain of all virtue”. Thus, the virtuous life is the way to the Divine Being.

¹³² On this argument Gregory mentions the immortality of our body “by participating in incorruption through its fellowship with that immortal Body”.

According to Gregory, if one departs from evil, one will be united with God, as 1 Cor 15:28 says, “God may be all in all (*ESV, KJV, NIV*)”.¹³³ For Gregory, the statement God is “all in all” means “the complete annihilation of evil” (*On the Soul and the Resurrection, NPNF 2nd vol.5:452-453*). Therefore, the virtue of the Christian is being perfected by being filled with God as much as possible at every level of life.

The concrete place for deification is worship. In this sense, Gregory links the Sacraments to deification. Being purified by water is to “participate in the Purity” and “true Purity is Deity” (*The Great Catechism, NPNF 2nd vol.5:502-4; Torrance 2009:68*). Thus, participation in the divine nature is not different from participation in the Sacraments. Besides baptism, the Eucharist is the way of deification. As mentioned above, Gregory uses the term deification once, and the usage is given while he gives account of the Sacraments:

Since, then, that God-containing flesh partook for its substance and support of this particular nourishment also, and since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminates Himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption (*The Great Catechism, NPNF 2nd vol.5:506*).

3.2.1.9 Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444)

Deification for Cyril was the supreme goal of human life. His preferred term for deification was *θεοποιήσις* (Russell 2000:21; Christensen 2008:27).

As is well known, Cyril condemned Nestorius because he proposed that Jesus comprises two

¹³³ The phrase God is “all in all” does not mean, however, that everything surrounding the faith can be God (pantheism). Gregory ensures that he does not intend to mean pantheism, rather, he urges that “blessed state which we hope for is in need of none of these things, but the Divine Being will become all, and instead of all, to us, distributing Himself proportionately to every need of that existence”. Therefore, when God is all in all, we will still totally depend on Him (*On the Soul and the Resurrection, NPNF 2nd vol.5:452-453*).

persons: the divine and the human, while Cyril insists on the unity of the two natures in one person.¹³⁴ In the dispute with Nestorius on the matter of the unity of persons in the Son, Cyril wanted Nestorius to explain, if the Son had two persons, who endured the suffering on the cross and who was seen on the thrones of the supreme Deity. He continued, stating that God-bearing man must then appear as the fourth Person after the Trinity. That instantly entailed the pagan sense of deification – human deification in essence with the Trinity (*Against Nestorius*, in Russell 2000:171-172). As we have observed, that kind of idea of deification was never meant by the Greek Fathers.¹³⁵ It is important therefore that Cyril insists that through “partaking of the Spirit and the body of Christ” human beings become gods and sons of the Most High by adoption and participate in the divine life (Russell 2000:45-46).

The same dignity as of the Word with the Father is ensured by His indwelling of us; “the whole humanity might be raised up to his status” (*Commentary on John*, in Russell 2000:107). In his commentary on John 1:13, he, relying on the Holy Spirit’s power of deifying, he proves that the Holy Spirit is true God. The Holy Spirit is God by nature and we are called gods by the grace of God and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (*Commentary on John*, in Russell 2000:103). Human deification is the co-work of the Trinity. Russell’s evaluation that deification for Cyril is to share a community of life with the Trinity (Russell 2000:21) is appropriate.

Cyril used the example of a wax, indicating that the meaning of our participation in the life of the Trinity is to be united with Him, like putting two pieces of “melted wax” into fire to make them one. Thus, deification, the participation in the life of the Trinity, is the life-long process of human beings (Christensen 2008:27).

¹³⁴ “Nature” and “person” possibly are not the proper terms to explain their different positions. See Russell (2000:39-46) for a more generous understanding of Nestorius and Cyril and their use of terms like *ousia*, *physis*, *hypostasis*, and *prosopon*.

¹³⁵ See, for instance, his commentary on John 1:12: “We, therefore, ascend to a dignity that transcends our nature on account of Christ, but we shall not also be sons of God ourselves in exactly the same way as he is, only in relation to him through grace by imitation” (*Commentary on John*, in Russell 2000:101).

3.2.1.10 Maximus the Confessor (580-662)

As noted above,¹³⁶ *theosis* was not just accepted in Christian thought in the 7th century, but also came to a peak of development. In the centre of the popularity of the concept was Maximus, who came to know the doctrine of deification from the Christological debates of his time (Russell 2006:215; Kharlamov 2008a:213-214; McGuckin 2008:97-98).

Kharlamov (2008b:164) indicates that, for Maximus, the meaning of deification contains the restoration or transfiguration of the whole cosmos, but he at the same time makes it clear that the place of human deification is the Church (Sherwood 1955:73ff).¹³⁷ Deification is not the result of speculative thoughts, but entails concrete action in the daily life of Christians. Nides (2010:73-79; also see Russell 2006:267-269) reviews the mysterious elements of deification in Maximus's *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer* in seven points: 1) the mystic knowledge of God, which is embodied in prayer, or more specifically in the Lord's prayer; 2) the divine adoption, which enables us to name God as our father; 3) the same honour with angels, which was achieved in the Lord's prayer as a petition for heaven and earth to be one; 4) sharing the eternal life, in which he refers to Christ as the divine food, the bread of life; 5) restoration of nature based on forgiveness and that the forgiveness of sin is the prerogative of God; 6) purification from the law of sin, which is closely related to 7) deliverance from evil.

Thus, according to Maximus, we are being deified as we are praying, especially when praying the Lord's Prayer. As Christ prayed to God "not mine, but your will be done", human weakness and earthly desire is tuned to God's will by the Lord's prayer, and this demonstrates how perfectly deification is fulfilled in our life (Alfsvåg 2008:180). In *Mystagogia*, Maximus' commentary on the divine liturgy, the participants in the liturgy are deified by grace after reading the Gospel, singing the hymns, and exchanging the kiss of peace, i.e. normal ceremonies in our worship, although the kiss of

¹³⁶ See 86n130 in this dissertation.

¹³⁷ Sherwood distinguishes two aspect of deification related to the Church: the Sacraments as a practical aspect and prayer as a contemplative aspect. However, prayer is to be dealt with in the context of liturgy in the Church with the Sacraments. We will examine it with Maximus's commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

peace has largely been taken away in current worship (Louth 2004:113; Russell 2006:271). In his opinion, faith is the basis for our unity with God, and it is given in baptism by the exact confession of the participant, then the baptised is sanctified through faith (Sherwood 1955:74). In the Eucharist the recipients are made into His likeness that “they may be called really gods by grace, because of the divine presence of God” (Sherwood 1955:80). As such, the appropriate place of deification for Maximus is worship.

In the *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, Maximus deals with deification from the eschatological perspective in the “already but not yet” frame (Nodes 2010:71). Human beings are deified as much as possible, but still remain human and dependent on God (Olson 2007:190-191; Vishnevskaya 2008:136). Maximus compares the extent of human deification with the extent of God's humanisation. He especially says love functions as an agent between God and human beings:

For they say that God and man are paradigms one of another, that as much as God is humanized to man through love for mankind, so much is man able to be deified to God through love, and that as much as man is caught up by God to what is known in his mind, so much does man manifest God, who is invisible by nature, through the virtues (*Difficulty*, in Louth 1999:101).

Love is “the first and most excellent good” agent between God and human beings, given that it draws God and humanity “together in a single embrace” and through which human beings are able to be deified in God as far as possible (*Letter 2: On Love*, in Louth 1999:90). According to Maximus, “nothing is more truly Godlike than divine love, nothing more mysterious, nothing more apt to raise up human beings to deification” (*Letter 2: On Love*, in Louth 1999:85). Loving and being loved are placed in such a relationship. That one deifies the other and the other is deified by the one through love might be described as that they are in a loving relationship. In this relationship, the two agents are one but not the same by nature (*Opuscule*, in Louth 1999:193-194). As observed above, other Church Fathers also agreed that human deification never meant unity with God in essence. Maximus develops the same idea with his specific terminology: *perichoresis*.

Perichoretic language was one of the main approaches to deification for Maximus. The term initially marks the relationship between the humanity and divinity of Christ. Both divinity and humanity correspondently penetrate one another but do not lose their own character in Christ.¹³⁸ Therefore, *perichoresis* is not a one-sided procession, but rather the active reciprocity between natures. As mentioned above, the Incarnation of Christ and deification of human beings have the same dimension in opposite directions. Being God did not prevent becoming man, and He did not lose His divinity in becoming man. Regarding human deification, remaining man does not obstruct becoming god, and becoming god does not take away our human nature. Thus, in the idea of *perichoresis*, the unity of the Creator and creatures can withstand certifying the differentiation between one and the other (Vishnevskaya 2008:133-134). The distinction between them might be blurred in the end, but the essential distinction is not collapsed (Christensen 2008:27). Maximus confirms this as follows: “Nothing changes its nature by being deified” (Alfsvåg 2008:180).

For Maximus, adoption is one of the distinctive ways of explaining deification. The Son has the unique prerogative to call God the Father by nature, but in the Son we are also able to address God as our father by adoption (Nodes 2010:75-76). Not only did the Son capacitate our calling God the Father, but His Incarnation also enables our deification. In this sense, Maximus follows the Incarnation-deification formula like his predecessors: “...God the Word, the Son of God and of the Father, became son of man Himself in order to make men gods and sons of God...” (*Theological Chapters*, cited from Alfeyev 2004:114n37). Maximus extends the link between the Incarnation and deification to the parallelism between *kenosis* and *theosis*. *Kenosis* (self-emptying) of the divine Son entails the self-emptying of human bodily passion so that it is the basis of our *theosis* (Louth 1999:34; Russell 2006:267).

¹³⁸ At the same time, Maximus accepts the fact that, at root level, divine and human penetration differ from one another “in conformity with the essences of their respective natures”. He calls this difference “identity in difference” which is the central idea of his whole theology from Christology to cosmology (Vishnevskaya 2008:133-134).

3.2.2 The Latin Fathers

As Williams (1999:4) rightly indicates, the difference or commonality between East and West must be examined on the basis of texts, not by rigid theological perspectives, which often create barriers between them. It is true that the Latin Fathers used the language of deification less frequently than the Greek Fathers, but it is also true that they left texts behind in which they articulated the doctrine of deification, whether directly or indirectly.¹³⁹

3.2.2.1 Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225)

Tertullian's use of the language of deification in many cases refers to the faulty deification of human beings, i.e. idolatry.¹⁴⁰ In these cases, a human being who pretends to be a god adopts its power and essence, which is never dealt with in the Church Fathers' writings.

As Russell rightly indicates, the term deification was not commonly used among Latin theologians, besides Augustine. Among the Latin theologians, Tertullian was the first to use deification terminology in a Christian context. Tertullian might not have known about the Greek exegesis of Ps 82:6 relating to the doctrine of deification and the Incarnation-deification formula (Russell 2006:326). According to Russell, it is generally said that those exegeses were known by Latin theologians by the mid-fourth century, but it is still uncertain whether they knew of these concepts before the fourth century. Tertullian's understanding of human deification means the same as that of

¹³⁹ Kärkkäinen (2004:6) gives us an example of wrong categorising in the United States Library of Congress who puts the works of Palamas between the Gnostic works of Nag Hammandi and various Manichaeic works. This representatively shows Western ignorance of Eastern theology, and we can assume that the same thing might have happened in the East. Finch (2008:233) provides us with another example of misunderstanding in Western theology on Palamas in that Palamas was accused of "veritable heresy" for his theology of distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies by Augustinian friar Jugie, M, in 1925, "Palamas Grégoire", in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 11:1735-1776. According to Russell, this misunderstanding of Palamas in the West led to the rediscovery of Palamite theology, which at last led the renaissance of the doctrine of deification in Orthodox theology in the early 20th century (Russell 2009:13-14). See also Williams (1999:6) for a negative evaluation of Palamas in the West by Runciman.

¹⁴⁰ E.g., *Apology*, ANF vol.3:21, 40-41; *The Chaplet*, or *De Corona*, ANF vol.3:98; *Ad Nationes*, ANF vol.3:135, 137-138, 143; *A Treatise on the Soul*, ANF vol.3:227; and *Against Marcion*, ANF vol.3:276.

the Greek Fathers, however. Surely the idea of the Incarnation-deification formula is found in Tertullian's *Against Marcion*:

For if the God (in whom ye believe,) even from His higher condition, prostrated the supreme dignity of His majesty to such a lowliness as to undergo death, even the death of the cross, why can you not suppose that some humiliations are becoming to our God also, only more tolerable than Jewish contumelies, and crosses, and sepulchres? Are these the humiliations which henceforth are to raise a prejudice against Christ (the subject as He is of human passions) being a partaker of that Godhead against which you make the participation in human qualities a reproach? (*Against Marcion*, in *ANF* vol.3:318).

As confirmed from the Greek Fathers, human deification in its appropriate meaning does not refer to becoming God in essence. Tertullian ensures both the possibility of human deification and a monotheistic faith in God as he comments on Ps 82:6. In his opinion, God's supremacy is not defamed by this passage, because sharing the same name as God does not prove that the gods share the divinity of God in essence (Russell 2006:326).

Tertullian does not view Adam and Eve's fall as an absolute disaster for human beings because hope was held out when God said "Behold, the man has become like one of us" (Russell 2006:326). Becoming like God in this passage implies the future blessing of the deification of humanity. The reason God expelled them from the garden after the Fall should be understood as not being able to live forever in their sinful state, viz., as un-deified beings.¹⁴¹ Thus, human deification is God's very intention for fallen mankind.

¹⁴¹ "Now, although Adam was by reason of his condition under law subject to death, yet was hope preserved to him by the Lord's saying, 'Behold, Adam is become as one of us;' [Gen 3:22; cf. 2 Pet 1:4] that is, in consequence of the future taking of the man into the divine nature. Then what follows? 'And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, (and eat), and live for ever.' inserting thus the particle of present time, 'And now,' He shows that He had made for a time, and at present, a prolongation of man's life. Therefore He did not actually curse Adam and Eve, for they were candidates for restoration, and they had been relieved by confession" (*Against Marcion* 2.25, in *ANF* vol.3:317).

3.2.2.2 Ambrose (340-397)

Because we have already observed the Incarnation-deification formula in the Latin Father Tertullian, it is not strange to recognise the same formula in Ambrose: "... and the Word became flesh that flesh might become God" (*Concerning Virgins*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.10:365). By making Himself "a partaker of our weakness in the flesh, He makes us partakers of the divine Nature in His power" (*On the Christian Faith*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.10:306). Thus, it is affirmed that the sense of becoming God was neither an unacceptable nor unspeakable idea among the Latin Fathers or the Greek Fathers.

The Godhead of the Holy Spirit is not delimited but embodied through making us partakers of the divine nature (*On the Holy Spirit*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.10:103). As we have observed, the power of deifying is by nature restricted to God. Ambrose claims the significant proof of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit from human deification in the same manner.

3.2.2.3 Jerome (c. 347 - 420)

The Incarnation-deification formula is not found in Jerome. Jerome establishes a similar idea from Christ being born from virginity; in other words, without sin, so that "we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world" (2 Pet 1:4) (*Against Jovinianus*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.6:377). Then, he links participation in the divine nature to the oneness with God of all Christians as Christ is one with the Father (John 17:20-21). Yet he immediately gives assurance that our oneness with the Father is not the same as Christ's; that it is not according to our nature but according to God's grace (*Against Jovinianus*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.6:410).

3.2.2.4 Augustine (354 - 430)

As mentioned above, Augustine is the only Latin theologian who used deification language

explicitly.¹⁴² From the Western perspective, it can be assumed that Augustine preferred to speak of redemption through justification by faith, instead of using the language of deification. At the same time, however, the teaching of deification is not alien to Augustine. He taught the doctrine (Bonner 1999:265), and deification indeed played such an important role in Augustine's theology that he placed deification as central to the Christian's new life in Christ (Mosser 2002:38; Meconi 2013:xi).¹⁴³ Without becoming like God, human beings cannot be conveyed to the "fatherland" where our God is: "We must fly to our beloved fatherland. There is the Father, there our all. What fleet or flight shall convey us thither? Our way is, to become like God". In his opinion, "one is nearer to God the liker he is to Him" (*The City of God, NPNF 1st vol.2:175-176*). Augustine quotes Ps 82 in commenting on John 10:22-42, when Jesus urges His Godhead in which his presupposition is that God calls people gods. The Godhead of Christ is ensured through God calling human beings gods. Augustine provides examples of light and fire:

If the word of God came to men, that they might be called gods, how can the very Word of God, who is with God, be otherwise than God? If by the word of God men become gods, if by fellowship they become gods, can He by whom they have fellowship not be God? If lights which are lit are gods, is the light which enlighteneth not God? If through being warmed in a way by saving fire they are constituted gods, is He who gives them the warmth other than God?... . . . If, then, the word of God maketh you gods, how can the Word of God be otherwise than God? (*On the Gospel of St. John 10:22-42, NPNF 1st vol.7:269*).

The Incarnation-deification formula for Augustine is shared with his predecessors regarding the meaning of "becoming" (Bonner 1999:265-266; Meconi 2013:xi).¹⁴⁴ Yet, participation plays a

¹⁴² Much scholastic research has, however, been dominated to insist that the doctrine of deification in the West has been denied under the influence of Augustine, who sharply distinguished between God and depraved human beings in terms of original sin. Thus, many scholars like Mausbach, Lot-Borodine and, recently, Woodhead, regard Augustine as a representative Western theologian whose ideas are incompatible with the doctrine of deification. See Meconi (2013:xiii-xv) for details. Furthermore, the influence of Harnack, who claimed that it was Augustine who brought the doctrine of deification "to an edifying end", cannot be exaggerated (Harnack 1961:164n2).

¹⁴³ Meconi says that his book *The One Christ*, which was published 2013, is the first book-length study on Augustine's theology of deification. In 2010, however, a doctoral dissertation titled *Augustinian Interiority: The Teleological Deification of the Soul through Divine Grace*, was presented at Durham University, England. See Choi (2010).

¹⁴⁴ "The Creator of man deigned to become man; was made what He had made, that the creature He had made

significant role for the procedure of the formula: “Godhead equal to the Father was made partaker of our mortal nature, not of His own store, but of ours; that we too might be made partakers of His Divine Nature, not of our store, but of His” (*On the Psalms 139, NPNF 1st vol.8:635*). He also argues that Christ is the only mediator between God and human beings in terms of His immortality and that He is the blessed one. Christ, who is immortal and blessed, became mortal and miserable; living in the same condition as human beings so that He might lead us to be immortal and blessed like Him. His mortality and misery is temporary, yet He gives permanent immortality and blessedness, and this is accomplished through the participation of human beings in the immortality and the blessed one (*The City of God, NPNF 1st vol.2:174*).¹⁴⁵

As noted above, it is to be ensured that the formula we articulate as Incarnation-deification is not an “exchange formula” which implies the idea of equality between God and human beings.¹⁴⁶ The Son was already begotten equally perfect with the Father, He does not have to “become better by

might not perish” (*On the Gospel of St. John 8:15-18, NPNF 1st vol.7:209*).

¹⁴⁵ See the Incarnation-deification formula with the meaning of participation in Augustine’s other works: “For though with the Father He was God, by whom we were made, He became in the flesh partaker of our nature, that we might become the body of which He is the head” (*Reply to Faustus the Manichæan, NPNF 1st vol.4:186*); “He was made sharer in our mortal state, that we might also become partakers in His Divine Nature, we became sharers in One unto life, He a sharer in many unto death” (*On the Psalms 119, NPNF 1st vol.8:573*); “By joining therefore to us the likeness of His humanity, He took away the unlikeness of our unrighteousness; and by being made partaker of our mortality, He made us partakers of His divinity” (*On the Trinity, NPNF 1st vol.3:71*); “The children of men; for that He Himself (as the Son of Man) became partaker of their mortality in order to make them partakers of His Immortality” (*On the Psalms 45, NPNF 1st vol.8:151*); “See what this participation is: there hath been promised to us a participation of Divinity: He lieth that hath promised, if He is not first made partaker of mortality. For the Son of God hath been made partaker of mortality, in order that mortal man may be made partaker of divinity” (*On the Psalms 53, NPNF 1st vol.8:204*); “For He, abiding unchangeable, took upon Him our nature, that thereby He might take us to Himself; and, holding fast His own divinity, He became partaker of our infirmity, that we, being changed into some better thing, might, by participating in His righteousness and immortality, lose our own properties of sin and mortality, and preserve whatever good quality He had implanted in our nature perfected now by sharing in the goodness of His nature” (*The City of God, NPNF 1st vol.2:465*); “... He gives only through the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who became a partaker of our mortality that He might make us partakers of His divinity” (*The City of God, NPNF 1st vol.2:465*); “... by His participation in our mortality, through His love for us, He might make us partakers of His own divinity in the way of adoption” (*The Harmony of the Gospels, NPNF 1st vol.6:104*); “... God’s gift and of His mercy, who has sent His only Son to partake our death with us, and to lead us to His own immortality” (*On the Gospel of St. John 5:20-23, NPNF 1st vol.7:137*); and “To this “Form” God is Father, the “Form” equal to Himself, the only-begotten Son, begotten of His Substance. But forasmuch as for our sakes, that we might be re-made, and made partakers of His Divine Nature, being renewed unto life eternal, He was made partaker of our mortal nature, what saith the Apostle of Him?” (*On the Psalms 139, NPNF 1st vol.8:636*). Therefore, it is not an exaggerated statement of Meconi that deification or the union with God is at the centre of Augustine’s theology.

¹⁴⁶ Ephrem of Nisibis, the Syriac Father had indicated this equal exchange of states between God and us. See footnote 103.

participation of the Father”, however, “we are made better by participation of the Son” (*On the Gospel of St. John*, NPNF 1st vol.7:173). Therefore, His participation is for our sake – to be the first fruit among us, not to be better, being, for example, God. Through grace we are able to participate in the imperishable image of God, but at the same time, it is to be ensured that we are just endowed with the capacity to become His image, not the same image the Son has (Choi 2010:241).

As a result of this intrinsic dissimilarity between God the Creator and human beings, human deification for Augustine cannot be regarded as entailing an essential or ontological transformation:

For my own part, I am of this opinion that the creature will never become equal with God, even when so perfect a holiness shall be accomplished in us, that it shall be quite incapable of receiving any addition. No; all who maintain that our progress is to be so complete that we shall be changed into the substance of God, and that we shall thus become what He is, should look well to it how they build up their opinion; for myself I must confess that I am not persuaded of this (*On Nature and Grace*, NPNF 1st vol.5:134).

By Augustine’s citation from Porphyry¹⁴⁷ that “inquiry purifies and imitation deifies us, by moving us nearer to Him” (*The City of God*, NPNF 1st vol.2:417), we can see the above limitations of human deification, or differentiation of it from the Son. Meconi describes this differentiation in the meaning of *imago Dei*, explaining that the Son is “the eternal equivalence of the Father, manifesting him in full filial expression” while human beings have, though we are in a sense the image of God, “a capacity for divine perfection by a source never identifiable with themselves” (Meconi 2013:39). He likewise insists on a participation of human beings that is different from that of the Son owing to the sinful nature that is underlying the limitation of human deification. A human beings’ deification cannot occur in essence because sin is not completely excluded from human beings. Thus, only by the grace of God are we able to become perfect and be called the sons of God (*On Nature and Grace*, NPNF 1st vol.5:145). For Augustine it is evident that human beings are deified by “His grace, not born of His substance” when the Bible says “You are gods, sons of the Most High” (*On the Psalms 50*, NPNF 1st vol.8:178).

¹⁴⁷ For Porphyry’s influence upon Augustine, see Fleteren (1999); Magny (2013).

Augustine regards the living and spiritual being as superior to being without a living and material being (Mann 2006:78). In this sense, only the superior creatures, according to Augustine, are able to become like to God (*The Confessions*, *NPNF 1st* vol.1:111). Human beings apparently are superior creatures according to Augustine's distinction. It is God's love and grace, however, not the superiority *per se*, which enables human deification. The love is attained "not by any ability of nature or the free will within us, but 'by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us' (Rom 5:5)" (*On Nature and Grace*, *NPNF 1st* vol.5:148). Being regarded as a rational soul, human beings are blessed by God "by participation in His own unchangeable and incorporeal light" (*The City of God*, *NPNF 1st* vol.2:144). In this sense, the participation in God has significance for the deification of humanity that has initially fallen into the depraved status. As the Greek Fathers identified participating in God with deification, Augustine also used human participation in God in forms of deification (Choi 2010:241). Participating in God, in His immortality, divinity, and divine light, enables human beings in their sinful nature to be deified. According to Augustine, "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen 3:5) was a tempting word for Adam and Eve, which was pleasurable to them to hear. This being a god is accomplished, however, by obediently adhering to the true God. "For created gods are gods not by virtue of what is in themselves, but by a participation of the true God" (*The City of God*, *NPNF 1st* vol.2:274). By listening to the seducer, Adam and Eve abandoned God, who would have made them gods by their participating in Him (*The City of God*, *NPNF 1st* vol.2:511), and "lost the immortality in which they were made" (*On the Psalms*, *NPNF 1st* vol.8:446).

As the locus of participation in the Son, Augustine suggests the Eucharist which makes each of us a better being, i.e. immortal. Thus, as denoted above from the works of some Greek Fathers, deification is not such an abstract and philosophical idea, but rather a concrete and practical doctrine that requires and should be matched with the appropriate praxis: participating in worship. The place where deification is consummated in this world is worship (*On the Gospel of St. John 6:41-59*, *NPNF 1st* vol.7:173).

3.3 THE MIDDLE AGE THEOLOGIANS

3.3.1 Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022)

Symeon the New Theologian inherited the patristic traditions around deification and preceded Gregory Palamas, who was the most eminent theologian in the study of deification in Eastern theology (Alfeyev 2004:116).

Symeon, like other Fathers, also uses the Incarnation-deification formula: To the question “‘Why did God become man?’, he answers: ‘So that man may become god’” (*Ethical Discourse*, quoted from Alfeyev 2004:116). Unlike the patristic teachings we have examined, however, Symeon views the formula as exchangeable in the equivalent position between God and humanity, like Ephrem of Nisibis: “God received His human flesh from the Virgin Mary and gave Her His divinity instead; now He gives His flesh to the saints in order to deify them” (*Ethical Discourse*, quoted from Alfeyev 2004:116). As we have already seen, application of such a meaning to the formula by the Syriac Father and Symeon should be criticised as it is God who initiated the Incarnation of the Word and human deification as well. Human beings have no merit in this.

The supreme image of deification in Symeon’s works is the divine light. The image of the divine light is found in Eastern Orthodox theology and its literature in general. It is the light filled with the Incarnated Son which was from the Father, and was shown to the disciples on Mount Tabor. The divine light is the face of God, His grace upon us and His energy in the world. It is also God’s commandments and human love for God (*Hymns*, cited from Stathopoulos 1974:95-96). The two concepts, deification and the divine light, are regarded as counterparts so that, according to Symeon, the faithful become light, the children of God and gods by God’s grace (*Hymns*, cited from Alfeyev 2004:118). Because of the weakness of human beings, the divine light is shown in different forms. Human deification is one of the forms that it consists of in illumination by and participation in the

divine light (Alfeyev 2004:118; Russell 2011:134). Symeon even identifies the divine light to God: “Your Light is you, my God (*Hymns*)”. This, however, does not mean that human deification reaches to being God in essence. Our union with God is not literal oneness with Him, but rather our souls becoming transparent (Miller 1999:475). We cannot express the essence of the light, but can only describe its energies (Stathopoulos 1974:96). Symeon as such evidently makes sure the limitation of human deification that it is not a transformation in essence.

Preserving the stance of viewing human deification as in energy only, the process of participating in the light does not exclude the experience of the body for Symeon (Russell 2011:134). Penkett (2000:97) presents the extraordinary experience of Symeon himself, which is recorded in his *Catecheses*. In this experience Symeon “seemed to himself to have turned into light”. Thus, what Symeon had undergone was an experience of deification in this world, which contained a physical dimension, as well as a spiritual one. Penkett also presents three visions experienced by Symeon. Through the visions, Symeon ultimately enjoyed “increasingly intimate communion with the Trinity, the essence of an authentically Christian life” (Penkett 2000:109). Consequently, deification for Symeon, as for the Church Fathers, had an eschatological dimension that developed from this life, including deification in the body, and being perfected until the Second Coming of Jesus (*Hymns*), when the final restoration and transformation will be given us (*Ethical Discourse*, cited from Alfeyev 2004:117). In every step to the end, human beings are more purified, illumined and enlightened by practising God’s commandments more (*Catechetical Discourse*, cited from Alfeyev 2004:118) in sharing the grace of the Triune God.

It might be said that a mystical and inexplicable experience such as Symeon’s, as mentioned above, might be one of the reasons that the doctrine of deification was not embraced and studied adequately. Nevertheless, there are two prominent theologians from the Middle Ages who considered the theme of deification: Aquinas in the West and Palamas in the East. Aquinas might have bequeathed a little work on deification when compared to Palamas, but because he is the most representative theologian from the Middle Ages in the West, the two have been paralleled in recent

times with reference to the doctrine of deification by some writers, like Williams (1999), Van Rossum (2003) and Untea (2010).¹⁴⁸

3.3.2 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Now man's happiness is twofold ... One is proportionate to human nature, a happiness, to wit, which man can obtain by means of his natural principles. The other is a happiness surpassing man's nature, and which man can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation of the Godhead, about which it is written (2. Pet, i. 4) that by Christ we are made partakers of the Divine nature. And because such happiness surpasses the capacity of human nature, man's natural principles which enable him to act well according to his capacity, do not suffice to direct man to this same happiness (*ST*, I-II.62.1 co.).

From the above citation from Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, we notice two kinds of beatific happiness of humans: One can be achieved by natural principles, and the other can only come from participation in God. Thus, human deification according to Aquinas is achieved within the distinction between the essentially divine Being and the created, and the possibility of the participation in God is its precondition (Williams 1999:36; Marshall 2004:29). Aquinas refers to the participation as "the light of grace", quoting 2 Pet 1:4 (*ST*, I-II.110.3 co.). By arguing that "[n]o being can act beyond the limits of its specific nature, since the cause must always be of a higher potency than its effect", he makes sure of the distinction between God the Creator and the creatures, and in his statement that "[n]ow the gift of grace surpasses every capacity of created nature, since it is nothing other than a certain participation in the divine nature, which surpasses every other nature", the possibility of it can be observed. Thus, God alone deifies (*deificet*) human beings through sharing His divine nature which is achieved by human participation in Him (*ST*, I.112.1 co.). Human deification in Aquinas is not deification in essence, because for him God's essence is identical with His being (Rossum

¹⁴⁸ See Also Marshall (2004) for the parallel between Aquinas and Eastern Orthodox theology on the same theme.

2003:369).¹⁴⁹ Thus, for human beings the union with God means that, although the communion with Him through participation is possible in a sense, there should be distinction between God and human.

Aquinas frequently stresses the merit of intellect, but at the same time he makes it clear that the human intellect obviously has its limitations. Because of its insufficiency, the human intellect is not able to see God's divine essence, and the power of understanding God comes as by God's grace. Aquinas calls grace the "illumination" of the mind and "light". "By this light we are made 'deiform' (*deiformes*), that is, like to God" (*ST*, I.12.5 co.; I.12.5 ad.3).¹⁵⁰ Thus, if one human being 'sees' God more than another, that cannot mean that the one is more perfect nor that the one's ability is superior to the other, because the "ability to see God does not belong to the mind by its own nature but by the light of glory which renders the mind in some sense like to God (*deiformitate*)" (*ST*, I.12.6 co.; Untea 2010:73).¹⁵¹ As such, the intellect and the divine are placed as altogether central to Aquinas' doctrine on deification. The more we become like God, the more we know God (Williams 1999:38). In this sense, the glory of God can be observed as standing against human intellect and that the perfection of nature is achieved only in the glory (*ST*, II-II.26.13 s.c; Williams 1999:89).

Untea points to dissimilarity between Aquinas and Palamas in terms of the reality of human participation in the divine God. In his opinion, Aquinas stresses the reality of the intermediary created Being while Palamas insists on the reality of human participation through the uncreated energies (Untea 2010:113). Simply put, however, they share a similarity in that human ability, like intellect, is

¹⁴⁹ Van Rossum (2003:369) produces evidence that the union with God is still a distinguishable matter through Aquinas's usage of the verb *conjungere* (or *coniungo*). In his opinion, Aquinas prefers the verb *conjungere* to *unire*, which means the union with God; for him conjunction does not mean complete identicalness.

¹⁵⁰ He quotes 1 John 3:2 for this reason: "When he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is".

¹⁵¹ It is the same with angels in their hierarchy or orders. The more intelligible angel is able to enlighten and pass the truth on to a lower one (*ST*, I.106.1 co.). However, this hierarchy or order in angels is not derived from their nature, but from God's grace. The hierarchy is about how they have been "likening to God (*deiforme*)" not about how intelligent they are themselves (*ST*, I.108.4 arg.). The angels in the highest level, according to Dionysius, are called "Furnace and Thrones and Effusion of Wisdom" because those titles show how they are deiform in their disposition (*ST*, I.50.6 s.c.), not by nature.

For Thomas, charity is a distinguished virtue, seeing God more perfectly for human beings. Those who have more charity will have greater desire for the divine things, and this desire predisposes them to receive what they desire; this then consequently leads to seeing God more perfectly (*ST*, I.12.6 co.). In Williams' estimation, the level of participation in God's divine nature is determined by the degree of charity one possesses (Williams 1999:38), and he maintains this opinion saying "[i]f charity is the substance of God and the prime means of our likening to God, the very locus of our participation in God ... is also a locus of union with God". In this regard, the reality of the Eucharist is charity (*ST*, III.79,4 resp.; Williams 1999:93).

not sufficient to know, to participate in, and to become like God. Untea describes this inability of human nature from an eschatological perspective. Even though the intellect sees the essence of God in a sense through the light of grace, His essence in this life is always beyond reach (Untea 2010:72). Therefore, it can definitely be said that Aquinas is not a rationalist. “He had a strong sense of the divine mystery which cannot be grasped by the human *ratio*, and he often gave evidence of an ‘apophatic’ approach” (Rossum 2003:379).

Aquinas quotes Rom 1:2-3,¹⁵² Augustine¹⁵³ and Gregory of Nazianus¹⁵⁴ in investigating whether the statement “a man was made God” and *vice versa* is true (*ST*, III.16.7 arg.1-3). However, while Augustine and Gregory, as have seen, indicate the Incarnation-deification formula, Aquinas’ focus is exclusively on the Incarnation. His attention is focused only on the divinity and humanity of Christ, not on the Incarnation of the Son and deification of human beings when he says “a man was made God”. His equivalent understanding of “being humanized” and “being deified” is based upon the two natures of Christ in one person (substance). The divine nature of Jesus was “enfleshed” and His human nature was “deified” (*deificatam*) (*ST*, III.2.1 arg.3). One is not changed into another, however; the two natures are united in one another, retaining the attributes of each (*ST*, III.2.1 ad.3; III.16.5 ad.2). The divine nature existed first, and then the human nature was introduced through the Incarnation. Thus, it is evident that one person (*suppositum*) and two natures existed in Jesus even after the Incarnation. Therefore, it is true that the Son was “humanised”, and it is not true that He was deified, but His human nature was (*ST*, III.16.3 ad.2). In this regard, the man Jesus Christ is said to be “the Lord”, not a man “of the Lord”. On the other hand, the human nature of Jesus may not be said to be God essentially because it is “divinized”(*deificata*) (*ST*, III.16.3 co). The point is that the Son was essentially divine and then His human nature was deified for our sake. Consequently, for Aquinas, the statement “God was made a man” is true, but “a man was made God” is false (*ST*, III.16.7), in the relationship of the natures of Christ.

¹⁵² “(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (*KJV*).

¹⁵³ “This assumption was such that it made God a man and made a man God” (*De Trinitate* I, 13).

¹⁵⁴ “God was humanized while a man was deified” (*Epist.* (101) *ad Chelidonium*).

As with a few Greek¹⁵⁵ and Latin Fathers,¹⁵⁶ the conception of participation in the divine nature through adoption is one of the distinctive images in Aquinas' theology on deification, especially with regard to understanding deification in relation to the work of the Triune God.¹⁵⁷ The adoptive sonship of human beings is "a participated likeness of natural sonship" (*ST*, III. 23.4 co.; cf. III.23.1 ad.2).¹⁵⁸ The three divine Persons play specific roles for our adoption: the Father as the *auctor*, the Son as the *exemplar*, and the Holy Spirit as the *imprimens*. Yet, at the same time, Aquinas distinguishes the Sonship of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father by nature from the adoptive sonship of human beings. We are adopted as sons of the Father through the Son in the grace of the Holy Spirit. As Marshall indicates, "we have the full likeness of his Sonship, of his own distinctive way of possessing the divine nature, though we do not, of course, have numerically the same *filiatio*" (Marshall 2004:27).

Williams also observes the Trinitarian perspective in Aquinas' understanding of deification with the inner and outer relationship of the Triune God. In his observation, the Son plays the role as example, as Marshall proposed, for the outer relationship, viz. the economic Trinity. By the Incarnation of the Son, human beings are able to understand what being deified means to us; and it is the Holy Spirit who works between God and human beings to preserve and strengthen the relationship with love of God (Williams 1999:68). Human beings' relationship with God is ontologically divine, which is "eternal and inviolable" as the relationship between the Father and the Son is, although not the same.

As with many other Church Fathers, the Sacrament is the locus of deification in a very practical way for Aquinas. He quotes Damascene on this matter: "The fire of that desire within us which is kindled by the burning coal, namely the sacrament, will consume our sins and enlighten our hearts, so

¹⁵⁵ E.g. Irenaeus, Cyril of Alexandria, and Maximus the Confessor.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. Ambrose and Augustine.

¹⁵⁷ In Marshall's estimation, however, this aspect of Aquinas' theology is not properly acknowledged by Eastern Orthodox theologians or Western critics of Thomas (Marshall 2004:28).

¹⁵⁸ "*Dictum est autem supra quod filiatio adoptionis est participata similitudo filiationis naturalis*". Marshall (2004:26-27) reads this with the meaning of *participation* while the English translation reads it as "adoptive sonship has just been described as a *partial* likeness to sonship by nature" (my italics).

that we shall be *enflamed (participatione)* and made godlike (*deificemur*)” (*ST*, III.79.8 s.c.).¹⁵⁹ Simply stated: by participation in the Sacrament we are deified. Thus, the Eucharist, for Aquinas, is a locus of union with and participation in God; more directly, a locus of deification (Williams 1999:93). Then he mentions “venial sins” that hamper the effect of the Sacrament (see also *ST*, III.79.4), it reminds of us the insufficiency of human deification in this life, as we have already seen.

3.3.3 Gregory Palamas (1296-1359)

Gregory Palamas was the Monk of Mount Athos and archbishop of Thessalonike. The value of his influence in the study of deification cannot be overemphasised. It is no exaggeration to say that all study on the doctrine of deification, especially in Orthodox theology, starts from the study of the works of Palamas.¹⁶⁰ His theology is the summary of Greek patristic theology and the fulfilment of the Greek patristic tradition is found in him (LaCugna 1991b:173-174; Williams 1999:4; Olson 2007:199-200). Against the background of ignorance about one another between East and West, as mentioned above, the theology of Palamas had not become properly known to Western theologians. The work of the neo-Palamite theologians like Lossky and Meyendorff, however, has made Palamas’ better known in the West (LaCugna 1991b:173-174) and, according to Hallonsten, Orthodox theology of the 20th century is characterised by a renaissance involving the theology of Palamas (Hallonsten 2013:35).

Regarding deification in Palamas’ theology, Williams (1999:106ff) presents ten observations on human deification by Palamas, which can be listed simply as follows: 1) Virtue as a threshold of deification, which is won through human effort;¹⁶¹ 2) knowledge. For Palamas, “to understand the

¹⁵⁹ The Italics are mine and emphasise the translation, originally “participate in”.

¹⁶⁰ For a short history of the study on Palamas, see Mantzaridis (1984:8).

¹⁶¹ By articulating “human effort”, Palamas, according to Williams, did not intend any Pelagianism. The reason he used this directly is that the Eastern theologians had not been worried about how human effort affects salvation, as the Western theologians had been with doctrine like “justification by faith”. According to Palamas, human beings always need to stand firmly between virtue and grace in need of both.

nature of God is to become deified; those who know that God is Spirit are those who become God completely and know God in God (*Triads*, II.iii.68)¹⁶²; 3) vision, the eternal light, which was shown in Mount Tabor transfigured Jesus in glory; 4) contemplation, which links the knowledge and the vision and in which true God is experienced;¹⁶³ 5) light “as deification’s source, as the agent of human sanctification, and as deification itself”; 6) glory as God’s communicable power that dwells in us, the alternative name for “divine energy”, which is to be separated from “divine essence”; 7) grace, the only source where divinisation comes from; 8) adoption, which underscores deification as God’s grace; 9) participation, as a connection between “what one encounters and what one becomes”,¹⁶⁴ and 10) according to Williams, “union probably functions as the nearest equivalent to theosis”. All ten of these images, according to Williams, are connected to each other, representing the whole meaning of deification. Kärkkäinen states Palamas’ theology of deification more simply, premised on three points: 1) the creation in the image and likeness of God; 2) the incarnation of the Son; and 3) the Holy Spirit, the mediator for the communication with God” (Kärkkäinen 2004:28). In Wesche’s opinion, Palamas’ principle on deification is identified in three realities of God: the divine essence, the divine energies and the Triad of divine Persons (Wesche 2008:169).

Palamas also emphasises the deification-Incarnation formula in his theological system (Alfeyev 2004:120); and as his predecessors like Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria had done, Palamas stresses that the deifying power of the Holy Spirit ensures the Godhead of the third Person of the Trinity. He indicates that only God is able to deify human beings and that “the deifying gift of the Spirit is an energy of God” (*Triads*, III.i.31). In his opinion, the grace of the Holy Spirit is uncreated grace because any created thing cannot be united to a human soul (Kärkkäinen 2004:29). Human beings are incapable of participation in the uncreated grace by their power of perception, but

¹⁶² Although, generally speaking, Palamas’ theological ground is apophaticism as a counterpart of kataphaticism, he was not negative about intelligence or knowledge at all, because he believed true knowledge which deifies human beings and is distinguished from rational natural knowledge to be in Christ.

¹⁶³ By distinguishing the particular practice of prayer, which can be taught, from the contemplation of the gift of divine grace, Palamas ensured that what he meant with contemplation was not hesychism.

¹⁶⁴ Although Williams refers to participation as one of 10 images of the same weight, the concept participation in the doctrine of deification has a more significant meaning than other concepts. We deal with participation in Palamas’ theology in more detail in what follows.

only through the Holy Spirit (Mantzarides 1984:100). Therefore, human deification is divine in terms of participating in the uncreated grace through the Holy Spirit, but at the same time, it is to be distinguished from God's divine because it is from the divine energies, not the divine essence. As such, human beings who are created in God's image and likeness, should be distinguished from the Son who is the image of God; Palamas is aware of the identity the Son with human beings in this matter (Mantzarides 1984:17; Kärkkäinen 2004:28).¹⁶⁵

The distinction between the divine essence and energies is a central conception of the Orthodox Church from the Greek patristic tradition; that is to say, it is the most important characteristic of Palamas' theology. Instead of the term "immanent", which is related to ontology – what God is, Orthodox theology refers to "essence", which cannot be known ever; and for the term "economic" related to salvation – what God does, "energies", which relate to God's actions in creation and redemption, are rendered (LaCugna 1991b:171; Williams 1999:151). For this reason, Louth urges that "activity" is a much better translation for the Greek word *energeia*, than energy. The distinction between essence and energy is a distinction between God in Himself and God in His activity, therefore when we encounter the energies it is not merely His activity that we encounter, but God Himself (Louth 2013:40-41). As with the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity in the West, it is about God for God (God *in se*) and God for us (God *ad extra* and *pro nobis*) (Williams 1999:138). One of the main points is that the divine energies are communicable, but the essence of God is not. God is unknowable, incommunicable, unnameable, imparticipable in terms of His essence (*ousia*) but at the same time He is known, communicated, and participated in through the divine energies (*energeiai*) (LaCugna 1991a:183; Papanikolaou 2003:357). That is what Cappadocian theologians repeated constantly; we cannot know who God is in His essence, but we know God from

¹⁶⁵ The "uncreated grace" or "uncreated light" is at the centre of Palamas' theology on deification. It is also a central point of the hesychastic dispute in the 4th century in Thessalonike. The point is that Palamas believed that human beings are able to reach the uncreated light by contemplation or prayer as Jesus did on Mount Tabor (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36), whereas his opponents did not accept that because the practice obliterated the unbridgeable difference between God and creature (Mantzarides 1984:96; LaCugna 1991b:173; Louth 2013:41). Palamas was capable to stick to his insistence, however, by distinguishing the divine essence that belongs only to God thus imparticipable from the divine energies that God granted for human beings to enter into union with them.

God's energies in the world (LaCugna 1991b:169). In this regard, the term divine energies is a counterpart of *oikonomia* (theology of salvation of God), which is to be distinguished from *theologia* (theology of mystery of God) as the same as the divine essence, and they altogether constitute God (LaCugna 1991b:175n55). The invisible and imparticipable God becomes visible and participable to human beings by virtue of His energies. The possibility of real communion with God is open to us, but the fact that His divine nature or essence is transcendence is still preserved (Mantzarides 1984:97, 113). Thus, in terms of human deification, deified human beings, according to Palamas, do not become what God is in God's essence, but through the divine energies we share in God's attributes (Russell 2011:134). We participate in His energies for real communication with the Triune God and sharing God's divine life.¹⁶⁶ Palamas is assured of God's transcendence by the divine essence in which creatures cannot participate and, at the same time, speaks of deification of human beings through participating in the divine energies. The divine essence and the divine energies are the same in the sense of being uncreated but different in allowing partaking thereof by creatures. From the Trinitarian perspective, the distinction between essence and energies can be firm. If human beings are able to share in God's essence, the Triune God would not be tri-hypostatic any longer, but innumerable in hypostases. Only the Son participated in God's essence or hypostasis which took place only once, while deified human beings share in the uncreated grace of God's energies shown to us. Thus, according to LaCugna, Palamas claims two statements via the essence-energies distinction: "our deification is real, and, God remains absolutely transcendent to union with the creature" (LaCugna 1991a:184).

Olson suggests that the core of the distinction between the divine essence and the divine energy is whether the divine energy is the means of participating in God's essence indirectly or is that in which we participate (Olson 2007:189-200). Mantzaridis clearly denotes that God in His essence is transcendent and imparticipable, but He preserves a relationship with human beings through His

¹⁶⁶ Van Rossum (2003:379) considers that the Greek verb *μετέχειν* is close to the meaning of "share" or "communicate with", while "participate", the English translation of the word, means to "grasp a part". Cf. The Greek verb *μετέχω* is defined "to have a part or share in something" or "to partake of something" (*BDAG* s.v. *μετέχω*:642).

energies. Without the energies, human beings are incapable of speaking of the existence of the divine essence (Mantzarides 1984:104, 106). The divine energy is not the effect of God by which we participate in God's essence, but reveals the transcendence of God and enables us to enter into the divine communication of God the Trinity while maintaining our own nature, not blending with God nor becoming God in essence (LaCugna 1991a:184).¹⁶⁷ Thus, we participate in God's energies through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Human deification is not limited to the idea of soul, but deals with an understanding of the human being as a whole. According to Palamas, human deification comprises a continuous transformation of the human soul, as well as body (*Triads*, II.ii.9).¹⁶⁸ It can be also deduced from the work of Creation that God created human beings as a psychosomatic unity, thus a whole person – body, soul and mind – that must be deified (Williams 1999:115). As the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ was operated in His body and soul, the body and soul of human beings are deified and transformed in His divinity (*Triads*, II.ii.12). Thus, although they still are distinct, the human body and soul should be conceived as a unity, which cannot be regarded as being effected separately from one another (Untea 2010:100).

Lastly, Palamas' theology on deification, as seen in many Church Fathers, is closely linked to the Sacrament of the Church. In the Eucharist, Christ “mingles Himself with each of the faithful through participation in His holy body, becoming one body with us and making us the temple of the entire divinity” (*Triads*, I.iii.38).¹⁶⁹ The deifying grace of God in the Sacraments is also found in his homilies (*Homilies* 56):¹⁷⁰

Christ has become our brother, by sharing our flesh and blood and so becoming assimilated to us... He has joined and bound us to Himself, as a husband his wife, by becoming a single flesh with us through

¹⁶⁷ In this regard, according to LaCugna, kataphatic and apophatic theology are simultaneously referred to as the Palamite distinction. In the sense of our possibility of knowing God in His energies, it is positive; however, it also has a negative dimension in that we do not know what the energies are because, as mentioned above, the divine energies manifest the divine essence; therefore, knowing the energies necessarily requires knowing the essence as well.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Untea (2010:99)

¹⁶⁹ Quoted from Alfeyev (2004:121).

¹⁷⁰ Quoted from Alfeyev (2004:121).

the communion of His blood; he has also become our father by divine Baptism which renders us like unto Him, and He nourishes us at His own breast as a tender mother nourishes her babies... Come, He says, eat My Body, drink My Blood... so that you be not only made after God's image, but become gods and kings, eternal and heavenly, in Me clothing yourselves with Me, King and God.

3.4 THE REFORMATION ERA

3.4.1 Martin Luther (1483-1546)¹⁷¹

Many scholars indicate that Luther does not mention the term deification directly in his works, and the verb “deify” is used only four times.¹⁷² According to Peura, however, he utilises the concept of deification 30 times in various forms in his corpus,¹⁷³ although Briskina-Müller’s estimation that Luther succeeds the Church Fathers as a heritor of the doctrine of deification has this aspect: “Luther takes over and repeats the Athanasianian *theosis* formula. Furthermore, he mostly uses the same scriptural passage (2 Peter 1:4) upon which the patristic notion of *theosis* rests. The notion of *theosis* occurs in the works of the Reformer not only thematically but also terminologically” (Briskina-Müller 2008:20).

In the comment on Ps 57:8, Luther cites analogous cases between Christ’s two natures and two musical instruments, the psaltery and the harp. In this metaphor, the two instruments each symbolise the divinity and the humanity of Christ, respectively. The psaltery, making the sound from the top, shows Christ’s powers and miracles, while the harp shows His humanity in that the harp gets its sound

¹⁷¹ Regarding Luther on the matter of deification, the interpretation from Tuomo Mannermaa and his colleagues at the University of Helsinki takes up the most significant portion in this study on deification. We will deal with their interpretation in detail, as well as with the objections, in 3.5.2.1. Thus, in this section the observation from the text in which Luther himself directly mentioned deification is mainly presented.

¹⁷² Mannermaa, however, finds that the term *deificatio* and/or *Vergöttlichung* appears in Luther's texts more often than the term *theologia crucis* (Mannermaa 1995:37).

¹⁷³ Peura, S, “Vergöttlichungsgedanke in Luthers Theologie 1518-1519”, in *Thesaurus Lutheri*. 171-172, quoted from Kärkkäinen (2004:47n40).

from the bottom. Therefore, according to Luther, Christ is “the psalter by reason of the fact that He is God incarnate, and the harp because He is man deified” (*First Letters on the Psalms I: Psalms 1-75, LW 10:265*). In another comment on Ps 82:7, he exposes the reason for the wicked, by which he mainly means the rulers, being called ‘gods’, as for the sake of His word and divine office: He called the wicked gods, using His own name, appealing to the authority of the word of God which “hallows and deifies everything to which it is applied” (*Selected Psalms II, LW 13:71*). The third use of the verb “deify” concerns the dispute on free choice in Erasmus, which is not relevant to our current study.¹⁷⁴ One of the most explicit passages on deification in Luther’s works comes from the sermon on the day of St. Peter and St. Paul that was delivered in 1519, in which Luther describes the deified human being as “more than a man” (cf. Kärkkäinen 2006:76; Chia 2011:135):

Therefore St. Jerome well says concerning this Gospel that it should be noted how Christ asks his disciples what men are saying of him and then afterwards asks them what they say of him, just as if they were not men. For it is true that man helped by grace is more than a man; indeed, the grace of God gives him the form of God and deifies him, so that even the Scriptures call him “God” and God’s son. Thus a man must be extended beyond flesh and blood and become more than man, if he is to become good. And this begins when a man acknowledges that of himself this is impossible, humbly seeks the grace of God, and utterly despairs of himself; only then do good works follow. Thus, when grace has been obtained, then you have a free will; then do what in you lies (*Sermons I: A Sermon on the Festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, LW 51:58*).

Although the direct terminology is not used, Luther’s Christmas sermon in 1514 is worth citing. In the sermon, he shows his understanding of the Incarnation of the Word, referring it to the doctrine of deification:

Just as the word of God became flesh, so it is certainly also necessary that the flesh become word. In other words: God becomes man so that man may become God. Thus power becomes powerless so that weakness may become powerful. The logos puts on our form and manner, our image and likeness, so that it may clothe us with its image, its pattern, and its likeness (*WA 1, 28, 25-32*).

¹⁷⁴ cf. *Career of the Reformer III, LW 33:107*.

It is the same as what we have said of the Incarnation-deification formula, which we proved in the work of the Church Fathers and scholars of the Middle Ages. Luther also confirms later in this sermon that the union with Christ does not signify a change in substance. The participation in God cannot prevent being God and being human as well, rather, we always exist in our substance even after being deified by God's grace (Mannermaa 1995:43). In the comment on Gal 2:6b, Luther makes a comparison between God and human beings: God is not made to anything for He is unchanging but human beings are made to God by faith for faith is unchanging (*LW* 26:99-100). Thus, we participate in the everlasting God with the everlasting faith, which is given from God.

3.4.2 John Calvin (1509-1564)

Finding any trace on deification in Calvin's work may seem an easy task, because the doctrine of deification contains various theological dimensions such as redemption, participation, and union with God, which basically are dealt with by any theologian or theological tradition. At the same time, however, it is difficult because Calvin himself maintained some distance from the late Byzantine theology or Palamite theology that is often regarded as the origin of the doctrine of deification. Thus, if a vestige of deification is found in Calvin's theology, it cannot necessarily mean that Calvin was as familiar with the doctrine of deification as Palamas or other Eastern theologians were.¹⁷⁵ Calvin's notion of deification or similar points cannot be the same as the late Byzantine notions of it (Billings 2005:334). As Ollerton indicates, Calvin's approach to deification was oblique and he more frequently uses diverse terms to articulate the theme (Ollerton 2011:240).

Norris's statement that "John Calvin seems to have avoided teaching deification or not known of it" (Norris 1996:420) has been a representative view among Calvin scholars. It was Mosser, however,

¹⁷⁵ Billings (2005:328-329; 2008:208-209) criticises McLelland in this regard, indicating that he depicted Calvin and Orthodox theologians too simply regarding dealing with the mystic union with God. Cf. McLelland, J C, "Sailing to Byzantine", in Meyendorff, J & McLelland, J C (eds), *The New Man: An Orthodox and Reformed Dialogue*. New Brunswick: Agora Books (1973:10-25).

who upset the presupposition. Although not as popular as the interpretation of the theology of Luther in Lutherans, esp. in Finnish Lutheran scholars, the dispute on whether Calvin uses deification in his writings is also held among a few Calvin scholars, especially since Mosser (2002) wrote his article *The Greatest Possible Blessing*. Besides Mosser, on the one hand, Billings (2005) also adamantly affirms deification in Calvin's theology; while on the other hand, some scholars, like Slater (2005), deny any presence of the motif of the doctrine in Calvin's theology. The research for the current study has found that Lee (2010) and Ollerton (2011) have recently shown a more neutral attitude .

As Mosser himself admits, deification is not a prominent theme in Calvin's theology. Thus, Mosser endeavours to find "deificatory language and imagery" in Calvin's theology (Mosser 2002:39-40), such as *Imago Dei*, the union with Christ, the Baptism and ingrafting, the Lord's Supper, glorification, and he then develops these images from the Trinitarian perspective (Mosser 2002:41ff). It is notable that all the expressions and images that he found from Calvin's theology do not differ from what we have seen in writings from the patriarchs to Luther. According to Mosser, Calvin regards partaking of the divine nature to be the same as a "blessing than which nothing more excellent can be conceived", which seems to come from Anselm: "than which nothing more outstanding can be imagined". Thus, Mosser calls it "the greatest possible blessing" (Mosser 2002:40). At this point, Calvin's view on partaking of the divine nature is identical to the ideas of patristic writers (Mosser 2002:41). Nevertheless, Mosser maintains a cautious position about applying deificatory language directly to Calvin's theology. Rather, he blames the Finnish Lutheran School for overstating the significance of deification in Luther's theology.

While Mosser is cautious about saying that Calvin speaks of deification as a result of his distance from the Byzantine theology, Billings takes a more aggressive stance, arguing that Byzantine theology cannot be the only lens through which deification is introduced and understood (Christensen & Wittung 2008a:14). Billings (2005:325) differentiates the "theme" of theology and "doctrine" of theology in this regard:

A theology containing the *themes* typically associated with deification would not necessarily result in a *doctrine* of deification. These themes are, after all, biblical ones that can be found in nearly any Christian theology. A doctrine of deification involves the development of these biblical themes and a differentiation among various theological alternatives connected with them.

According to Billings, Calvin, without using the Palamite distinction between “energies” and “essence”, fully developed the theology of deification with his own language and images like participation, ingrafting and adoption, which he adopted from Pauline and Johannine passages (Billings 2005:316-317; 2008:211-212). In addition to those images, the union with God is also an alleged doctrine in Calvin’s writings. As is well known, humanity, for Calvin, is totally corrupted and powerless to contribute to its redemption. Thus, being united to God is also impossible for fallen human beings. As Billings rightly indicates, however, Calvin is not being “negative” about humanity but “negative” about sin (Billings 2005:318; 2008:202). The sinful humanity for Calvin is what must be united with God to recover its original status. Because of this, a perfect union with God, i.e. deification, is a possible and pursuable blessing for Calvin. Billings, however, also emphasises that this union, for Calvin, must not mean “confusion” between the Creator and creatures (Billings 2005:317, 327).¹⁷⁶

Slater, on the other hand, objects to Mosser arguing that there is no evidence of deification in Calvin’s theology and that Mosser’s interpretation of Calvin that the theme of deification is frequently found in Calvin is an overstated one (Slater 2005:40). He admitted that Calvin speaks about the believers’ union with Christ. According to Slater, however, Calvin’s position was that believers share Christ’s human nature and are clothed in His righteousness from His human obedience, not the divine nature (Slater 2005:41, 52). He (Slater 2005:43) also objects that the union with God does not mean the sharing of His divine nature. However, the human and divine natures do not work in separation of one another. What Christ performed to reconcile God and man validly affects to the whole person, and is not separately restricted to either nature of human beings (Tylenda 1992:161, 170-171; Lee

¹⁷⁶ Partee (2008:178) says in this regard that, if union with God does not mean to become God but to become like God as far as possible, he admits that Calvin teaches the doctrine of deification in his doctrine on the union with God.

2010:28).

Recently, Lee and Ollerton presented a third or middle way between Mosser and Billings, and Slater. While Lee has a rather negative understanding of deificatory teachings from Calvin, Ollerton cites the expression *quasi deificari* from Calvin towards a positive position. Lee endeavours to find such a middle way between Mosser and Slater in the criticism of Calvin's two opponents (Lee 2010:273ff): Osiander, who insisted that Christ was made righteous for us in terms of His divine nature; and Stancaró, who admitted Christ as the mediator only in His human nature.¹⁷⁷ So to speak, Lee ascribes Mosser's positive view on deification to Osiander, and Slater's negative idea to Stancaró, and then criticises Mosser and Slater via the criticism on Osiander and Stancaró to allege that both of them occupy polemical positions. Thus, according to Lee, Slater, on the one hand, should not have separated the divinity and the humanity excessively, and should have admitted the possibility of human deification.¹⁷⁸ Mosser, on the other hand, should be criticised for excessively insisting on the union with God in essence. Lee rightly draws the line on the union with God in essence: "the union between God and the believer in Calvin is a spiritual union, not a union of essences" (Lee 2010:283). However, it is also to be emphasised that the spiritual union is not equivocal for Calvin, but, as we see in his theology on the meaning of the bread and the wine in the Eucharist, "spiritual" always implies a "practical" and "realistic" meaning. Lee's intermediate, or somewhat ambiguous, stance is shown clearly when he says: "We will be like God, but we will not be God. We will experience a kind of deification, but not deification itself" (Lee 2010:284).¹⁷⁹ As Ollerton points out, however, he did not deal with Calvin on the ground of the Church Fathers' inheritance (Ollerton 2011:239). Thus, his negative view on deification can be said to be too hasty.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Tylenda (1992:161).

¹⁷⁸ Lee agrees with Slater when he says, "the immortality which we receive from God is not God's own immortality, but immortality as God's gift" (Lee 2010:284). It should be stressed, however, that the immortality, righteousness, divinity etc. are attributes that belong only to God. Thus, sharing His attributes with us means that human beings become one with Him, if not in essence. We will deal with the relationship between "gift" and "grace" in the theology of Luther from the perspective of Finnish interpretation. They insist that Luther never dealt with these two aspects separately.

¹⁷⁹ Partee also seems to take this moderated view. He is ready to stand on the positive side on the matter of deification as long as the phrase "in so far as possible" is assured (Partee 2008:173). He differentiates participation in God and divinisation: "... since Calvin's hope is located in Christ, the goal is participation in him, not divinization. In other words, sharply focused Christology precludes blurry deification" (Partee 2008:167). However, it is doubtful that participation in Him and divinisation can be regarded separately.

Ollerton, compared to Lee, seems to stand on positive ground in adopting “a kind of deification (*quasi deificari*)” as his basic stance: “This phrase [*quasi deificari*] shows Calvin's willingness to affirm the motif of deification (through explicit use of *theosis* terminology) whilst also using the qualifying term (*quasi*) to guard against certain versions of deification” (Ollerton 2011:237). His perspective is more resolute than Lee’s in the understanding of Calvin’s connecting union with Christ with the deification motif. In this regard, he stresses that Calvin speaks of *unto mystic* for the notion of *participatio substantia* (Ollerton 2011:249).

Deification for Calvin, above all, is not about the union in essence.¹⁸⁰ Calvin says that the end of the Gospel is “to render us eventually conformable to God”, and adds, “if we may so speak, to deify us”. At the same time, he makes sure that this union is different from the heretic thought of transformation of human beings in essence:

But the word *nature* [2 Pet. 1:4] is not here essence but quality. The Manicheans formerly dreamt that we are a part of God, and that, after having run the race of life we shall at length revert to our original. There are also at this day fanatics who imagine that we thus pass over into the nature of God, so that his swallows up our nature... But such a delirium as this never entered the minds of the holy Apostles (Calvin 1855:371).

This distinction between essence and quality is also given in *Inst.*: “Indeed, Paul truly quotes Aratus that we are God’s offspring (Acts 17:28), but in quality, not in essence, inasmuch as he, indeed, adorned us with divine gifts” (*Inst.* 1.15.5).¹⁸¹ At this point, Calvin criticises Osiander who claimed that “we are substantially righteous in God by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality”. Calvin agrees with Osiander that there is no need of proof of the fact that the Bible testifies of the union between Christ and believers. Differentiating himself from Osiander, however, Calvin urges that Osiander did not observe that believers are united with God by the “secret power” of the Holy Spirit

¹⁸⁰ “His [Calvin’s] understanding of the union between Christ and the believer is parallel. There is a real union, but not an essential or ‘physical’ union” (Mosser 2002:49).

¹⁸¹ Mosser links the Calvinic distinction between “essence” and “quality” to the Palamite or Orthodox distinction between “essence” and “energies” (Mosser 2002:54).

(*Inst.* 3.11.5).¹⁸² As a result, Osiander “forces a gross mingling of Christ with believers” (*Inst.* 3.11.10). On any level, Calvin did not accept the Osiandrian opinion that God’s essence is united with the believers, nor that the union is by an infusion of the divine essence (Mosser 2002:37, 49; Ollerton 2011:242). Thus, Ollerton’s observation is right when he says that Calvin “*receives and rejects* deification” as he comments on 2 Pet 1:4 (Ollerton 2011:240). The Manicheans insisted that Calvin was aware of using the theme of deification in essence. He rather separates Christian deification from heretic thought. As such, what Calvin objected to in Osiander was the mingling or absorbing of us. In the union between the Creator and creatures, the former does not “swallow up” the latter (Billings 2005:327-328). Rather, as we noticed from the patristic teachings, God will remain God, while human beings will remain human, even after having received the perfect deification in the future. Thus, Calvin’s theology of the mystic union is to be distinguished from the mystical and ambiguous absorption, as well as the union in essence. Following the Chalcedonian inheritance of “union” between divinity and humanity without “confusing”, Calvin states, “he who was the Son of God became the Son of man – not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person” (*Inst.* 2.14.1).¹⁸³

Calvin’s doctrine of the union with Christ opens and helps to define the discussion of deification. The mystical union with God and deification are the two doctrines that must be considered and dealt with one perspective (Partee 2008:168). As long as the distinction between the Creator and creatures is assured, the union with God is compulsory for human beings. Calvin understands that it is the purpose of the Gospel: “We should notice that it is the purpose of the Gospel to make us sooner or later like God; indeed it is, so to speak, a kind of deification” (Calvin 2009:328).¹⁸⁴

Human deification is possible as long as it depends on Christ who is perfectly united with God

¹⁸² Cf. Partee also emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit in the union between God and human beings and even notes that the union is constituted “substantially” by the Holy Spirit: “Union with God is established not instrumentally but “substantially” by union with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit” (Partee 2008:167).

¹⁸³ The Chalcedonian Creed says: “One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably.”

¹⁸⁴ “*Notemus ergo hunc esse Evangelii finem, ut aliquando conformes Deo reddamur: id vero est quasi deificari, ut ita loquamur*”. See also Billings (2008:205): “Relying upon interpretations of John and Paul as well as Irenaeus and Augustine, Calvin teaches that the final end and goal for humanity is a trinitarian union of humanity with God”.

the Father and in whom we are able to be united with the Father. Thus, in the Son's relationship with the Father we are united with God by grace (Canlis 2004:184). Ollerton regards this as the "definition" and "dynamic" of deification. By "definition" he means that human deification is not about the union with God in essence. As with Christ, the only definition of human deification was one with the Father without confusion of substance but by unity of the person, and He unites us with the Father in perfect union, while safeguarding the distinction between the Creator and creatures. On the other hand, Christ as the "dynamic" of deification, refers to the Incarnation-deification formula through which His incarnated flesh becomes the source of divine life for us in which the Holy Spirit works (Ollerton 2011:244-245). Concerning Calvin's notion of the Incarnation-deification formulas, the following statement clearly shows the possibility of human deification through the Incarnation of the Son:

This is the wonderful exchange which, out of his measureless benevolence, he has made with us; that, becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him; that, by his descent to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, by taking on our mortality, he has conferred his immortality upon us; that, accepting our weakness, he has strengthened us by his power; that, receiving our poverty unto himself, he has transferred his wealth to us; that, taking the weight of our iniquity upon himself (which oppressed us), he has clothed us with his righteousness (*Inst.* 4.17.2).

Billings (2005:327) indicates that Calvin was cautious of Osiander's account of participation in Christ in that that might leave out the significant role of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, the union with God is fundamentally Trinitarian and the all three Persons should be involved at any stage (Mosser 2002:46). The equality of the Triune God is confirmed from the fact that neither Person deifies the others nor is deified by the others. Calvin admits that the Father is the beginning of the divinity of the Trinity, however, at the same time, he says the essence of God is not "proper to the Father alone as if he were the deifier of the Son (*quasi Filii deificator esset*)" (*Inst.* 1.13.24). If God the Father was the deifier and the other two Persons were deified by the Father, he continues, "the Trinity would be nothing else but the conjunction of the one God with two created things" (*Inst.* 1.13.25). Human beings who are deified cannot have equality with the Triune God because a "deified being can never be considered the same kind of being as the uncreated God" (Mosser 2002:55). Thus, although a

deified human being is able to partake in the inner life of the Trinity, such a being still remains a creature.¹⁸⁵

For Calvin, the death and resurrection of Christ is the remedy for the participation of unjust believers in God in whom they are righteous (*Inst.* 3.11.8). Thus, the participation in the whole person of Christ and participation in the Trinity is a synonym. Calvin also emphasises that the Holy Spirit is the agency of the believers' participation (*Inst.* 3.11.5, 8).¹⁸⁶ Calvin's theology of participation has a wide range, but his strongest language of participation is related to the Sacraments (Billings 2005:323; Ollerton 2011:250).

It is important that the context of Calvin's articulation of the Incarnation-deification formula is the Sacrament (*Inst.* 4.17.2). Human deification for Calvin is not something that remains mystic in status, but is made more concrete in the Sacraments of Church life. As is well known, Calvin's theology concerning the Sacrament is different from that of Luther and Zwingli. Such a middle position between two other Reformers has the effect of making Calvin's theology on deification real and, at the same time, spiritual as well: "Calvin opposes the Lutheran notion that the believer receives the unmediated and unqualified substance of Christ in the bread itself. However, he still affirms the spiritually substantive nature of Christ's presence in the Supper" (Ollerton 2011:252). In the bread and the wine, Christ shows Himself as the sharer of our mortality and makes us partakers in His immortality (*Inst.* 4.17.4). As such, the Sacraments provide the means by which participants are ingrafted into the body of Christ, not simply partaking of His benefits, but "becoming one with Christ" (Billings 2005:317, 323-324). This communal activity of the deified community does not have a vertical link with the Trinity in whom they participate only, but also is horizontal to the neighbours to whom they have to show the love of the Trinity and what the life of the deified people comprises (Billings 2005:330-331). Therefore, Love should be revealed and shown to neighbours as an external

¹⁸⁵ Calvin says that the love with which the Father loves the Son is the same love with which He loves us: "It is an invaluable privilege of faith, that we know that Christ was *loved* by the Father on our account, that we might be made partakers of the *same love*, and might enjoy it for ever" (Calvin 1848:189). However, Ollerton distinguishes the *ad intra* love that the Father has for the Son and the *ad extra* love, of which the adopted sons partake (Ollerton 2011:247). Such a distinction is valid for the current study.

¹⁸⁶ See also Billings (2008:207).

proof of deification for us.¹⁸⁷

3.5 RECENT STUDY OF DEIFICATION

3.5.1 Eastern Theology

As we mentioned above, all studies with regard to deification in Eastern theology can be said to be the legacy of Gregory Palamas. It is thus no overstatement to claim that all Eastern theological work on deification after Palamas is about the interpretation of Palamas' work. After Palamas, however, Orthodox theology was silent for nearly 400 years (Papanikolaou 2013:53). After the silence, interpretation of Palamas' theology emerged from at least two groups. In this section, we deal with the current Eastern theology on deification along three streams: 1) Lossky, a representative Neo-Palamite theology, 2) Zizioulas, who is against the Palamite tradition, and 3) Other theologians between the two sides.

3.5.1.1 Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958): Neo-Palamism

The essence-energies distinction, which we have seen in the theology of Palamas, is the central theme for the most contemporary Orthodox theologians. That's why Orthodox theology is often described as Neo-Palamite (Papanikolaou 2011:249; Hallonsten 2013:35).

Lossky is generally regarded as the founder of Neo-Palamism. He representatively plays a

¹⁸⁷ We will see the same stress on love in the new Finnish Lutheran interpretation of Luther at 3.5.2.1.

significant role in the Palamite distinction between essence and energies (Papanikolaou 2003:357; Kotiranta 2013:379). The distinction is vital for his approach to theology: An apophatic way, which is the perfect way for knowledge of God in a negative sense, while the positive approach, the cataphatic way, provides some knowledge of God that is imperfect. God in essence is unknowable to us, so that the apophatic way leads us to total ignorance (Lossky 1991:25). The apophatic way does not mean, however, that we are led to utter absence or emptiness (Lossky 1991:43), because God is not the impersonal God of the philosophers but the God who reveals Himself in the Incarnation of the Son as the Triune God (Lossky 1991:31; Papanikolaou 2003:358). Thus, although conceptualisation of the essence of God is impossible for us, the possibility of access to God is still valid, and Neo-Palamism holds on to this possibility in the essence-energies distinction (Kotiranta 2013:382).

“God reveals Himself, totally gives himself in His energies, and remains totally unknowable and incommunicable in His essence” (Lossky 1974:55). The essence and the energies are in a way simply the two modes of God’s existence: In Western terminology, He is totally transcendent in His essence and, at the same time, fully immanent for the sake of the salvation of human beings, which is revealed in the divine energies (Lossky 1991:86; Papanikolaou 2003:359; Russell 2009:134). The essence-energies distinction, however, does not lead us to a contradiction, but is very purposeful in simultaneously ensuring God’s autonomy and His involvement with the world, and it avoids the pantheistic concept of deification keeping the union with God in nature (Kotiranta 2013:386-387). Thus, with this distinction, deification of human beings is possible through participation in God’s energies, not in His essence. Papanikolaou regards the purpose of salvation and the Incarnation “to increase one’s participation in these energies in order to penetrate further the divine mystery” (Papanikolaou 2003:363). No one is, at any rate, able to reach to the essence of the mystery. As such, the essence-energies distinction postulates the possibility of deification as well as the limitation of it.

Unlike Zizioulas, whom we will deal with soon, Lossky rejects the use of *hypostasis* in the deification of human beings. In his opinion, the hypostatic union is to be applied only to the Son who became man “without ceasing [as] the second Person of the Trinity”. Human sharing of the divine

nature is not the same as the Son's hypostatic union with the Father, in which we cannot participate in the essence or the *hypostasis* of the Trinity (Lossky 1991:70; Papanikolaou 2003:370). Christ needs to be deified in His human nature, not the divine nature, but human beings need deification of the entire nature (Lossky 1991:155). Thus, even being deified, human beings remain less than the Son (Olson 2007:190). Adam's state, according to Lossky, was neither pure nature nor a deified one. He was able to be deified in his nature by God, but he failed. Then, the second Adam, the incarnated Word, accomplished the perfect union of His two natures (Lossky 1974:104). Thus, the possibility of human deification for Lossky starts from Christ's descending in our fallen nature. He overcame death and corruption so that we may participate in His divine nature and be deified by the grace of the Triune God.

Therefore, for Lossky, the Incarnation-deification formula, which we have investigated in all periods and traditions, is not a novel idea that has sprung up suddenly, but the main theme of Christianity, which has been considered by the Church Fathers and the Eastern Orthodox theologians for many centuries:

“God made Himself man, that man might become God.” These powerful words, which we find for the first time in St. Irenaeus, are again found in the writings of St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. The Fathers and Orthodox theologians have repeated them in every century with the same emphasis, wishing to sum up in this striking sentence the very essence of Christianity: an ineffable descent of God to the ultimate limit of our fallen human condition, even unto death – a descent of God which opens to men a path of ascent, the unlimited vistas of the union of created beings with the Divinity (Lossky 1974:97).

Pneumatology is important for Lossky to presuppose the formula that we become God “by partaking of the divinity in the Holy Spirit” (Lossky 1974:109). He (1974:103) considers that it is insufficient to deal with Christology only for deification, which is why medieval Western theology failed in coming to teach the doctrine more abundantly, focusing only on the work of Christ. Pneumatology is required to deal with in this matter. For Lossky, “[t]he redeeming work of Christ is an indispensable pre-condition of the deifying work of the Holy Spirit” (Lossky 1974:109). The

Pneumatological approach also guarantees that deification does not depend on human merit or virtue. Although he mentions a “synergistic cooperation of divinity and humanity”, he avoids, in Western terminology, the Pelagian fallacy by stressing that deification is only achieved through the action of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁸ Deification, for Lossky, is the Trinitarian gift (Lossky 1991:196ff; Olson 2007:190; Christensen 2008:30n25).

Theology is and must always be mystical, says Lossky in *The mystical theology of the Eastern Church*, his principal work. By mystical, he does not mean the esoteric theology of the Middle Ages, but that it should be cautious about the intellectual approach to knowledge of God. For Lossky, the way to knowledge of God thus, necessarily, is deification (Lossky 1991:39). It is a mystic union with God. The union with God, for Lossky, however, does not mean that we are absorbed or that our personal humanity disappears, as we have observed from the Fathers:

Only in the Church can they realize themselves in their true diversity. Not being parts of a common nature, as is the case with individuals, persons are not confused with each other on account of the unity of nature which is in the process of realization in the Church. They do not become portions of the Person of Christ. They are not included in the Person of Christ as in a super-person. (Lossky 1974:108)

3.5.1.2 John Zizioulas (1931-): Deification as the Hypostatic Union with Christ

Unlike Lossky, Zizioulas challenges the traditional essence-energies distinction, which has been firmly founded in Orthodox theology since Palamas. For even though the traditional Orthodox distinction has not received the consent of Western theologians, Zizioulas is more widely accepted and has become popular in Western theology, among Roman Catholics as well as Protestants (Olson 2007:191).

¹⁸⁸ Grace and human free will has never been regarded separately in Eastern theology. Thus, the so-called Pelagian controversy had no influence on the Orthodox Church (Kärkkäinen 2002:19; Hallonsten 2013:33).

Although he understands that the intention of the distinction between the essence and energies is to safeguard the otherness existing between the Creator and creatures (Zizioulas 2002:91n75), his approach to deification is basically different from the traditional approach. While the traditional Orthodox theologians from Palamas to Lossky have regarded deification as participation in the divine energies revealed to the world through the economy of the Triune God, Zizioulas' approach is rather Christological in that he suggests that we participate in the hypostasis of Christ who is the perfect model of a true human being (Papanikolaou 2003:358; Olson 2007:192; Russell 2009:52). Both Zizioulas and Lossky are the same in terms of being cautious about participation in the divine essence which is not allowed us, as we have previously observed. Yet Zizioulas finds a possibility of human deification in the everlasting relationship of the Son with the Father. According to Zizioulas, "it is ultimately *personhood*, the *hypostasis* of the *Logos*, and not divine energies, that bridges the gulf between God and the world" (Zizioulas 2006:30). This Christ-centric union is built from his thoughts on ontology:

The human being by asking the questions 'Who am I?' expects to raise the particular to the level of ontological primacy... In so doing Man wishes to be God, for the conditions that we have set out for this ontology of personhood exist only in God. Is that the *Imago Dei* in Man? I believe it is. But the realisation of this drive of Man towards personal ontology cannot be provided by created being. Here *Christology* emerges as the only way of fulfilling the human drive to personhood (Zizioulas 1991:42-43).

Standing in contrast to Lossky's apophatic theology, Zizioulas sets the place of the Eucharist as the locus of deification where human beings enter into communion with the Triune God (Hallonsten 2013:41). As he emphasises participation in the hypostasis of the Son, not in the divine energies, the Eucharist for Zizioulas is also the event of our uniting with Christ in which the Holy Spirit constitutes the Church as the body of Christ (Olson 2007:192; Papanikolaou 2011:252-253).

The objection to Zizioulas concerns the absorption of the personal particularities of human beings. According to Zizioulas, however, we do not cease to be human beings but rather become true

persons only in relationship with God through Christ. The prerequisite for the concept of a person in his view is “personhood as communion in otherness” (Zizioulas 2006:30n51). Another criticism of forsaking the traditional essence-energies distinction is that, if we abandon the distinction, “either a near-pantheistic identity of the redeemed person with God or belief that deification is merely a metaphor and not real participation in God” could arise (Olson 2007:192).

3.5.1.3 The Modern Eastern Orthodox Approach to Deification

Russell (2009:48ff) categorises the current Eastern Orthodox approach to the doctrine of deification into two groups according to their focus: Bulgakov, Lossky, and Louth for the cosmic deification; and Nellas, Zizioulas, and Behr for deification as the participation in the Person of Christ. The former, according to Russell, follows the cosmic theology of Maximus the Confessor, namely that deification is for the whole universe and all creatures will partake of the cosmic deification when “God is all in all”. In this position, deification does not merely remain the remedy for the Fall. Louth (2008:35) gives the “example of [an] arch” for this cosmic vision of deification. There is an arch that starts from the Fall and ends with redemption. Louth says Western theology is characterised in this lesser arch, while Eastern theology has a greater arch, which leads us from the creation to deification. Thus, in Eastern theology, God’s intention for the whole cosmos is explicitly shown: cosmic deification. As a result of the Adam’s failure to be obedient to God, all human beings are put in the position of needing the redemption. The purpose of theology, however, should not remain at this level, but reach the restoration of the cosmic dimension of theology. The purpose of the Incarnation is not only the redemption of human beings but also participation in the cosmic deification of the whole universe through the redeemed and deified human beings. Therefore the full scope of the divine economy is revealed in the greater arch (Russell 2009:50). The second party’s approach is focused on the Son as the true image of God, and the Incarnation of the Son through which human beings participate in the divine nature and being in Christification. We have already seen this Christo-centric concept of deification from Zizioulas.

However, both approaches encounter the fact that deification is not merely another word for salvation, but that it leads us to the divine economy:

Whether (following St Cyril) we understand it in terms of our re-creation in the divine image through our acceptance of baptism and participation in the Eucharist, or whether (following St Maximus) we prefer to see it in broader terms as the fulfilment in God of the entire created order, theosis sums up the divine economy (Russell 2009:53) .

As we have seen, Maximus the Confessor stresses the cosmic deification as well as its realisation in the spiritual life of the Church in a very practical way, through the prayers of the saints and the rites of the Church. Nellas (1996) also agrees that the range of theology is from the creation to deification and simultaneously emphasises personal participation in the divine nature. Thus, the cosmic and personal deification is not incompatible, but rather complementary to one another in Orthodox theology.

3.5.2 Western Theology

By and large, there have been three streams of study on deification in the West since the 20th century. Regarding the first stream, the Ecumenical movement and the Ecumenical dialogues, a significant discussion transpired between Finnish Lutheran and Russian Orthodoxy, which entailed the re-interest in and re-interpretation of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith and, in the mood of above streams, interest in Eastern Orthodox theology has arisen among young scholars like Russell and Christensen.

3.5.2.1 Tuomo Mannermaa (1937-): The New Finnish Luther Research

In 1977, ecumenical dialogue between the Finnish Lutheran and the Russian Orthodox Church took place in Kiev, Ukraine, and the Lutheran understanding of justification by faith was implied in

the Orthodox view of deification.¹⁸⁹ This new hermeneutic vista has since then opened up a new dimension in the interpretation of Luther in the Finnish Lutheran tradition. After all, instead of the classic forensic understanding of justification as forgiveness of sin, this interpretation has a more active meaning of participation in the divine life, which corresponds in a special way to the Orthodox doctrine of participation in God, in deification (Mannermaa 1998a:25; 1998b:2; Linman 2008:190).¹⁹⁰ This has never been a common theme between the Orthodox and the Lutheran traditions. The dialogue, however, became a surprising starting point of intersection between the two traditions.

This new interpretation of Luther, especially on his theology of justification by faith, has emerged mainly at the University of Helsinki, later becoming known as the Finnish Luther School after the dialogue, of which Tuomo Mannermaa was the founder. Mannermaa published a monograph, *In ipsa fide Christus adest*, in 1978, which was presented in Kiev and was later translated into English with the title of *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (2005). The monograph became a catalyst for the new interpretation of Finnish Luther research. After Mannermaa, his colleagues and students from the University of Helsinki took part and developed the new theological position. Thus, Mannermaa is called the father or the founder of the Finnish school (Kärkkäinen 2004:37; Laato 2008:327-328; Linman 2008:190; Garcia 2013:33).¹⁹¹

Mannermaa and his colleague's insistence can be summarized as follows: 1) Deification is not alien to Luther's understanding of salvation, but is mainly developed in his doctrine of justification; 2) justification must be dealt with in two dimensions simultaneously: forensic declaration for the sinners and the real presence of Christ in the believers (real-ontic way);¹⁹² connecting to the second point, 3)

¹⁸⁹ For the detailed story with the background of how the dialogue between the Finnish Lutheran and the Russian Orthodox Church commenced the new Luther study in Finland, see Mannermaa (1998b:1-2).

¹⁹⁰ According to Billings, it is the same for Calvin: "In Calvin, the 'forensic' imputation of Christ's righteousness and the mystical union with Christ are held in the closest possible relationship – one is unthinkable without the other" (Billings 2008:209).

¹⁹¹ Mannermaa (1995:38) himself, however, places value on three dissertations for the development of the Finnish Luther Research: Risto Saarinen, *God Acting upon Us: The Transcendental Interpretation of the Presence-of-Christ Motif in Luther Research* (published in 1989); Simo Peura, *Theosis in the Theology of Martin Luther 1510-1519* (1994); and Antti Raunio, *The Golden Rule as a Principle of Luther's Theology* (1993). Then he (1998b:3-4) adds one more: Sammeli Juntunen, *The Concept of Nothing in the Theology of Martin Luther* (1996).

¹⁹² The term "real-ontic" is used when the Mannermaa School says "real-ontic unity between Christ and the

unlike the Formula of Concord (1577, hereafter FC), the Lutheran document of the faith, Luther himself did not distinguished the effective justification (gift) from the forensic idea of it (grace, favour); and 4) justification and sanctification is united in the concept of deification in terms of that, in the life of Christians as a small Christ to the world, love must be shown to neighbours.

According to the Finnish school, there has been no real relationship between God and human beings in the classic research on Luther, but only casual affecting and being affected. In this view, there has also been separation between justification and sanctification in that Christ is only presented in the latter. Luther, however, never intended justification to be only a forensic concept while the presence of Christ is formulated on the sanctificational level. Rather, Christ abides in the heart of the believers in a “real-ontic” way in which an effective relationship between God and human beings is established. FC is criticised in Finnish Luther research for its distortion of what Luther originally meant on this matter, and, in their opinion, the blame also should put on Neo-Kantianism for their philosophical influence on the FC.

The influence of neo-Kantianism has dominated in classical interpretation of Luther on the matter of the presence of Christ. In terms of the being and the relationship, Neo-Kantianism, particularly represented by Herman Lotze, takes the point of view that existence is required first to have a relationship. Thus, the presence of Christ is an ontologically unreal event, because the being of Christ is totally transcendent to human beings (Isaac 2012:251-252). In Neo-Kantian theology, God’s being and His effects should be considered separately. This separation consequently means that the God is known only in His effects. The idea of the union with God (*unio cum Deo*), which is regarded as the core of Luther’s theology by the Finnish school, therefore becomes impossible (Peura 1998:46; Chia 2011:133). From the Neo-Kantian perspective, everything about ontology loses its foundation and faith is purely the act of the will.

The forensic aspect of the justification of the sinner that one is declared righteous by God is in a

Christian” and is an alternative term for “a participation in the very *ousia* of God”, which Athanasius and other Church Fathers used (Kärkkäinen 2004:46). It is also a complementary word for the traditional Lutheran interpretation of forensic justification, which stresses the real union with Christ and the believers.

sense the hallmark of Lutheran theology, which makes it different from Catholicism. As Mannermaa observes, according to the FC text, God is present in the believer in His essence (Mannermaa 1998a:27). However, what Mannermaa mainly criticised in the FC is that it announces only “favour”, the claim of forgiveness of sins, while “gift”, as an effective presence or sanctification, is excluded, or at least, dealt with as being separated from the former, as it accounts the merit of justification. In his opinion, Luther’s understanding of justification should be interpreted as grace, God’s favour, and gift, the indwelling of Christ, simultaneously (Mannermaa 1998a:28).¹⁹³ The FC rightly distinguishes the grace of God and His gift, however, it emphasises the forensic aspect of justification and then consequently diminishes the meaning of the gift as the place of justification (*loco iustificationis*) (Peura 1998:44). The separation between justification and the divine indwelling is also criticised. According to the FC, the divine indwelling of Christ follows justification by faith. In other words, that is the level of the next stage, namely, sanctification. Thus, in its view, justification only has significance with divine favour; and the divine indwelling as the gift which makes sinners righteous is reduced (Chia 2011:132). The result of the above separations is that the idea of the real presence of Christ and the union between Christ and the believers become totally foreign to Lutheran theology (Chia 2011:133).

Mannermaa insists that the forensic aspect and the real-ontic way of justification are not in conflict with one another, but express two dimensions of justification. Christians do not have their own righteousness but rely on Christ’s. Thus, Christians are not merely declared righteous but Christ’s righteousness is imputed into the Christians in that He indwells them with real meaning and condition.¹⁹⁴ As is well known, the matter of sin was so real for Luther himself that the presence of Christ should also be real for him and for all sinners as well. Mannermaa’s main idea regarding the interpretation of Luther’s theology of justification is that “in faith itself Christ is really present” (Braaten & Jenson 1998:viii; Olson 2007:197; Briskina-Müller 2008:19). Thus, he stresses the

¹⁹³ For criticism on this, see Laato (2008:338ff).

¹⁹⁴ Luther, according to Kärkkäinen, distinguishes between two types of righteousness: The righteousness of Christ which is imputed into the believers, and the righteousness of the believers which should be reflected to neighbours (Kärkkäinen 2004:53-54).

inhabitatio Dei and forensic justification equally. The traditional interpretation of justification, however, only focuses on the legalistic declaration, while it ignores the union with Christ, which entails participation in the divine nature (Garcia 2013:33), and in this case the divine nature in which the Christian participates is Christ Himself (Briskina-Müller 2008:20): “Central in Luther’s theology is that in faith the human being *really* participates by faith in the person of Christ and in the divine life” (Mannermaa 1998a:32).

Thus, for Mannermaa and his colleagues, justification by faith and participation in the divine nature is identical (Kärkkäinen 2006:75; Hallonsten 2008:282; Garcia 2013:33). By *unio cum Christo*, Christians are able to participate in the divine life that makes them ontologically divine beings, which constitutes the human deification (Peura 1998:48; Briskina-Müller 2008:19). We have already seen that participation in and the union with God are crucial conceptions to understand the doctrine of deification. Therefore, deification as participation in the divine nature and the real union with Christ is the core of Luther’s theology, according to Mannermaa.

Mannermaa, however, or Luther in his opinion, never means the ontological transformation of human beings nor the union with God in essence. Although the human union with God has points in common with the union of the Son with the Father and the Holy Spirit, “the union connotes for the human no change in substance” (Briskina-Müller 2008:20). There still remains a distinction between the Divine Being and the creaturely way of possessing the divine attributes (Marshall 2002:6). By the “real-ontic” way of justification, they think of the real presence and indwelling of Christ in believers, however, Mannermaa and the Finnish school are careful to say that the union does not indicate a change of substances: “God does not stop being God and man does not stop being man. Both retain their substances, i.e. they are at all times in the union realities existing in themselves (*ens in se*), i.e. precisely substances” (Mannermaa 1995:43).

There is also criticism of their new interpretation of Luther. According to Trueman (2003), the Finnish school for historical reasons is weak in the understanding and use of the historical

development of studies on Luther, and their quotations from Luther's work for their argument is not sufficient because they do not cite from Luther's complete works. Laato (2008), concerning the matter of the relationship between grace, Christ the object of the faith, and gift, His presence in believers' faith, indicates that Mannermaa's interpretation of the prerequisite regarding grace and gift differs from what Luther really meant. According to Laato, Luther gave priority to grace over gift, while Mannermaa insists on their equality or the priority of the gift (330ff). Laato warns that "Mannermaa's Luther school should be reformed in accordance with the Formula of Concord. Otherwise, it will be the heir of neither Luther nor Lutheranism" (Laato 2008:346). Briskina-Müller (2008) criticises Finnish Luther research from the perspective of Orthodoxy, as following the Aristotelian principle that the knower becomes one with known, i.e. the intellect is shaped by experience (Briskina-Müller 2008:22).¹⁹⁵ In this relationship, for example, one can know God or a horse; no distinction is made between them. Finnish Luther research overlooks the terms of the Church life, only exaggerates the doctrine itself and the relationship between Lutheran and Orthodox Churches (Briskina-Müller 2008:24). More recently, Garcia (2013:33ff) has presented textual criticism concerning the exegetical problems of Finnish Luther research.

Regarding the evaluation of Mannermaa and Finnish Luther research, their contribution to the revival of Luther studies, especially on the doctrine of justification, should be admitted first. Their new interpretation of Luther challenges many other scholars world-wide, entailing re-reading and re-thinking of Luther and then creates a new methodological framework for the interpretation of Luther (Kärkkäinen 2004:38; Laato 2008:327). Secondly, their ecumenical endeavour in the dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church on the doctrine of deification and justification pioneered the study of deification in Western scholarship.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ "The appearance of the known thing itself is present in the knower. '*Species cogniti est in cognoscenti*,' says Thomas of Aquinas, and '*Idem est intellectus et intellectum*' 'Knowing and that which is known are identical.'" (Mannermaa 1995:39).

¹⁹⁶ For positive evaluation of Mannermaa and Finnish Luther research, see also Marquart (2000), Jenson (2003), and Kärkkäinen (2006).

3.5.2.2 Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (1958-): “wrong Ecumenism?”

As we have seen above, it is not an exaggeration to say that the contemporary renaissance of the doctrine of deification began with the dialogues between the different traditions in the Christianity. These ecumenically based endeavours have tried to find the common truth from the origin of the Christianity which had been lost before its breakup.

In Kärkkäinen’s opinion, the main concern regarding deification is how the Eastern concept of salvation is linked to the Western concept of salvation – justification, and to solve the conflict between the Roman Catholics and Protestants on the matter of the doctrine of justification by faith (cf. Kärkkäinen 2006:74). Ecumenical dialogue between different traditions are important for him. Thus, the emergence of Finnish Luther research, of which the result was the development of ecumenical dialogue between the Finnish Lutheran and the Russian Orthodox Church, has significant meaning.

Regarding the first tension, he refers to this effort of finding a common perspective between them as the heart of his book *One with God* (2004). He builds up the greater part of the book on biblical study and historical research in verification of a common perspective between justification from West and deification from the East. Some regret also figures in this remarkable work, however: As an ecumenist, he commences his book referring to the similarity among various religions on the perception of salvation, then finds a common motif in Eastern and Western theology regarding deification in terms of salvation. What he detects as a common motif between them and even among other religions is the idea of “union with god” (Kärkkäinen 2004:2ff). Furthermore, the last section of the last chapter of the book – “Deification, Justification, and Other Religions” – even contains syncretism beyond ecumenism. In this section, he seems to try to find a “*potential* contact point” between Christianity and other religions, re-arguing for a common concept of salvation in all religions (Kärkkäinen 2004:133ff). Despite some similar points regarding the concept of salvation, however, Christianity and other religions must be said to be fundamentally different as long as one believes that salvation is the work of the Trinity through Jesus in the Holy Spirit planned before the Beginning.

It is worth citing Meyendorff's distinction between "good ecumenism" and "wrong ecumenism" to criticise Kärkkäinen's ecumenical standpoint: "The former means a sincere dialogue with our fellow Christians, while the latter implies acceptance of relativism and superficiality" (Meyendorff 1987:42-44).¹⁹⁷ The boundary of ecumenical dialogue is obvious; it must be undertaken in Christianity among Christians. Kärkkäinen defends himself against the criticism by saying:

I am not naïve about what ecumenism is. Ecumenical thinking does not mean collecting pieces from here and there and putting them together to make a more appealing mixture. Sometimes ecumenical work may lead to a more precise and explicit acknowledgment of differences between various Christian traditions or to acknowledgment of convergence despite legitimate differing emphases. (Kärkkäinen 2006:80)

In the conclusion of the same article, however, he again insists on finding commonality with other religions from his ecumenical perspective: "As a footnote, let me suggest that the ecumenical discussion of the doctrine of salvation is not only urgent for the sake of Christian unity, but also in light of the relation of Christian faith to other religions". For him, the doctrine of deification presents such a connection point with other religions in terms of the soteriological character of all religions or cultures like "Hinduism and Buddhism" and "African spiritualities" (Kärkkäinen 2006:80-81). It seems that his main concern regarding ecumenism is not to restore the unity of the Christian Church only, but also of all religions.

As can be seen from the above statements, the contemporary renaissance of the doctrine of deification originated from the ecumenical dialogues between the traditions – the Orthodox and the Lutherans, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic. If we concede this viewpoint of the ecumenical approach to the doctrine of deification, however, the end point might be a regression to pantheism, in which we have been cautious not to fall.

¹⁹⁷ Quoted from Van Rossum (2003:381).

3.5.2.3 Renewed Interested in Eastern Orthodox Theology

The re-thinking of Eastern Orthodoxy has been induced through those ecumenical dialogues and practical attempts to find commonality among the denominations in Christianity. Many scholars, like Russell and Christensen, have contributed to the study of Orthodox doctrine on deification from Western perspectives.

Louth (Louth 2008:32) is complimentary about Russell's major study on deification, *The Doctrine of Deification in Greek Patristic Theology* (2004), indicating it as one of the three important studies on the theme so far.¹⁹⁸ The book is an extension of Russell's PhD thesis at Oxford University with the title of *The Concept of Deification in the Early Greek Fathers* (1988). Russell recently published another work *Fellow Workers with God* (2009) that is written in simple and plain language to make it easier for lay people to approach the doctrine.

Christensen gives various perspectives from various theological traditions with many scholars – Greek and Latin patristic, Coptic, Reformed, Methodist, and Eastern Orthodox, finding various dimensions from these traditions in his edited book *Partakers of Divine Nature* (2007). It undoubtedly is a laudable work for popularising the doctrine of deification and for ensuring that the doctrine is not alienated indeed, even in Western theology. Most of all, he maintains the barrier of ecumenism, unlike Kärkkäinen. We may accept Christensen's insistence that both West and East drink from the same stream, especially in the matter of salvation, including perceptions of human perfection and whether it means deification or sanctification. Thus, both traditions should respect and complete one another.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to prepare more explicit grounds on which to dispute deification for

¹⁹⁸ The other two studies are Bartos, E, 1999, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology: An Evaluation and Critique of the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloaie*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press; and Giosanu, É J, 2003, *La Déification de l'homme d'après la pensée du Père Stăniloaie*, Iassy: Trinitas. These two are by Eastern scholars.

the further study. Having investigated the Greek and Latin Fathers and following through to current theologians from East and West, we find several points of commonality in their teachings on deification. It is clear that they express the same, or a similar, theme, whether they do or do not use the same language. Alfeyev (2004:116) summarises the patristic teaching on deification as follows:

1 / Deification is perceived by the Fathers within a Christological framework: deification of the human nature is possible because of the Incarnation of God the Word. 2/ Human body, according to the patristic teaching, takes full part in the process of deification and is deified along with the soul. 3/ The church sacraments, in particular, Baptism and the Eucharist, are among the most important means for deification. 4/ Deification is perceived by most of the Fathers within an eschatological framework: it is anticipated and begun here, on earth, in *via*, but is fully realized in *patria*¹⁹⁹ in the kingdom of the age to come. 5/ Deification is closely connected with a personal mystical experience of the believer, in particular, with the vision of the divine uncreated light.

Including Alfeyev's conclusion on the patristic authors, we conclude and encapsulate the doctrine of deification with several points:

Firstly, deification is God's purpose. Human deification is possible because it was part of God's original intention for human beings when He created the world. Thus, it is His promise and the ultimate goal of all creatures.

Secondly, human deification is not about "in essence". Deification does not mean that we become the kind of being that one true God is, but that we will be able to possess the divine attributes which is not allowed to humanity but only to deity, like immortality and incorruptibility through the union with the one true God.²⁰⁰ It must, however, occur within the limits of the distinction between the Creator and creatures.

Thirdly, only God has the deifying power. Only God is able to deify others. Thus, human beings, even after being deified by God, cannot deify others. That is a decisive aspect of the distinction

¹⁹⁹ Cf. M. Lot-Borodine, *La déification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 21.

²⁰⁰ This point has not been widely admitted by Western theologians: "It is important to point out that deification has never meant for Orthodoxy that the soul becomes one with God in essence" (Horton 2011:690).

between the Triune God and whoever participates in the community of the Trinity. Defending the Son's Godhead, especially concerning that He is not created but is truly God, was the most significant dimension for the fourth-century Fathers, who were engaged in the controversy with Arianism. For them, the fact that the Son (and the Holy Spirit as well) has the power of deifying man, but not was deified, was the key to the surety that the Godhead that deified one cannot deify other.

Fourthly, deification is Trinitarian. None of the authors who have taught deification have ever emphasised one Person. When they stress one Person in giving an account of deification, it is for the proof of the Person being true God.

Fifthly, Incarnation-deification formula is significant: "God was made man so that man might become god". The Incarnation-deification formula as the essence of deification has so far only featured with reference to Irenaeus and Athanasius. We have observed, however, that many other Greek and Latin Fathers, Medieval theologians, and Reformers also articulated the same concept and even sometimes used the exact formulation. We may therefore conclude that the basic formula of deification regarding the relationship between the Incarnation of Jesus and our access to God is found in all ages and traditions (Lossky 1974:97; 1991:134). This explicitly means that the only initiator of human deification is God. There is no possibility of it starting from the side of human beings.

Sixthly, deification is about a proper relationship with the Trinity. Deification implies the meaning of transformation in a sense, but it is not the only purpose of deification. As Clendenin indicates, deification rather comprises a relative, not absolute transformation (Clendenin 2003:130). To be transformed, one ought to be concerned about the proper relationship with the one like whom one is to be transformed.²⁰¹

Seventhly, the doctrine of deification is practical, especially in terms of liturgy. Deification "finds its orientation and is anchored in the assembly that celebrates the worship of God: in the liturgy"

²⁰¹ "Orthodox theology wants to speak of this change in terms of ontology, not because this change involves a conversion into something other than human, but rather because the change involved is fundamental, radical, a rebuilding of what it is to be human from the roots up" (Louth 2008:39-40).

(Rikheim 2013:438). Participation in the life of the Trinity is shown in joining the regular worship service on Sunday.

Lastly, deification is eschatological, including deification of the body. Although human deification is begun in this world, the perfect deification is never ended, even in the heaven.

Contemporary scholars argue and examine the doctrine on such common grounds. In the East, the traditional Palamite distinction between the essence and energies is examined, representatively, by Lossky and Zizioulas, while the doctrine of justification by faith is mainly re-thought by New Finnish Lutheran Research in the West.

We are not able to investigate how the doctrine of deification has been dealt with from the time of the Church Fathers to scholars in contemporary times with much depth, but our supposition at the beginning of this chapter was that the doctrine of deification has not been regarded as weird or novel in the Church, and that the East and West have used similar terms for the same conception of the doctrine throughout history. Words such as participation in the divine nature, union with God, communion with God, and deification are the terminology the Church has adopted to describe the doctrine. We can say deification more explicitly, because it was shown that the doctrine reveals commonality between East and West; old and new. Therefore, “becoming God” is not an alien form of theology, even for Western theologians.

Chapter 4

DIALOGUE 2

THE TRINITY AND DEIFICATION: BECOMING GOD AND THE RELATIONSHIP

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the first dialogue on the Trinity and worship, we grasp a connecting point between the Trinity and deification; that is, our God exists and is revealed as the Triune God: Three in One and One in Three. Thus, the matter of becoming God cannot be answered in the sense of between a being and a being, otherwise it results in arithmetical confusion: one being cannot be three or one at the same time. Rather, becoming God in Christianity must be regarded in the sense of relationship as the Trinity exists in relationship (the immanent Trinity) and the relationship is expanded to us (the economic Trinity). Thus, the relationship is the most significant conception of the second dialogue between the Trinity and deification.

In the previous chapter, we have seen that the doctrine of deification has not incorporated any heretical idea or pantheism in it, neither in the East nor in the West, from ancient times to the present. Nonetheless, different terms such as participation, union, justification and sanctification have been used in the West. Eastern terms for deification give another dimension of salvation; and the terms complement one another. In this chapter, we will be more aggressive in finding the meaning of becoming God by examining the dialogue between the Trinity and deification in which relationship is centred.

Two different theological approaches are employed as methodologies to formulate a proper

relationship between deification and the Trinity: a biblical exegesis and a doctrinal analysis.²⁰² For the biblical exegesis, we cite Biblical passages like Gen 1:26, Ps 82:6-7, John 10:34-36 and 2 Pet 1:4. In these passages, we can find that deification from the beginning was centred in the relationship with the Creator, and that the possibility of deification was lost after the relationship was distorted by the Fall, so that only limited potential remained. Yet, since the Son restored the relationship of the creation with the Father in the Holy Spirit, human deification takes its place in the life of the Church from the eschatological perspective. Regarding the doctrinal analysis, we examine terminology used in the writings of the Church Fathers and the Reformers, namely justification, union with God and participation. Relationship is the base and the aim of all terminology. Throughout the observation, the anticipated conclusion that arises is that becoming God is not about a human status, not about sharing the power and the authority of God, and not about the essence of God, but rather about a divine relationship with the Triune God in terms of participation in the divine energies, of which human beings are passive partakers.

It can be asked why the biblical and doctrinal approach in this chapter, as well as the historical study of the previous chapter was required for this liturgical study. The answer is: Because liturgy is not an isolated subject in theology, but *per se* is the result of disputes and struggles that occurred in the history of the Church and biblical exegesis and the doctrinal controversy in most cases were the effective vehicles for the disputes to be settled in the believers' life through liturgy. We have discussed the principle of *lex orandi lex credendi* in the shaping of the Trinitarian doctrine in the 4th century in Chapter 2. Biblical and doctrinal study help to form liturgy, and liturgy reflects the results of doctrinal and biblical studies. Simply stated, there is no pure doctrine not related to a practice, and no pure practice not related to a doctrine. Thus, liturgical study needs an interdisciplinary study with other subjects. The result from the interdisciplinary studies will confirm our practical study and will provide a proper answer as to why we should worship God with the liturgy we have.

²⁰² For the biblical exegesis, we are not going to give a detailed exegetical study of deification and related notions in the biblical traditions, but we are going to deal with some selected texts that are often used in arguments in the discourse on deification.

4.2 BIBLICAL EXEGESIS: RESTORATION IN RELATIONSHIP

Although the Bible does not tell us directly of deification, it is also true that all the teachings of the Bible point towards the theme of the doctrine. Various passages can be cited to advocate and support the meaning of deification from the Bible.²⁰³ We here study four representative and most cited passages for the study of deification – Gen 1:26-27; Ps 82:6; John 10:34; and 2 Pet 1:4 – to show how deification is supported by the Bible and, furthermore, how the doctrine has a relation-centred narrative which proceeds through the Bible.

4.2.1 The Origin of Deification: Gen 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

According to Wenham, the statement that “Let us make man in our image according to our likeness” mainly generates three disputes (Wenham 1987:27): 1) Why does God speak in the plural?; 2) What does “in” and “according to” mean?; and 3) What does “image” and “likeness” mean? Mathews rightly indicates that the issues are interrelated, given that in order to understand what the image refers to, we must understand the Creator’s identity (Mathews 1996:160) and then we must acknowledge the fact that creatures cannot be the same as the Creator, which is the implied meaning in the “in” and “according to”.

On the issue of the plural “our”, there are six views with various interpretations (Wenham 1987:27-28; Mathews 1996:160): 1) polytheistic account; 2) addressing heavenly court such as angels; 3) addressing the creation; 4) a plural of majesty in grammatical terms; 5) self-deliberation; and 6)

²⁰³ Gorman (2011:16ff), for example, gives such proof from passages like 2 Cor (3:18, 5:21 and 8:9), then urges that the Epistle to the Romans is the first Christian treatise which deals with deification. Litwa (2012) and Blackwell (2010) also trace deification from Paul’s writings.

divine dialogue within the Godhead in a Trinitarian perspective. The last one is our basic point of view. Yet, Mathews (1996:162-163) does not support the last view, pointing out that the first readers of the passage could have not understood the Trinitarian reference. Wenham (1987:28) also upholds the view that the plural alludes to God drawing the angels' attention to the most momentous event of the whole creation – the creation of man. Then, however, he does not deny that it can be extended to the Trinitarian interpretation as the *sensus plenior*, although he is not sure of that because, according to Wenham, it is not the intention of the editor of Genesis. However, Mathews and Wenham do not pay attention to the current readers who grasp the Trinitarian reference and put their faith in it. Thus, we do not have to hesitate to speak of the Trinity in the passage.

The second question concerning this passage is what “in” and “according to” means. Mathews is right when he says that the being(s) created in the image of God, both man and woman, do not portray the contents of the image (Mathews 1996:164), but that Christ is the content of the image. Unlike the human being who is created “in” God’s image, Christ alone is the image of God. By distinguishing Christ as the image of God and human beings as created “in” the image of God, the distinction between the divine essence and energies, which we have observed from Palamas and his successors, is recapitulated. The prepositions “in (ⲓ)” and “according to (ⲓ)” limit the marginality of human deification. That is to say, if the image of a human being is restored, the fact that we are created “in” God’s image is not changed. Augustine articulates this clearly: “This image is not equal to the Trinity, as the Son is to the Father, but approaching it, as is said, by a certain likeness; as in things distinct there can be closeness, not however in this case as if a spatial closeness but by imitation” (*On the Trinity*, ACCS OT-I: 30).

Regarding the third question on the “image” and “likeness”, the traditional belief is that the image and likeness refers to God’s own attributes like “intellect”, “rationality” and “spirituality”, which are shared with human beings (van Huyssteen 2006:127-132). Then, there is a functional view. According to the view, the fact that human beings were created in the image and likeness of God refers to a specific task or function, viz., dominion over the earth (van Huyssteen 2006:132-135).

However, those views are eclipsed by existential or relational view on *Imago Dei* (van Huyssteen 2006:136ff).

We support the relational view in this dissertation.²⁰⁴ In the view, the relationship implies a threefold meaning: the inner relationship of the Trinity, the relationship between Creator and creature, and the relationship between human beings (van Huyssteen 2006:136ff). God does not want Adam to be alone and creates Eve as his partner so that they have a relationship with one another. “Adam does not reflect who God is until Adam shares life with Eve” (Johnson 2002:52). In other words, the fact that Adam is created in God’s image is presented in the relationship. Thus, being created in God’s image is the starting point of human deification because the image was a capacity of human relationship with God.

That human beings have a divine image means that God enters into a personal relationship with us (Wenham 1987:31; Mathews 1996:166). As Van Huyssteen (2006:121) articulates, human beings “alone in the world” are invited into a personal relationship with God. The human being is not just an “animal endowed with reason” (*CD III/2, 77*), nor a slave who just works for its master. Because God is the Triune God, the image of God is also to be understood from the Trinitarian perspective. When we refer the “image”, it must be considered that the image is the image of the Trinity, not a Person of God. Augustine supports this, as follows: “It would certainly not be correct to say ‘our,’ because the number is plural, if man were made in the image of one person, whether Father, Son or Holy Spirit. But because he is made in the image of the Trinity, consequently it was said ‘in our image’” (*On the Trinity, ACCS OT-I: 30*).

Relation is a fundamental aspect of the Trinity; that we are created in the image of the Trinity means that we are able to participate in the divine relationship and join the inner life of the Trinity. Although the image is invisible according to its character, the distortion of the image affected the visible body. That is to say, discontinuation of the relationship with God means the death of both soul

²⁰⁴ That does not mean, however, that the previous two views are wrong. All views together comprise the full meaning of the “image” and “likeness” of God.

and body. For Palamas, who insists on the salvation of soul and body, not like the Platonists, body and soul has a loving relationship in the image of God involved with the entire man (Mantzarides 1984:19). As Kärkkäinen indicates, Eastern theologians regarded the effect of the Fall as “physical death and the obscuring of distortion of the image of God” (Kärkkäinen 2004:22).

Having a relational base, deification is not something that Adam accomplishes alone. Although he was created flawless, it does not mean that he was perfect like God, but that he had perfect freedom in God’s will. According to Lossky, “Adam was neither a ‘pure nature’ nor a deified man” (Lossky 1991:126). Adam has both the possibility to be deified in the proper relationship with God or to lose it. Ollerton’s warning message is noteworthy: “If deification is divorced from union with God *himself* to becoming god-like *ourselves*, then the serpent returns with his subtle but sinful temptation: ‘You could be like God’” (Ollerton 2011:247-248). The reason that Adam failed to be God was that he did not know that being God cannot be considered without the relationship with God. Without this relationship, only pagan teachings of false deification, which is based on polytheism, can be insisted on (Nispel 1999:291).

In this relational-centred view of the image of God, the Fall of Adam renders the relationship between God and human being broken. Thus, to recover the image and to be redeemed from the sin, it is vital to be reconnected in relationship with the Creator. Because deification is not only transformational but also relational, as we have seen, the result of Adam’s sin is not merely the Fall, which needs to be redeemed, but also the loss of the possibility of deification for human beings (Kärkkäinen 2004:2). Thus, the Incarnation was not just for our redemption, but also for our deification. We have already seen the Incarnation-deification formula in the previous chapter. Louth accordingly quotes Bulgakov, as follows:²⁰⁵

The Incarnation is the interior basis of creation, its *final cause*. God did not create the world to hold it at a distance from him, at that insurmountable metaphysical distance that separates the Creator from the creation, but in order to surmount that distance and unite himself completely with the world; not only from the outside, as Creator, not even as providence, but from within: “the Word became flesh.”

²⁰⁵ Bulgakov, S, *Du Verbe incarné*. Paris: Aubier (1943:97-98), quoted from Louth (2008:36).

That is why the Incarnation is already predetermined in human kind.

The three questions entailed from the passage can be answered from the perspective of deification. The first question, “Why does God speak in the plural?”, is linked to who God is, which is what we examined in Chapter 2. The answer is: God is the Trinity, who is a relational being both inwardly and outwardly. The second question, “What does ‘in’ and ‘according to’ mean?”, reminds us of the distinction between divine essence and energies we have dealt with. We are not created having the same status as God, but “in” and “according to” His image and likeness. Our deification thus cannot be in the essence of God. From the third question, “What does ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ mean?”, we can trace the original possibility of human deification that, of all creatures, only human beings are made in a relationship with God. Deification is the divine purpose of the creation (Louth 2008:39), as we have observed from Louth’s analogy of two arches in the previous chapter.²⁰⁶

4.2.2 The Broken Relationship: Psalm 82:6-7

⁶I say, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; ⁷nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince”

As Morgenstern once commented, Ps 82 is open to a very wide range of interpretations and more uncertain finality than any other of the Psalms (Morgenstern 1939:29-30). The most debatable issue of the passage is who the “you” is that the text is referring to, whom the text calls “gods” (אֱלֹהִים). The interpretation of “you” can be categorised according to three views:²⁰⁷ 1) fallen angels; 2) corrupted judges or rulers; 3) Israelites, especially at Sinai when they received the law from God.

²⁰⁶ See, 3.5.1.3.

²⁰⁷ Otherwise, put more simply, there are two interpretations of what “gods” refers to: “divine beings, either gods or angels, or human beings, either native Israelite judges, native Jewish kings, or foreign rulers” (Morgenstern 1939:31).

Many Old Testament (OT) scholars support the second and the third views, while the first one is not popular today. Davidson (1998:272), who endorses the second view, supports reading “gods” as the rulers, although he admits the passage contains theologically more daring concept of “gods” in it. Eaton (2003:296) similarly regards gods as “government of the nations”. However, as Davidson admits, it is uncertain that the judge is called “god” in any other books in the Bible. The third view has more supporters and we believe that our perspective on deification is safer in this interpretation, than in supporting other views.

Grogan (2008:146) supports the third view, given that “assembly” (עֲדָה, v.1) applies to the assembly of Israel with great frequency in the OT, and when Jesus cites this passage in John 10:34-36, He certainly indicates human beings within a rather ordinary meaning. Ackerman (1966:187-188) indicates that there is no evidence in rabbinic tradition that God called the judges of Israel “gods”, and he supports the third view through comments of Jewish Midrash on Ps 82:6 (cf. Neyrey 1989:655ff). Gregory of Nazianzus is of the opinion that the redeemed are considered “gods”.²⁰⁸ Irenaeus provides further comment on the passage. In his view, adoption is the opted concept. He indicates that there is only one God who created all things visible and invisible, and this one “God” means the Father and the Son simultaneously, while “gods” are those who are adopted, the Church (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:419; Mosser 2005:45). Then, by grace, human beings can become gods who are able to call God “Abba, Father”. In this regard, he sees the meaning of “becoming god” as “becoming the son of God”.²⁰⁹ Calling God Father shows that the two agents are in the proper relationship – a loving relationship. Yet the “gods” have the limitation that they should remain mortal (v.7). Thus, only by God’s gracious coming to us and the communion with God, human beings can be called gods, or as Irenaeus stresses, the sons of God (Aagaard 2010:312).

²⁰⁸ “After which he arises to judge the earth and to separate the saved from the lost. After that he is to stand as God in the midst of gods, that is, of the saved, distinguishing and deciding of what honor and of what mansion each is worthy.” (*On the Son, Theological Oration*, ACCS OT-VIII:146).

²⁰⁹ “To whom the Word says, mentioning His own gift of grace: ‘I said, Ye are all the sons of the Highest, and gods; but ye shall die like men.’ (Ps 82:6, 7) He undoubtedly speaks these words to those who have not received the gift of adoption, but who despise the incarnation of the pure generation of the Word of God, defraud human nature of promotion into God, and prove themselves ungrateful to the Word of God, who became flesh for them” (*Against Heresies*, ANF vol.1:448-449).

Davidson, although he supports the second view, rightly points out that “men” (אָדָם) and “prince” (v.7) are used to indicate the whole human race, commoner and potentate alike (Davidson 1998:272). Once called “gods”, they now are common human beings. The current position of “gods” thus is just the same as normal human beings. Origen also sees that they have fallen from their deity (On Prayer XIX.3 in Chadwick 1954:277).²¹⁰ “Gods” are not better than Adam, for their disobedience (Grogan 2008:147). Human beings were once called “the image of God”, but the phrase does not recur in the OT (van Huyssteen 2006:122). Tate (1990:338) prefers to read “I say, אָנִי אָמַרְתִּי (v.6)” as “I said” or “I once said” to avoid the contradiction of God’s decrees between verses 6 and 7. In other words, God once called them “gods” but revokes His decree since they have lost their original status. If so, there is no reason to refuse the idea that “gods” are the Israelites, or, more widely, human beings. Apparently, the Israelites were thought of as gods when they received the Law at Mt. Sinai. However, they committed the sin with the golden calf and became mortal beings again. In this Psalm, thus, God’s salvation history is recapitulated. After tracing the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria, as well as Jewish literature on Ps 82, Mosser (2005:58-59) summarises the interpretation of the passages as follows:

The earliest patristic writers understood Ps. 82:6-7 as a summary description of the creation and fall of humanity. God created humanity with the intention that they should be his immortal sons. If humankind had persevered in obedience to the one command given in the garden, they would have matured in their likeness to God and the fulfilment of this intention would have been realized. By disobeying the command humanity disrupted God’s creative intentions. The result was a loss of Edenic glory, the intimacy of sonship, and life itself. Corruption and death became characteristic of the human condition. However, God’s spoken decree cannot be made void by humanity’s foolish action (cf. John 10:35: ‘scripture cannot be broken’); what was declared must come to pass. Thus, the declaration of verse 6 takes on prophetic significance.

From Mosser’s articulation above, three important ideas regarding deification which we have supported so far, are found: 1) as we have seen in Gen 1:26, human deification is the divine purpose

²¹⁰ “... where are to be found those who are ‘dying like men’ (Ps 82:7) because they have fallen from their deity”.

of the creation; 2) what the Fall has most seriously brought upon human beings is the broken relationship with God; and 3) although the relationship is broken, God's ceaseless love and passion for His creatures will be continued to deify human beings, and this restoration will be fulfilled through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Ps 82 has been used as the proof for deification in the East (Nispel 1999:291) and, as we have seen in the previous chapter, even Latin Fathers like Tertullian and Augustine used the Psalm in referring to deification.²¹¹ According to Mosser, however, the passage is neglected as proof for the doctrine of deification in the West, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, under the influence of Harnack, it was normally thought that interpreting the passage in the light of deification was inspired by Hellenism. Secondly, some think that deification-centred interpretation of the passage is an over rated interpretation by those theologians who embrace the doctrine of deification too fervently. In other words, it can seem to other theologians that some deification supporters interpret the whole Bible only through the lens of deification (Mosser 2005:33ff).

Mosser concludes that it is Jesus in whom the declaration that "you are gods" can have a clearer meaning because in Jesus "there is found an immortal, incorruptible man who is Son of God" (Mosser 2005:59). Nispel traces the use of Ps 82 in deificational mood in the early Latin and Greek Fathers through the *testimonia*. Then he comes to the end, stating that the theme of Ps 82 in the early *testimonia* can be capitulated in the phrase that "Jesus is God" (Nispel 1999:293). Thus, how Jesus interpreted and cited the OT passage in the NT has significant value for determining who the "gods" in the passage are.

4.2.3 The Restoration of the Relationship: John 10:34-36

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" ³⁵If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶do you say of him whom the Father

²¹¹ See 3.2.2.1. and 3.2.2.4.

consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’”

Since Lenski ([1942]2008:764ff),²¹² it is normally accepted that Jesus in this discourse is not only silencing His opponents, but also claiming that He is God in the highest sense. Thus, the main focus of the passage should be on Jesus’ statement that He is God, and He and God are one. Nevertheless, the issue of who the “gods” in the text are, and with what intention Jesus cited the OT text is still debatable. Like OT scholars on the interpretation on Ps 82, NT scholars also mainly hold three views on who the “gods” in the text are: 1) angelic power; 2) Israel’s corrupt judges; and 3) Israelites at Sinai.²¹³

The first view has not received much support from scholars.²¹⁴ Yet Bruner (2012:646), “human judges”, Morris (1995:467), “judges of Israel”, Newbigin (1982:135), “who are responsible for administrating the law”, and Godet (1970:165), “theocratic judges”, follow the second view. However, if we follow the view supporting “to whom the word of the Lord came” (v.35), it is unclear (von Wahlde 2010:474) and no juridical or angelic image is found in the light of what Jesus has articulated in the text (Ridderbos 1997:373). Thus, Von Wahlde (2010:474-475), “people of Israel”, Ridderbos (1997:373), “more general people”, Witherington (1995:191), “ordinary Jews who have the divine knowledge from the God’s Word”, and Beasley-Murray (1987:177), “Israelites at Sinai”, take the third view; and Von Wahlde says that variation of this view is adopted by the majority of current scholars (von Wahlde 2010:475).²¹⁵

Jesus is accused and threatened with stoning by Jews for blasphemy because of declaring Himself God. Yet Jesus indicates to them that God called even the mortal human beings “gods”. What

²¹² Quoted from Jungkuntz (1964:557-558). Cf. Philips (1989:414ff).

²¹³ Mosser (2005:59-60) regrets that New Testament scholars overlook the patristic exegesis on the passage while they scour the rabbinic sources. He strongly urges that the patristic literatures have many clues as to how biblical texts were understood in the Second Temple era, as well as the rabbinic literatures.

²¹⁴ See Morris (1995:467n96) for criticism of this view.

²¹⁵ “New Testament scholars have long known that rabbinic writers often linked the declaration of Ps. 82:6 with the giving of the Law at Sinai. Almost all scholars today accept that this tradition very likely goes back to the Second Temple period and that ‘those to whom the word of God came’ refers to Israel when the Law was given” (Mosser 2005:67-68).

Jesus said was: “If you or your law call the mortals to whom the Word of God came gods, how much more the one from whom the Word of God came be called God?” He follows the typical rabbinic fashion of more simply *a fortiori*, which continues a discourse from the lesser to the greater (Witherington III 1995:191; Köstenberger 2005:315; Bruner 2012:647)., As Mosser suggests, Jesus conceivably applies Ps 82:6 to Himself and 82:7 is then implicitly applied to his opponents (Mosser 2005:64). For Bruce, the point of the passage is that whoever the gods were, whether the judges of Israel or demonic powers, they were inferior beings to the supreme God in that they were divinely sentenced to death (Bruce 1983:235). Thus, simply saying, two things are obvious in the passage; that Jesus referred to men as gods and that they nevertheless would die.

Only in Jesus, who is immortal and incorruptible, the mortals who were once called gods but had to be put to death can live forever and be called “gods” again. Some rightly say that this passage teaches about the Deity of the Son. However, that does not prohibit Jesus from calling mortal beings gods. Although human deification is not the main theme of this discourse, it can anyhow be denoted to supplement the main theme. In this regard, Mosser (2005:64) points out that not the godhood but the Sonship of Jesus is of primary significance in the passage. From His affirmed Sonship, Jesus leads us into another sonship, although it is somehow different from His. In Ps 82, the mood around the deification of human beings is rather negative in that, although they are called gods, they would die like Adam. However, in the light of the NT, it is fully clear that God’s intention is not the punishment of fallen human beings, but rather to give immortality and incorruptibility through Christ so that they can live forever, being called gods, in the divine relationship with the Triune God.

4.2.4 The Way of Deification: 2 Peter 1:4

...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may

escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature

Origen was the first to quote 2 Pet 1:4 as a supportive text of the idea of deification. Athanasius then uses the text in the context of deification at least six times, and Cyril used the passage with Ps 82:6 to refer to the texts as the principal biblical texts for deification (Russell 2000:229n19; Kharlamov 2008a:120). Yet, according to Wolters, whether the text supports deification is still debatable. He indicates that the text, on the one hand, supports the doctrine of deification and, on the other hand, that many scholars in the West argue that this text is “a kind of alien intrusion into the New Testament as a whole” (Wolters 1990:28).

Thus, the first and most disputable issue of the passage with regard to deification is that whether the main theme of the passage, i.e. partaking the divine nature, was an idea which was influenced by Hellenism. Bauckham sees the phrase as coming from Greek philosophical dualism that proposes that this material world is mortal and transience, while the divine world has permanence and immortality. Then, only the superior part of the human being can recover its true, godlike nature via participation in the divine nature (Bauckham 1983:179-180). Schreiner also suggests that Peter wanted to communicate with gentiles in their own idiom, that is, the Hellenistic term “the divine nature” (θείαζ ... φύσεως). Then he gives further proof of the Hellenistic use for the hearers’ sake from Acts 17:29, when Paul spoke of “divine” (θεῖος) to Athenians who were familiar with Greek culture (Schreiner 2003:294). However, as Davids rightly reads the text (2006:174), Peter does not make the comparison between the world and the divine nature, but between the corruption (ἐπιθυμία φθοράζ; sinful desire, *ESV*; evil desires, *NIV*) of human beings and God’s divine nature. Thus, it is not the world in which we live, but the sin fallen into because of desire, that we should escape from, which is very common and traditional lesson from early Christianity and Judaism as well.²¹⁶

What does partaking in the divine nature then mean? Wolters (1990:30) suggests “partners of the

²¹⁶ Davids (2006:175) continues: “The picture 2 Peter presents here uses Greek language, but it is far more Jewish than Greek”.

divine nature” as an alternative interpretation of “partakers of the divine nature”. Beale (2008:228) also understands partakers as “partners” who share “sufferings” (2 Cor. 1:7) and “glory” (1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4). However, Wolters and Beale do not give details about what “becoming partners” means. For Bauckham and Vögtle (Davids 2006:174) it means that we, as partners, share the immortality and incorruptibility that belongs only to God. Bauckham objects that it means participation in God, but, in his understanding of the Hellenistic influence of the text, it means that the godlike being reflects the glory of God (Bauckham 1983:181). However, who is godlike, and who has immortality and incorruptibility but God Himself? If the beings Bauckham is referring to are given the attributes from God, they also have participated in God’s divine nature. Those who are godly can experience eternal life, but the only source of godliness is God Himself (Schreiner 2003:292). As we have seen, there is a difference between the one who partakes of the divine nature and God in whom we participate, because those beings are not able to deify others. The distinction between divine essence and energies is to be applied to the passage.

Davids and Schreiner are of the opinion that partaking in the divine nature has its significance in an ethical aspect. Davids objects to the view that regards partaking in the divine nature as immortality because he sees the desire which is corrupted as ethical. However, on the matter of what makes the desire sinful, we need to approach the primitive concept of original sin, not as a fallen ethical passion. Schreiner (2003:294) makes sure that believers will participate in the divine nature but, at the same time, denies that they will become gods. For him, it is only moral excellence in which the believers will participate, not divinity itself. Schreiner cites Starr in this regard, from the book *Sharers of the Divine Nature*, in which Starr concludes that the divine nature does not mean deification but that the believers will share in the moral qualities of Christ that they will be morally perfected (Schreiner 2003:294). However, Starr himself takes a rather open stance to the doctrine of deification in his later work (Starr 2008:90):

Does 2 Peter mean deification? The answer to that question is that it depends on what is meant by deification. If the term means equality with God or elevation to divine status or absorption into God’s essence, the answer is no. If it means the participation in and enjoyment of specific divine attributes

and qualities, in part now and fully at Christ's return, then the answer is – most certainly – yes.

Therefore, for Starr, it is important to ensure that deification does not mean becoming God in essence. Bauckham (1983:180) cites Philo in this regard. According to Bauckham, deification in the work of Philo does not infringe the monotheistic sense of one God in not blurring the distinction between God and the creatures, but means escaping from the material world, and becoming “incorporeal and immortal, one of the divine powers of the heavenly world”. For Calvin, partaking of the divine nature, unlike the Manicheans, does not swallow up the participants, but rather unites them with the Creator as the Son is one with the Father. He also regards nature in this text as quality not essence (Calvin 1855:371). Lossky and the Eastern Orthodox tradition, according to Olson, explain the passage in the light of the distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies, which makes it clearer (Olson 2007:191):

This is how Lossky and Eastern Orthodoxy in general understand 2 Peter 1:4. Christians become partakers of the divine uncreated energies and of the divine essence only through them. Otherwise, deification would mean a pantheistic dissolution of the person in God or God in creation. Both the transcendence and unique personhood of God are protected, according to Lossky, only by the Palamite distinction, which is not unique to Gregory. Part of the nature of personhood is ineffability; a person is ultimately a mystery. As person and as transcendent, God cannot be treated as an object; no creature can penetrate God's essence. But God graciously reveals himself and draws creatures into real, ontological communion through his emanations or uncreated energies without derogating from the inviolable mystery of who and what he is in and of himself.

The last issue concerns when the participation in the divine nature happens. It is obvious that it should be understood from the eschatological perspective. Yet Bauckham and Schreiner are in conflict with one another regarding what the eschaton means with regard to this matter. Bauckham splits “eschatological expectation” and “presence experience”. Thus, for him, participation in the divine nature is a totally future event, while Christians participate in decay and mortality in this world (Bauckham 1983:179, 182). Unlike Bauckham, Schreiner maintains the traditional “already but not yet” schema. The believers are like God “to some extent” in this world in the Holy Spirit, and they

already escape the world's corruption in that they belong to God, but such a likeness to God in the full sense and the perfect liberation of the believers will be accomplished when the Lord returns (Schreiner 2003:293, 295).

4.3 DOCTRINAL ANALYSIS: FROM JUDGEMENT TO THE RELATIONSHIP

Kipling says in his famous poem *The Ballad of East and West*: “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.”²¹⁷ However, we believe East and West do not insist on incompatible doctrines but are the same, or at least similar to one another in differing languages, which they prefer to use because of their own historical backgrounds. As we have seen, it was only in the middle of the 20th century that ecumenical dialogue between East and West commenced. After that, much consent has been reached by both. We start this section with a comparison between the Eastern doctrine of deification and the Western justification, which is mainly regarded as a counterpart of the former. Then two other ideas familiar to the West and embracing the doctrine of deification will be dealt with. By this, we see relationship centred in all three doctrinal languages concerning deification.

4.3.1 Two Doctrines for One Salvation

Deification and justification which stresses different sides of salvation are vital doctrines for Eastern and Western theology respectively; neither one of them is right or wrong, but they rather exist complementarily to one another.²¹⁸ Inexperience and unfamiliarity with each other made East and West use differing languages and specific theological terms on soteriology. This created, following Louth's word, the “pattern” of theology for East and West. According to Louth, this pattern comes out

²¹⁷ Cf. Kipling, R (1889), *The Ballad of East and West*.

²¹⁸ The doctrine of deification is usually compared to the doctrine of justification as many studies are done on the comparison between the two doctrines. However, as insisted at the last paragraph of this section, it is the notion of *Ordo Salutis* which is to be compared to deification, for the understanding of salvation in the West includes the calling of God, justification, sanctification, and glorification of the saints.

of what we read and study. Thus, those who have studied a westernised pattern of theology can experience difficulty with the Eastern pattern and *vice versa*. Humility and patience, then, are required as one studies theology that is not suited to one (Louth 2008:33). As we compare the two doctrines, we should therefore approach this without any “pattern” or bias.

For Barth, “taking up of humanity into the event of the knowledge of God” is grounded in “taking up of humanity into the event of the being of God”. Jüngel (2001:75; cf. CD II/1, 181) conclusively remarks that Barth, from the above statement, did not think of deification in any sense. Rather, according to Jüngel, it is through salvation that human beings are taken up into the being of God. That means that Jüngel distinguishes salvation from deification. However, as we have seen, deification, in the simplest explanation, is Eastern language for salvation. Whereas the West has developed the doctrine of justification to explain salvation, the East has upheld the doctrine of deification for the same reason. The Western doctrine of justification and the Eastern doctrine of deification, however, have been regarded as contradictory (Mannermaa 1998a:25-26; Kärkkäinen 2004:88-89; Chia 2011:125-126). Ignorance and estrangement might be the most important reason for the negative stance. For nearly a thousand years, neither has communicated with the other, which resulted in pride in oneself and bias against the other. Regarding the doctrine of deification, the belief spread in West supposed that the Eastern doctrine is based on the ontological or physical transformation of human beings. It thus cannot be accepted by the West, whose focus on the salvation is justification by faith through imputed righteousness from Christ. From the viewpoint of the West, that sinful human beings become god sounds alien at any rate. The East, likewise, has not made mention of the idea of being justified in their theology (Kärkkäinen 2004:6).

The greatest difference between justification and deification is what it focuses on. As is well known in Western theology, our sin is hidden or covered by Jesus Christ in whom we believe, and God reckons us righteous, not because of our work but for the sake of Jesus through imputing His righteousness to us though we are still in this earthly life. We, in brief, are justified. Then all those who are justified are to be gradually changed by the Holy Spirit, viz. we are being sanctified. This is

possible by the grace of God and we only receive it by faith. As such, the Western doctrine starts with the fallen human condition – sin, and sinners first confront God’s judgment and, simultaneously, His grace (Vandervelde 2001:74).²¹⁹ Therefore, the doctrine of justification has to emphasise the juridical aspect that God as the judge declares sinners as righteous for the sake of Jesus. Marshall’s indication that “[a]t least since Anselm western theology has been burdened ... by an overwhelmingly juridical conception of the human relationship to God” is right. According to Marshall, the outcome of the doctrine of deification is “our full conformity to God, a real participation of human beings in the divine nature”, not mere payment of ransom or the remission of guilt (Marshall 2004:25). In his opinion, however, the doctrine of deification was flawed by the Western perspective. Daly (2009:51, 58n8) also criticises the atonement doctrine, stating that it veils God’s mercy and love which is revealed in the Bible, only focusing on “the juridical and mercantile metaphors”, while deification is reserved its unpacking process of salvation.

In the Eastern theology, Incarnation not only involves atonement, but also models the final destiny of human beings. Furthermore, it presents a more cosmic perspective of the creation (O'Brien 2009:74). Even if Adam and Eve had not sinned, Incarnation for the restoration of the whole creation would still have been necessary for human deification. It is clear in the contrast between *kenosis* and *theosis* (Chia 2011:130). Lossky links *kenosis* and *theosis* as follows: “It was necessary that the voluntary humiliation, the redemptive κένωσις, of the Son of God should take place, so that fallen men might accomplish their vocation of θέωσις, the deification of created beings by uncreated grace” (Lossky 1974:97-98). He, then, continues to explain the meaning of the Incarnation with the Western term “sanctification” (Lossky 1978:115-116):

Kenosis culminates and ends with Christ’s death, to sanctify the entire human condition, including death. *Cur Deus homo?* Not only because of our sins but for our sanctification, to introduce all the moments of our fallen life into that true life which never knows death.

²¹⁹ Calvin also starts his *Institution of the Christian Religions* with the statement that when we know ourselves, sinners, we are able to know who God is (*Inst.* 1.1.1), and *vice versa* (*Inst.* 1.1.2).

Regarding the relationship between deification and justification, Turcescu (2001:69ff) sees the relationship as a sequential occurrence for believers. He suggests two steps of salvation, i.e. justification as the first and deification as the second and the end. He interprets a few biblical texts (e.g., John 15:15, 20:17b; Rom 8:2, 14-15) and cites from the Church Fathers, such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, for the matter. However, the Bible and the writings of the Fathers cited by him rather stress the movement from sinner to redeemed, not the two stages of the redeemers as he proposes. If deification is the next step following justification in the salvation process, how is deification different from sanctification? Furthermore, if justification should remain in the first stage alone, it contradicts his understanding of Luther, namely that Luther did not separate justification and the indwelling of Christ in believers. Vandervelde (2001:73-74) objects to Turcescu in this sense, insisting that justification is not a phase through which believers pass, but a permanent condition and the foundation for all believers. The Finnish Lutherans present another idea concerning the relationship between the two doctrines. For them, deification contains a concept of justification. Deification is the authentic goal of justification, or conversely, justification is a version of deification (Briskina-Müller 2008:21).

However, as mentioned above, rather many scholars find that the proper relationship between justification and deification is complementary of one another. We have already seen the ecumenical dialogue among the denominations, especially between Lutheran and Orthodox. One of the main issues of the dialogues was to identify a proper relationship between deification and justification. The result of the dialogues and research is that justification and deification stress different sides of salvation; forensic and transformative dimensions. Both concepts complement one another and provide a deeper understanding of salvation (Chia 2011:139). One of the reasons for the different points of view results from the fact that each has a different perspective on human beings.²²⁰ While

²²⁰ To explain the origin of the different views of the doctrines from the West and the East, Hinlicky (1997:51) asks two questions: "Where in history is the justice of God?" and "Why has God created life?" Then he reviews the stances that West and East have as answers for the questions. These questions are related to the historical background against which the theology of each was formed. Having seen the fall of the Rome, the West asked the question about the justice of God, and the development of the Roman law also contributed to the formation of the juridical understanding of salvation in the West. However, in the era of the foundation of their theology,

the West views the human condition as sinners, Orthodox theology believes human beings are required to become god, to reach deification (Ware 1993:231). Although Orthodox theology also admits the Fall of Adam and Eve, and that we are still being affected by sin following that, the most significant result of the Fall for them is the break in the harmony between the Creator and creation (Louth 2013:68-69). In other words, the relationship with the Triune God has been broken through sin. This restoration of the universal harmony, or relationship, as have seen, is the purpose of deification.

Indeed, neither of the two doctrines insists on one side. As Marshall (2002:3) rightly indicates, justification *per se* has two dimensions; a forensic and a transformative dimension. We have seen this in the previous chapter from the new interpretation of Luther's theology from the Finnish Lutherans.²²¹ According to them, justification does not have a juridical dimension only, but also an ontological change in the sinner so that a believer participates in the divine nature "being made righteous and 'a god'" (Peura 1998:48). It is about a new condition as well as a new status, which gives a real ability to resist sin, not just a legal re-inscription (Finlan 2008:77). "Righteousness *extra nos* does not exclude the process of real change" (Canlis 2004:174).

As such, many scholars admit that justification and deification are complementary to one another, while some compare the doctrine of deification with other Western doctrines. Christensen (1996:71ff) uses sanctification instead of justification in the comparison with deification, and for Horton (2011:698-710) it is glorification that should be contrasted to deification. This shows that they basically understand deification as a consequence of justification. Horton understands glorification as a totally future aspect of Christians; deification for him therefore also merely is a future event. However, it is *ordo salutis* which is to be compared more accurately with deification, not a one stage or step progression. Rom 8:28-30 is frequently employed to illustrate the abundance of salvation with the course of predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Each stage *per se*, according to this Western tradition, cannot express the whole process of salvation, but only one of the dimensions

the East experienced the rise of Byzantium (cf. Willimon 1980:41-42; Turcescu 2001:66). They did not need to contend the justice of God. Thus, mutual understanding of one another is required to perceive the whole dimension of salvation.

²²¹ See 3.5.2.1.

of salvation, whereas deification, the Eastern concept of salvation, contains whole idea of theology, from the creation to the end of the world. “[T]he Orthodox do not see ‘justification’ and ‘sanctification’ as two distinct works of God but as one divine action” (Chia 2011:127). Thus, a comparative study on deification and *ordo salutis* as the whole process of salvation is required in this regard.

4.3.2 The Union with God

The juridical position is significant for all believers who will stand before God’s judgment. It must be acknowledged, however, that it is not the believers’ behaviour or merit that would secure one from the forensic aspect of justification, but how God regards human beings, i.e. how God concedes sinners as the righteous. Objective juridical judgment thus is declared from a subjective relationship between the judge and a defendant. Salvation of believers comes from the proper relationship, not from the judgment itself. The relationship which leads us to salvation is based on the union with God. Peura (1998:48) capitulates this as follows:

Justification is not only a change of self-understanding, a new relation to God, or a new ethos of love. God changes the sinner ontologically in the sense that he or she participate[s] in God and in his divine nature, being made righteous and “a god”... Christ on the one hand is the grace that is given to the sinner that protects him against the wrath of God (the forensic aspect), and on the other hand he is the gift that renews and makes the sinner righteous (the effect aspect). All this is possible only if Christ is united with the sinner through the sinner’s faith. So, the crucial point of this interpretation rests in the notion of *unio cum Christo*.

The union with God is a common point of reference between the Western doctrine of justification and Eastern deification, and the two doctrines are synthesised in the union.²²² As

²²² Partee (2008:176) cites Habets in this regard: “For Calvin, the concept of theosis comes closest to what is more commonly in the West termed ‘union with Christ’. It has been argued that the *unio mystica* is central to Calvin’s theology. If this is true, then logically the doctrine of theosis is also of importance to Calvin’s theology”, Habets, M, “Reforming Theosis” in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed by Finlan, S & Kharlamov, V,

previously mentioned, the Eastern Orthodox Church rejects all forms of pantheism by distinction between the divine essence and energies. The union with God for them, thus, means the union with the divine energies, not divine essence. Calvin also clarifies the distinction between divine and human in union in Christ (Billings 2005:317; Partee 2008:xvi) although a human being, after becoming one with God, still remains distinct from God (Ware 1993:232; Wesche 2008:171). The union with God must not be understood as being one in essence, but that we are made one with God in the way of participating in His nature through the Son in the Holy Spirit. As the Son and the Father are one, we are made one with the Father through the mediatory ministry of the Son. Calvin highlights the position of the Holy Spirit as the bond of union between God and believers (Partee 2008:xvi, 324). Thus, the union is the work of the Trinity. The union of believers with the Father, however, must be distinguished from the union of the Triune God. We do not become one of the Trinity by the union, as it is with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but participate in the life of the Trinity which is open for us. Johnson gives an account on this with the *perichoretic* concept of “us” and “us-ness”:²²³ “The God who is ‘us’ draws near to us so that ‘us’ can draw us into the circle of his ‘us-ness’” (Johnson 2002:77). In this way, we become “us” with God who is us, i.e. we become God. This, however, does not mean that we become one of God, but we become one of “us”.

While the traditional interpretation of the doctrine of salvation emphasises Christ’s action in believers – justification, sanctification, absolution –, through which the believers are declared the righteous with the forensic aspect, the union with God focuses on the relationship between Christ and believers (Aagaard 2010:310). The believers are considered righteous; Christ does not give righteousness to the believers but Himself, for He is our righteousness. We have already looked at this inseparability of the gift and grace in Luther in the Finnish Lutheran School. According to them, justification by faith is not expressed in terms of a forensic or judicial statement only, but also is the relationship with Christ, and ultimately towards the union with God (Marshall 2002:8).²²⁴ In the

Eugene: Pickwick Publications (2006:148).

²²³ We will return to the concept of *perichoresis* in more detail in 5.2.2.

²²⁴ Marshall presents a good illustration of what Luther said about how justification of believers inevitably leads them to union with God. See Marshall (2002:8-12).

union with Christ, the gift which the believers receive is Christ Himself and He draws the believers into the closest possible relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Chia (2011:139) depicts the common ground of the two doctrines on the union with God as partaking in the life of the Trinity, as follows:

Informed and shaped by the metaphors of justification and deification, the reality of the believers' union with God through Christ means that, in their salvific relationship with God, believers do not only know God through his effects, but also – and most profoundly – in and through his personal, transforming presence, which includes their participation in the divine essence through the uncreated energies of God so that they are taken into the very life of the Trinity itself.

Because sinners' lives in this world are mortal and corrupted, the union with God, i.e. partaking of the life of the Trinity, is the final goal of Christians. While Western traditions have been dominated by legal, juridical, and forensic categories, Eastern theology understands the need of salvation in terms of deliverance from mortality and corruption. The union with God is the way of its accomplishment (Kärkkäinen 2004:29-30). Lossky more aggressively asserts that to know union with God is the ultimate goal of all creatures (Lossky 1974:97-98; cf. Billings 2005:317). Marshall's recapitulation clearly shows the dialectic relationship among justification, deification and the union with God: "to be justified is to be united with Christ by faith, and to be united with Christ is to be deified" (Marshall 2002:11).

4.3.3 The Participation in the Trinity

So far, participation in the divine nature or the life of the Trinity is one of the dominant concepts in our study on deification, as written in the writings of the Fathers. McCormack (2008:236ff) seems to detect tension between participation and deification²²⁵ in the theology of Barth at first. He, however, states: "while a human participation in God does indeed belong to any authentically

²²⁵ In Barth's language, it is divinisation.

Christian understanding of salvation, an affirmation of the ancient doctrine of ‘deification’ is not the only way to bring this idea to expression” (McCormack 2008:236). As we have seen, the tension is not between participation and deification; he criticises the interpretation of deification as the exclusive expression of participation. Participation and deification are incompatible, as McCormack later indicates, as long as human participation is distinguished from Jesus’ (McCormack 2008:247).

Being united with God cannot mean that we are absorbed into God or consumed; rather, as Jesus is in the Father and the Father in Jesus, we are to be in God the Trinity and the Trinity in us while maintaining our own person which is totally changed by God’s grace. However, it also cannot mean that we, like Jesus, are able to be perfectly united with God in terms of essence. As Palamas says (cf. Mantzarides 1984), God’s divine essence is nonparticipable and unknowable. Thus, the possibility of human participation in the divine nature is to be understood as participation in His energies which are knowable and participable, and through which human beings are able to experience God (Russell 2011:134).

Wesche provides Palamas’ analogy of the sun to explain that participation in the divine nature is not in the divine essence but in the energies (also see Palamas 1983:79; Wesche 2008:171): “The rays of the sun give us life and growth. In its rays, we partake of the sun itself even though we are not the sun in its essence and do not become the sun”. At the same time, however, as the being of the Sun is not separated from its rays, the Being of the Trinity is also not separated from His work. God reveals Him in His work. What is revealed from His work is God Himself. Then the uncreated energies also reveal God, and indeed, are God. Luther’s perspective on unification as gift and grace can also be adapted to this argument. Luther does not separate the person of Christ from His work. He presents Himself in His person with His work.

Thus, participating in the uncreated energies is participating in the Trinity. As long as it is assured that human participation in the Trinity does not refer to the divine essence or means the human being absorbed. Rather, by participating in the Son through the Holy Spirit, we are able to participate in the

Father (Horton 2011:696). Athanasius also explains:

For by partaking of Him, we partake of the Father; because that the Word is the Father's own. Whence, if He was Himself too from participation, and not from the Father His essential Godhead and Image, He would not deify, being deified Himself. For it is not possible that He, who merely possesses from participation, should impart of that partaking to others, since what He has is not His own, but the Giver's (*Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, NPNF 2nd vol.4:477*).

Mosser explains deification, i.e. participation in the Trinity, as both a “Trinitarian basis” and a “Trinitarian goal”. Christ is the base and shows the goal of our participation in the Trinity (Mosser 2002:46). He was pleased to become one with human beings in order to be the first fruit of our participating; and He is one with the Father to show the way of our participating in the Triune God. The Holy Spirit also plays an important role in believers' participation in the Trinity. For Luther, it is the work of the Holy Spirit who divinises us by imparting to us the life of the Trinity. Thus (Marshall 2002:7) states “Luther's concepts of participation in the divine nature and deification are thus genuinely trinitarian, and not only christological”. Because it is the participating in the life of the Trinity, not in one Person, neither a Pneumatological nor a Christological approach may overtake the other (LaCugna 1991b:189). Athanasius once in other writing said: “The Father does all things by the Word in the Holy Spirit”.²²⁶ Being together (the immanent Trinity), doing together (the economic Trinity) and making a relationship together (our participation in the Trinity) is the life of the Trinity.

In a sense, the role of human beings in the doctrine of justification is just underscored as passive, being sentenced and acknowledged by God, while deification through participation in the divine nature seems to point to an active aspect from the side of humans. It is because participation, in a general sense, includes the active action of a subject. However, participation in the life of the Trinity is only possible by the grace of the Triune God in whom we are passive receivers only. Unlike in Western theology, in which the Pelagian controversy on the relationship between grace and freewill, faith and the work of believers, has been argued, Eastern theology concerning grace was never

²²⁶ Quoted from Meyendorff (1979:171).

Pelagian in any sense (Hallonsten 2013:33). Thus, although McCormack is right when he indicates that salvation as participation is not exclusively affirmed in the doctrine of deification, participation as an idea of salvation is fully accepted in the doctrine of deification. According to Meyendorff (1979:171), the East has understood salvation essentially as participation in God.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Through a discussion of some interpretations of a selection of Biblical passages in the first part of the chapter, we have seen that participation in the divine nature is the purpose of creation (Gen 1:26). All human beings were supposed to be called “gods” according to the creational purpose, but they fell into the state of having to die because of their sinful nature (Ps 82:6-7). However, the Son restored the relationship between the Father and human beings through the Incarnation (John 10:34-36), and human beings have now become “partners” in the divine purpose, and share in the immortality and incorruption of the Trinity (2 Pet 1:4). In the second part of the chapter, we have observed and examined doctrinal analysis on deification and the counterpart Western doctrine: justification, union with God and participation. In this doctrinal analysis, relationship plays an important role. The Western doctrine of justification does not have a juridical aspect only, but also a transformative dimension similar to deification, which is based on the relationship with God. The gift and grace of Christ is not separated. Rather, He does not pass a forensic sentence on sinners only, but He Himself indwells us in the Holy Spirit. By the union with Christ, human beings share the immortality and incorruption which belongs to God. We, as passive participants, are united with God by partaking of the divine nature.

As such, “becoming God” in Christianity means to become Trinity, for our God is a Triune God. When we only focus on the ontological dimension of “becoming God”, the assumption is that we become one of the three divine Persons or become a fourth Person, which will ruin the genuine Trinitarian doctrine. Rather, the deification we anticipate is to be based in relationship with the Trinity.

We become God through participation in the relationship with God, viz., the life of God is extended to us. Torrance expresses it as “God has opened himself to us”.²²⁷ Thus, we understand that the meaning of deification regarding the Trinity, is that we participate in the divine relationship among the Triune God through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

The remaining issue for us in a more concrete and practical sense is how, where and when we can participate in the life of the Trinity. The most concrete and actual manner of participation by human beings in the life of the Trinity in this world is worship. We have explored how worship is Trinitarian in Chapter 2. Now, we turn to the last chapter of this dissertation to take note of the dialogue between worship and deification. Then, finally, doxology is discussed as a possible notion for the integration of the concepts of Trinity, deification and worship.

²²⁷ Torrance, T F, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark (1994:1), quoted from Johnson (2002:60).

Chapter 5

DIALOGUE 3

WORSHIP AND DEIFICATION: WE BECOME WHOM WE WORSHIP; WHOM WE GLORIFY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results from the previous dialogues – between the Trinity and worship, and deification and the Trinity – provide the basis for the third dialogue between worship and deification. From the first dialogue we grasped the idea that God is relational, and worship is based on His relational nature. Underhill (1936:60) indicates that worship, in a sense, always has a theological basis. The foundation of Christian worship is on the conception of God, i.e. how worshippers know who the God they worship is. Then the relation with God, according to Underhill, is also significant. Our God is not a being apart from His adorers, but created human beings in His image and likeness, saves them through His Son, and indwells them in the Holy Spirit, to be glorified by them. Thus, entering into a relationship with His creatures is God's attribute but this is not compelled by any. Then, in the previous chapter, we examined deification as being understood in the relationship with God, not about power, authority, or merely about transformation.

So far, relationship seems to take an important place in the current study. Webber (2006a:41-42) also estimates that relationship is significant as a concept to understand what deification means. For him, however, the Eastern doctrine of deification is more than relationship:

Perhaps a better way for us to grasp the meaning of theosis and deification is to use the word

relationship. However, the word relationship may not be strong enough to express the Eastern grasp of participation in Jesus and through him a participation in the very communal life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that theosis and deification imply. In Eastern thought, the goal of the Christian is to so commune with God that he or she is made more and more in the image of Christlikeness, fulfilling God's purposes for humanity in God's creation.

Webber is right, for the full range of deification cannot be revealed even in the light of the concept of relationship.

The third dialogue between worship and deification towards grasping the meaning of deification as fully as possible, takes place in this chapter. First of all, relationship plays an important role for the assertion of worship as a locus of deification. We apply specialised terms to tap various aspects of deification in advocating that the doctrine is realised in worship: the Greek term *perichoresis* and the African aphorism *Ubuntu*.²²⁸ An examination of how the hope of deification has been performed concretely in liturgy, especially in the Sacraments, follows. Then, the third term, liminality, is interpreted from an eschatological perspective in the time and space of worship.

To finalise this study, we present the idea of doxological theology as the last part of the dissertation in the belief that theology that starts with the knowledge of the Trinity ends in doxology. In doxology, mysteries beyond our comprehension take their locus.

5.2 WORSHIP: A LOCUS OF DEIFICATION

5.2.1 Deification and Worship in the Relationship

In the second chapter of this dissertation we explored the notion that the God we worship is the

²²⁸ We, however, should admit that in this dissertation we only deal with the limited meaning of the two concepts, i.e. both have a relational understanding of personhood.

Triune God who exists in relationship among the three divine Persons; and who is willing to enter into a relationship with His creatures. As we have seen, the term “person”, although it currently means a single individual, indeed implies relations in it. It does not mean an isolated individual but one in relationship with others. Thus, ‘person’ renders one being and, at the same time, many. The life of the three divine Persons shows us the relational conception of “person” – God is one and three. The Church demonstrates the meaning of person in the best way when the Triune God is worshiped as one “person”. That is to say, the one Church in many persons worships the one God in three Persons. In this liturgical phenomenon, Persons identifies persons.

Thus, the significant notion from the Trinitarian relational-oriented definition of worship regarding deification is that true deification is only possible in Christian worship. The lone god does not allow the people to participate in the god, because in that case the god’s loneliness would be threatened. Becoming such a god is fundamentally impossible. However, in Christianity, the relational God permits His people to participate in Him because He, who intrinsically is a relational Being, is willing to enter into a relationship with them. This relationship is verified and fortified in worship via the Sacraments through which the Triune God initiates and preserves the relationship with His people. Thus, proper relationship, which started with the covenant of God and in which God is the initiator and we are recipients, is a draft for Christian worship as a locus of deification.

In the third chapter, we found that deification is not about power and authority, but about relationship and worship. Human beings only deserve to be called god in the proper relationship with God, as He created them in His image. Although the image and likeness was distorted by sin and they were to die like other mortal creatures, the Son who was sent to restore the relationship called human beings “gods” again. The aim of human beings is to be truly human in the manner the Word showed us, not to cease to be human or to pursue becoming new beings beyond humanity. “Deification, then, is not a transcending of what it means to be human, but the fulfilment of what it is to be human” (Louth 2008:39).²²⁹ In this sense, becoming God means becoming true human beings, which is what

²²⁹ Strange presents the seemingly opposite opinion: “[W]hen the true God became truly man, he did not do so

God intended from the time of creation. According to Briskina-Müller, “Luther teaches that a Christian must ‘become human’ (*Vermenschlichung*), not become God (*Vergöttlichung*)” (Briskina-Müller 2008:23). Being a true human, or being deified, depends on what we do.

Buber (1996:67) said, “relation is reciprocity” followed by “our works form us”, and Beale’s recent work, which is about a biblical theology of idolatry, is titled as *We become what we worship*. Buber’s articulation “our works form us” approaches it from the positive side, while Beale deals with the negative dimension of becoming or forming. Yet, the two together speak of worship taking place in a certain relationship, whether Christianity or idolatry, and the relationship plays an important role in what the worshipper becomes in worshipping. In short, we become gods, or idols, in worship. Like Buber, who indicates that relationship is reciprocal, Gunton (1993:5) also regards relationship in worship in the same manner, not as in opposition of participants. That the relationship is reciprocal is strengthened by two concepts, namely *perichoresis* and *Ubuntu*.

5.2.2 Worship as a Round Dance: *Perichoretic* Participation in the Life of the Trinity

The term *perichoresis* was used by Gregory of Nazianzus, and then by Maximus, who was influenced by the former, to express the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Christ; how both characters of Christ penetrate one another, but at the same time do not lose their own characters. The term was used subsequently in the Trinitarian context, for the first time by Pseudo-Cyril in the 6th century (Harrison 1991:53; Vosloo 2002:97-98; Vishnevskaya 2008:132; Cilliers 2012:121). It is possible to account for the unity and personhood of the Trinity from the meaning of the term *perichoresis*. The three divine Persons exist together maintaining their substance, i.e. they are one, but not fused or mingled with one another (Vosloo 2002:98). Moltmann indicates that the unity of God is

to make it possible for men to become gods in the sense in which he was God, but in order to transform what it means to be a man”, Strange, R C, “Athanasius on Divinization”, *Studia Patristica* 16:6 (1985:343), quoted from Kharlamov (2008a:121-122). However, Louth and Strange also strive to say that the doctrine of deification by no means suggests being God as God is God, but shows that the purpose of human beings is to restore the authentic aim of their creation – to be true human beings like God created them originally.

to be perceived as a *perichoretic* unity so that Arianism or Sabellianism could not threaten the Trinitarian doctrine (Moltmann 1993:150). Vosloo (2004:86) also denotes that, in the *perichoretic* union, the Triune God can avoid both isolation and separation of the divine Persons. In other words, in the *perichoretic* union the three divine Persons are not understood as three different Persons – so called tritheism, but as one (Moltmann 1993:175).

In the concept of *perichoresis*, Marshall (2003:145) detects the possibility of a divine-human relationship, although he is very careful to clarify this relationship. However, the obvious thing for him is that “the *perichoresis* of God is open for the participation of all creation” and we find our identity in the life of the Trinity through this participation (Marshall 2003:150). As a relational being, we can find our identity in the relationship with others (Cilliers 2012:121). Vosloo (2004:86) also indicates that *perichoresis* “enables participation”. Regarding the *perichoretic* participation of human beings in the life of the Trinity, on the one hand, scholars like Balthasar, LaCugna, Jungel, Moltmann, Cunningham, and Fiddes take a positive stance. According to them, the meaning of *perichoresis* can be applied to human beings, meaning that we are to be one with the Father as the Son and the Father are one (John 17:11, 21, 22). On the other hand there is some hesitation in claiming *perichoretic* participation in the Trinity. Volf asserts that it cannot be that human beings can indwell the Triune God like the three divine Persons indwell one another (Fiddes 2006:379-380). Volf is right to distinguish between the divine relationship of the three divine Persons and the relationship in which human beings participate. The Triune God and we are one, but, at the same time, we cannot be God. We do not subsist like the divine Persons; our *perichoresis* with the Trinity is not the same ontologically. The substance of the created cannot mingle with the substance of the uncreated one, although they are united and correlated. Therefore there are two dimensions in the *perichoretic* participation: oneness with God and, simultaneously, difference from the *perichoresis* of the Trinity. As long as this distinction is assured, the *perichoresis* is one of the best terminologies for expressing what participation in the life of the Trinity means (Fiddes 2006:385). *Perichoresis*, thus, helps us to understand that participation in the Trinity is not mere speculation, nor that God is a being beyond our concern, but about concrete action and it advocates that God opens the divine communion among the

three divine Persons to His creatures (Vosloo 2002:100).²³⁰

Fiddes (2006:385-386) expresses the *perichoretic* union of and with the Trinity with the image of a “round dance”.²³¹ Indeed, this figuration came from a word play on *perichoreo*, from which *perichoresis* is derived, and *perichoreuo* which means “to dance around”. However, this word play presents a dynamic illustration of the idea of participation (Cilliers 2012:121). Fiddes articulates how *perichoresis* depicts the relationship among the Triune God and human beings with the round dance model as follows: “In *this* dance the partners not only encircle each other and weave in and out between each other as in human dancing; in the divine dance, so intimate is the communion that they move in and through each other so that the pattern is all-inclusive” (Fiddes 2006:386). Cilliers (2012:127) also points out the communicative aspect of a dance as metaphor:

[D]ance as metaphor expresses *the need for a community*, in which we can be *completely* reliant on the other”. A person who dances alone looks silly. It is only when others join in that dance truly starts. It is here where the idea of a circle, *surely* one of the oldest symbols of community, comes into play.

Fiddes (2006:386-387) then presents metaphorical images of the round dance according to the controversial issue of the “font of the Trinity” between East and West. In the Western perspective, the dance comprises one round without one Person as the origin, while the Eastern doctrine of the Trinity can be depicted as a “progressive dance” in which dancers, i.e. worshippers, dance in an outer circle while the Father is in the inner circle. Fiddes criticises the Western model in terms of “openness”. In this model, according to Fiddes, the three divine Persons hold one another’s hands and no one is allowed to participate in the circle. Furthermore, any participant joining the dance, can then be regarded as the fourth divine Person, because no font of the Trinity is figured. Yet, the Eastern thought well describes the openness of *perichoresis*, showing how believers participate in the round dance of the Triune God without referring to participation in essence.

²³⁰ *Perichoretic* participation of the Triune God as well as of creatures shows the nature of the glory of God (cf. Strobel 2012:272). We will return to this point shortly.

²³¹ In this dissertation we deal with the dance only in terms of a metaphorical image of *perichoretic* participation in the life of the Triune God. See Cilliers (2012:120-126) and Davies (1984) for the dance in liturgy in a practical way.

In the Eastern model, the Father, as the origin of three divine Persons, sends the Son to the outer circle, and then sends the Holy Spirit. The three divine Persons dance in and out permeating each other but not mixing together. Finally, by the Holy Spirit, external participants from the outer circle are invited to dance to the Father. All the participants make the round of the circle, and there they dance with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Father opens the round for all creation to come and dance in joy (Cilliers 2012:122). The place of joining the divine dance with the Triune God, according to Fiddes, is worship. We are drawn near to God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, and there we glorify the Trinity. In worship, the relationship among the Trinity is not closed, but God shares the divine relationship with us (Fiddes 2006:386). Worship is only allowed to those who have a proper relationship with God, as have seen.²³² The round dance as the image of *perichoretic* participation offers a frame for relational-oriented worship, the purpose of which is the union with God.

This figurative image of deification is to be concretely performed in liturgy. If we maintain the image of dance continuously, the Sacraments, preaching and prayer can be depicted as the source or genre of the dance. We dance in the round with the Triune God in such a varied genre – spectacular or restful, and our dance skill is developed as the participation is deepened and the relationship is strengthened. However, ontological distinction of the font of the dance and dancer is maintained, in other words, the stage on which only three divine Persons dance, is not opened to other dancers. Because worship as dance with God is incomplete and unfinished in this world, the Church's expression of the dance in her liturgy will be continually (Cilliers 2012:216) anticipating “the eternal participation in liturgy” as dance (Cilliers 2012:111).

5.2.3 *Ubuntu*, Deification and Worship

We have referred to the African aphorism *Ubuntu* to depict that God is a relational being in the

²³² See 2.3.2.

second chapter.²³³ *Ubuntu* is often translated as “a person is a person through other persons” (Cilliers 2008:1). We have seen the relational view of “person” as articulating the relationship among the three divine Persons.²³⁴ Although the current idea depicts a person as an isolated being, Lossky (1974:106-107) proposes that this isolated and divided concept of the person has its roots in the fallen world. He cites the Gospel of John to prove that the person is a relational being in its origin: “Personal existence suppose[s] a relation to the other; one person exists ‘to’ or ‘towards’ the other: Ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, as the preface to St. John’s Gospel says”.

In the idea behind *Ubuntu*, on the one hand, a person is defined in relationship to other persons. So, one is dependent on the other. On the other hand, *Ubuntu* does not suggest the absorption of all individuality. So, individuality does not end. Like the three divine Persons being one and three simultaneously, and the *perichoretic* union allowing penetration among one another but not blurring of oneself, *Ubuntu* contains the same concept: “*Ubuntu* strives to incorporate both relation and distance, both individuality and communality” (Cilliers 2008:5). The unity and distinction of the person thus is the core idea of *Ubuntu*. In addition to this, Cilliers (2008:12) regards the basic concept of *Ubuntu* as a true dialogue and an openness towards one another. This reminds us of the divine relationship in the Triune God and His invitation to us to be part of the relationship, as we have seen that the *perichoretic* union is open to the creation.

Cilliers (2008:2) says: “*Ubuntu* does not only describe humanity as ‘being-with-others’, but also prescribes what the relational ethics of this ‘being-with-others’ entail”. Ramose (2004:149) also says that, in its ontological and epistemological meaning, *Ubuntu* is a concept, but in its ethical character *Ubuntu* is a value. In other words, *Ubuntu* is not only a way of being, but also a way of life. *Ubuntu* in this regard walks along the relationship between divine essence and energies. The divine essence and energies are to be thought of as distinctive, but not to be considered separately. The work of God cannot be done regardless of God Himself. Thus, God in Himself and God in His activity are not separated. When we encounter the energies, it is not merely His activity but God Himself (Louth

²³³ See 1.1 and 2.2.2.1.

²³⁴ See 2.2.2.1.

2013:40-41). Likewise, *Ubuntu* does not simply describe one's being but also prescribes one's life. Being and doing are not to be considered separately. Rahner's Rule, "The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity" thus is confirmed again in the lens of *Ubuntu*.

As such, our beings can be defined only in the relationship with God: we are righteous through the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus; we are justified by the juridical statement of God the judge; we are becoming who became us. By these definitions of our beings, God calls us into the place of worship where He is glorified by those who originally are sinners, the unjust and the fallen beings, but who are re-born through the grace of God.

In worship, human beings, by participating in the life of the Trinity, more concretely by participating in the Word of God and the Sacraments, enter into a deeper relationship with God; and in this relationship a being who worships starts to become God who became a human being in order to make men God. However, at the same time, a worshipper and the Trinity who is worshipped are distinct. Neither one of them is absorbed or mingled. If God loses His being in worship, that would no more be a religious rite, because there is no religion without god; and if we lose our own beings in worship, that would be no more Christian worship, because worshippers are worshippers through God, the subject and object of the worship. For Cilliers, this reciprocal relationship is the reason that we exist (Cilliers 2008:5):

It represents a sort of *web of reciprocal relations* in which subject and object are indistinguishable. Therefore not: "I think, therefore I am", but rather "I participate, therefore I am." Or even: "I dance (with you), therefore I am" (cf. McGann 2002:19). We dance ourselves into existence, together.

5.2.4 Participation in Liturgy and Deification

Palamas defines the Church as a "communion of deification". For him, the aim of the Church is

the deification of its members (Mantzarides 1984:57). George, the Abbot of the St. Gregorios Monastery since 1974, also indicates that everything in the Church leads us to deification; and the Church alone is the place of deification (George 2006:36). Of everything in the Church he mentions, to accomplish the purpose of deification, the Church uses her liturgy. Believers, by participating in liturgy, experience deification in this world: “Deification by the Spirit is never to be separated in Gregory, or the Cappadocians as a whole, from the life of true worship, which equates with the life of the Church” (Torrance 2009:61n38).

Participation in the life of the Trinity should not be defined in a spiritual or speculative dimension alone; it also has its practical application in liturgy. We have to have an embodied imagination of participating in the Trinity through our worship service with physical participation. Cilliers articulates: “We participate with our bodies, or we do not participate at all” (Cilliers 2012:76). Cilliers proposes by this articulation that our body and soul, especially in an African context, is not considered separately but as one. Thus, that one participates in worship with one’s body can be soulful worship, and at the same time, the soulful worship should have its bodily action.

Alfeyev (2004:115-116) gives examples of many references to deification that is plainly shown in the Eastern Orthodox liturgy, whereby we may be sure that the doctrine of deification is not simply a matter of speculation, but has been performed in practical ways in the believers’ prayer life:

- Thou becamest man, O good Christ, in order to make man god (Seventh Tone, Thursday evening, Stichiron [Oktoicho]).
- Thou wert [made] man, O Lover of mankind, in order to make man god (Eighth Tone, Wednesday, Matins, Canon, Ode Eight [Oktoichos]).
- Today Christ on Mount Tabor changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with the brightness He has made it godlike (The Transfiguration of Christ, Vespers, Stichiron in Tone Two [Menaion]).
- ...Thou hast transformed [the nature of Adam] into the glory and splendour of Thine own divinity (Transfiguration, Vespers, Stichiron. Tone One [Menaion])...
- In My Kingdom... I shall be with you as God among gods’ (Good Thursday, Canon by Kosmas of Maiuma, Canticle Four [Triodion]).

We also find the same expectation in the liturgy of St. James (Arseniev 1979:148):²³⁵

Thou has united, O Lord, Thy divinity with our humanity and our humanity with Thy divinity, Thy life with our mortality and our mortality with Thy life; Thou hast received what was ours and has given unto us what was Thine, for the life and salvation of our souls, praise be to Thee in eternity

The doctrine of deification is embodied by participating in the liturgy. Participation in the liturgy is the right and duty of believers. For the pews, the participation in liturgy is more concretely applied to participate in the Sacraments. The *Constitution of Sacred Liturgy from Vatican II* reads (14):

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebration which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 *Pet.* 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the Sacraments, i.e. the Baptism and the Eucharist, believers are raised up from the dead, are cleansed and are maintained in the sustaining power of the Trinity. For Palamas, the Sacraments, although they are created media, are the only means of giving life by participating in the uncreated energies (Kärkkäinen 2004:29; Wesche 2008:171). Stressing the “uncreated energies” we can avoid any objection that we in the Sacraments participate in the divine nature in essence; at the same time, we can take a position that the media is an appropriate way of participation in God through communion with Christ in His body, the Church (Russell 2011:134).

Kharlamov (2008b:165) addresses the Baptism for the new birth of believers and the Eucharist as the actuality of the deified body and blood of Christ. Participating in the Baptism we have new lives, and by eating and drinking Jesus’ deified body and blood, our new lives are strengthened. So to speak, believers “become sons through the Son, who lifts them into the life of the Trinity” (Russell 2006:314-315) and, once we become sons, our sonship is nourished through the Son who gives of His body and blood. The point that the Sacraments are about relationship, not focusing on the

²³⁵ Quoted from. Kärkkäinen (Kärkkäinen 2004:9-10).

participation *per se*, should be highlighted. Without a proper relationship with God, no one is allowed participation in the Sacraments. That is what “anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor 11:29) means. The relationship with the Son entails our sonship so that we are able to enter the proper relationship with God through the Sacraments.

The BEM report states that the meaning of Baptism is “participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (BEM B.3). In the Sacramental act of Baptism, believers experience death and resurrection; in short, they are newborn. Zizioulas applies the term “hypostasis” to express the new lives of believers through Baptism. By the Baptism, believers are led “to a new mode of existence to a regeneration (1 Pet. 1:3,23), and consequently to a new ‘hypostasis’” (Zizioulas 2002:53). Those who have the new hypostasis, i.e. new life, constitute the Church. The new generation emerged in the Church as the early patristic literature employed the image of mother to the Church in which believers are new born (Zizioulas 2002:56). The Church, thus, is the place in which the new hypostasis, the new born and new generation are seen. As Luther’s theology of justification by faith means both juridical statement and the union with Christ, a participant is not only accepted as a member of the Church in the Baptism, but also is bound one with Christ (Peura 1998:53-54). Through this baptismal grace, by union with Christ and the indwelling the Holy Spirit, the image of God in which we are created, is purified and a participant acquires the power of deification (Mantzarides 1984:46).

This power of deification is embodied and fortified through the other Sacrament, the Eucharist. Maximus the Confessor, who describes deification with the idea of *perichoretic* penetration of the divine and human nature, urges that “God penetrates the human order by communicating grace through the sacraments; the believing community reciprocates by partaking of the transforming media of the divine plenitude bequeathed in the church” (Vishnevskaya 2008:138). He continues, saying that in the Eucharist “we have grace and familiarity which unites us to God himself. By holy communion of the spotless and life-giving mysteries we are given fellowship and identity with him by

participation in likeness, by which man is deemed worthy from man to become God”.²³⁶ Ware (1993:236) states:²³⁷

If someone asks ‘How can I become god?’ the answer is very simple: go to church, receive the sacraments regularly, pray to God ‘in spirit and in truth’, read the Gospels, follow the commandments. The last of these items – ‘follow the commandments’ – must never be forgotten.

Becoming God is the ultimate aim of human beings and in the Eucharist we are given Christ who cannot be more than anything we can receive. We share the divinised flesh of Christ participating in the incorruptible life, and then finally, we become of one body with Him (Mantzarides 1984:53-54). Through the Sacraments, “He makes us members of Himself” (George 2006:34). This reminds of the idea of “us-ness”, which we have referred to in the previous chapter to give an account of *perichoretic* union with God.²³⁸ Us-ness is not extended in numerical sums, but in relationship. Thus, the members of the Church as the body of Christ are one. All believers are one with God in the Church. True “communion” is not added in terms of numbers, but its membership is strengthened to being one. In this regard, God and the Church can be defined as a “communion” as well. Zizioulas states: “‘God’ is the communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, just as ‘church’ is the communion between Christ and his people and between believers and believers through the Spirit” (Olson 2007:192). Thus, as the Triune God is three and one in Their communion, we become one with God and others as well in the Church by the Sacraments.

5.2.5 Worship: A Liminal Time and Space for Deification

Russell (2009:169) defines “to live deification” as follows:

²³⁶ *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings*. tr by Berthold, G, Mahwah: Paulist Press (1985:207), quoted from Vishnevskaya (2008:138).

²³⁷ Quoted from Yoo (2008:275).

²³⁸ See 4.3.2.

It means to lead our life in an eschatological perspective within the ecclesial community, striving through prayer, participation in the Eucharist, and the practice of the moral life to attain the divine likeness, being confronted spiritually and corporeally to the body of Christ until we are brought into Christ's identity and arrive ultimately at union with the Father.

Two points are drawn from the above citation: 1) inwardly, through liturgical life we are accomplishing deification and 2) outwardly, the moral life is to be shown to neighbours as a fruit of deification. Russell articulates these with an eschatological perspective. Of the two, we focus on the first issue in this section, namely that the ecclesial event, viz. worship, is the means of deification from the eschatological perspective.

Lossky (1978:77-78) mentions the possibility of the immortality of Adam in Paradise that, if he had not sinned against God, he would have been nourished by God's grace and transformed by the grace through the Eucharist in which we now are nourished and fortified in spirit and body. The point is that, whether the state of Adam was mortal or immortal, to be nourished by God's grace is necessary for him. We are in the same state with him, meaning that it is compulsory to be fed by God constantly in the Eucharist to attain deification. This nourishment will last forever. The same condition of Adam, that is, the state in between mortal or immortal being, living forever or dying, being deified or failed, is accounted by Cilliers with the term "liminality".

According to Cilliers, "liminality implies an ambiguous phase between two situations or statuses. Often this in-between space or liminal displacement is filled with potential and/or danger" (Cilliers 2010:344). In being filled with potential and danger simultaneously in the liminal time and space, there can be a combination of new forms and relationships between two ontologically different beings (Cilliers 2010:344). As mentioned in the background to this dissertation,²³⁹ there are four tensions in worship in which two different things are encountered: "between being and becoming, between time and space, between awe and expression, and between laughter and lament" (Cilliers 2009:2). Of the four, our attention, which comprises the backbone of this dissertation, is the tension between "being

²³⁹ See 1.1.

and becoming'. All these tensions would remain or be resolved, but in the light of the liminality, the tensions can entail a new formation or relationship. In worship as a liminal time and space, we are able to experience this combination of new forms of human being or the new relationship with God, viz. deification. Cilliers (2010:346) sees three concepts as keywords for liminality; lament, re-framing and anticipation. All three concepts are related to our theme of worship as a liminal time and space for deification.

Firstly, "lament" is not a personal feeling like sympathy or compassion, but is desperate humbleness before of God. That is the feeling of *Coram Deo*. Thus, in lament the aspect of "not yet" is demonstrated more than "already" (Cilliers 2010:346). We have the feeling of lament in worship owing to our sinful nature that cannot be closer to God even as we worship Him. Human beings were supposed to participate in the divine nature and be nourished via God's grace in the garden (Gen 1:26). However, the human destiny of inevitable death which is altered from the initial human condition requires lamentation. This lament is applied to each human being who is before of God. George links this sole lament to the community of believers. The Church as a body of Christ is the place from where many discords and tensions constantly recur: "All these happen in the Church because we are as yet on the way to Theosis, and it is very natural that human weaknesses still exist. We are becoming gods, but not yet" (George 2006:37). Thus, both as a single human being and as a community of them, lament will always be there, until our final deification is accomplished.

Secondly, from the fact that liminality is the time and space in which unthought-of possibilities of relations between two beings are opened, "a liminal liturgy has the potential to tap into exactly these *existential experiences of re-framing*"(Cilliers 2010:348). Cilliers offers various alternatives for re-framing such as a re-arrangement, a re-appropriation, a re-configuration and a re-imagination and re-naming of God images. In this sense, the re-framing which happens in worship has the same dimension of sanctification in Western terminology, or deification in Eastern theology. Becoming God as a re-framing, although full re-framing will be accomplished in the afterlife, is initiated during this lifetime. Finlan is determined as he points out that "[w]e must not neglect the middle stage in this

metamorphosis, where one reflects God's glory while still in the flesh" (Finlan 2008:73). Human beings are fearful of God's glory because of the enormous disparity between sinful nature and the splendour of the glory. Human beings and the glory of God, thus, are allocated in the relationship which cannot be made. However, in the time and space of liminality, viz. worship, the two beings encounter and one of them, the human being in this case, starts becoming, or re-framing.

Thirdly, anticipation, or hope, is not just imagining that future becomes present, but rather "is rediscovering the fact that the future is already present, already amongst us" (Cilliers 2010:349). This eschatological hope should lead to worship as a liminal time and space being a celebration in which a permanent becoming of being is realised. The anticipation of perfect deification has a model who attained the full divinity with full humanity. Thus, to celebrate Jesus through the Eucharist, sharing His body and blood to remember Him, is necessary for us to have the hope. Likewise, in the Eucharist the liminal anticipation culminates in, on the one hand, a foretaste of the full deification, and on the other hand, in Christ whom we share and remember is already fully divine. Therefore, we can have a memory, a share and hope in Him.

In our liturgy, we recognise that we are standing in the liminal place between "becoming God" and "remaining one's being". Until our lament is taken away, we are being deified or, in Cilliers' word, re-framed, with the eschatological hope in our worship. In short, worship is a liminal time and place for deification.

5.3 DOXOLOGY: WHERE THE TRINITY, DEIFICATION AND WORSHIP ARE ENCOUNTERED

Theology (θεολογία) originally signified that God speaks or to speak of God. God who talks to us and to whom we talk is and does as Triune God. Thus, theology should start with the knowledge of the Trinity, but we are not able to know God perfectly. Theology is always a mystery. However, the

mystery is not to be left in mystery, nor be analyzed, but should be glorified. Until we are able to glorify God with the full scope of doxology, worship on earth is an ultimate response from redeemed human beings to God. In this sense, theology that started with the Trinity ends with doxology. The heart of LaCugna's theology, according to Groppe, is "the conviction that Trinitarian theology culminates in doxology". For LaCugna, not only primary theology (*theologia prima*), i.e. worship and liturgy, but also speculative theology must be doxological (Groppe 2002:735). As Kasper (1989:304) points out, the Trinitarian confession is not about teaching of God but doxology or eschatological glorification of God.²⁴⁰

We, in the previous chapters, dealt with theological issues which have dialectic relationships to one another, such as the economic and immanent Trinity, and the divine essence and energies. They belong together in doxology. In doxology, the distinction between God is for God (the immanent Trinity) and God is for us (the economic Trinity) has no place, because there is only one Triune God who is glorified; neither is there a distinction between who God is (the divine essence) and what God does (the divine energies), because God is and his doing is to be glorified by His creations. The tension between being and becoming, which was the motivation for this dissertation, is also resolved in the doxology when we glorify the being who became our being to save us, and whom our being is becoming.

In this section, we firstly determine the biblical meaning of the glory of God, and then the relationships of the three theological issues we have dealt in this dissertation – the Trinity, deification and worship – followed by the doxology.

5.3.1 The Glory of God in the Bible

The English word "glory" in the Bible is a translation of the Hebrew word קְבוֹד, and the Greek

²⁴⁰ Quoted from LaCugna (1991b:187).

word δόξα.²⁴¹ Sometimes, other words are translated as glory and sometimes קְבוֹד and δόξα are translated into other words (Duba 1990:365-366),²⁴² but קְבוֹד and δόξα are the most suitable words for glory as it occurs in the Bible. Wainwright (1978:102) defines the glory mentioned in the Bible in two ways: 1) a permanent and essential attribute of God (Isa 48:11, 59:19; John 17:5, 24); and 2) the symbol of God's presence (Ex 16:7, 10, 24:16ff; Lev 9:6, 23; Num 14:10, 16:19, 20:6; 1 Kings 8:10ff; 2 Chron 7:1-3; Ps 145:11ff; Isa 60:1-3; Ezek 3:23, 8:4, 9:3, 10:18ff, 11:23, 43:2-5, 44:4). As such, the glory and the presence of God are closely related in that God's presence with His people is depicted as the descending of His glory (Ramsey 1949:10; de Silva 2003:432).

God's presence in the OT is a fearful experience for human beings. With their sinful nature, human beings are not allowed to see Him. Because of this, His presence was always accompanied by clouds. The invisibility or hiddenness of God, which makes Him unpredictable, is one of the representative characteristics of the glory of God in the whole of the OT. Nonetheless, as Duba (1990:366) cautiously indicates, to manifest the glory is the nature of God. He is indeed not forced to show the glory by interior or exterior power, but He is pleased to reveal it to us by His willingness.

Like people in the OT, the shepherds in Luke 2 were fearful when they encountered the glory of God: "[T]he glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear" (Luke 2:9). According to Marshall (1978:109), the "inevitable effect of such a heavenly visitation is fear". Not only for the shepherds but also for all human beings, "fear is standard reaction to divine manifestations" (Nolland 1987:106).²⁴³ Zechariah was also in fear when he saw the angel of the Lord

²⁴¹ My unpublished M.Th dissertation will be used as point of departure for some arguments in 5.3.1. and 5.3.4. Cf Lim (2012:75-102).

²⁴² קְבוֹד has the customary meaning of 1) abundance, riches; 2) honour, splendour, glory of external condition and circumstances; 3) honour, dignity of position; and 4) honour, reputation of character of man, etc. (*BDB* s.v. קְבוֹד:458-459). The term δόξα means 1) the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendour, radiance; 2) a state of being magnificent, greatness, splendour; 3) honour as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, prestige; and 4) a transcendence being deserving of honour, majestic being (*BDAG* s.v. δόξα:256-258).

²⁴³ Johnson (1991:50) accentuates that the Greek word δόξα in these passages is the translated form of the Hebrew word קְבוֹד, saying that, as Isaiah felt fear when he encountered קְבוֹד (Isa 6:1-5), feeling fear is "a not unnatural response".

(Luke 1:12).²⁴⁴ Once the shepherds met Jesus, however, they “returned, glorifying and praising God” (Luke 2:20). The fear of God is changed to glorifying God, viz. doxology. The experience of encountering Jesus changed it, for He is “the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (Heb 1:3, *NIV*). The clouds which hid the glory of God in the OT will be given another role in His Second Coming. Jesus will come “on” (or with) the clouds (ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν or μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, Mat 24:30, 26:64; Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7). The prepositions “on” and “with” are compared to the OT phrase “in the cloud” (אֲנִי בְּעָנָן, Ex 16:10, 34:5; Num 11:25) or the function of the cloud to hide the glory of God from people (Ex 40:34,35; Num 16:42; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chron 5:14; Isa 4:5; Ezek 1:28, 10:4 etc.). Thus, until the *Parousia*, the glory of God is “already” revealed in the Son, “but not yet” fully revealed to us.

Initially, participation in the divine glory is granted to human beings (Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 11:7). However, as human beings have been unfaithful to their appointed place, so participation in the divine glory has been lost (Rom 1:24, 3:23). Thus, the glory takes on a central meaning in soteriology (Hegermann 1994:345). Even though the proper response to God’s glory must be doxology, it is impossible for human beings (Duba 1990:366). In other words, it is impossible to glorify God before being saved by Him. Without changing this state, a creature cannot be close to the glory of God or glorify God.

From human beings’ side, doxology is a responsive action. The response starts from the response to salvation. By responsive action, however, we do not indicate the response to salvation only, but it is the response to the glory, and ultimately, to the Trinity *per se*. That is to say, the doxology from the side of human beings is the response to the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Thus, doxology is not to cease with what God has done for me, but to reflect our relationship with God (Thomson 1994:102).

²⁴⁴ Lenski (1946:129) observes that the shepherds, Zacharias and Mary met the same angel, thus, it is no wonder that the shepherds were in fear as Zacharias and Mary were.

5.3.2 The Immanent and Economic Glorification and Our Deification

For Moltmann, as we have observed in the previous chapter,²⁴⁵ there is only one Trinity, and love is the agent that binds the two Trinities on the cross. For him, doxological theology as a response theology is a distinctive point between the immanent and economic Trinity. Here he again demonstrates his retroactive concept of the two Trinities which is based on the chronological order that entails that experiencing the economic Trinity should precede knowing the immanent Trinity (Moltmann 1993:152-153). However, the two Trinities, as discussed before, should not be articulated simply in the chronological order. From the side of human comprehension, the economic Trinity should be experienced ahead of knowing the immanent Trinity. However, that does not suppose pre-existence of the immanent Trinity. As Moltmann indicates, the distinction between the two forms of the Trinity is only necessary to understand the doctrine of the Trinity (1993:160). Thus, doxological theology does not necessarily have to be the point of distinction between the two Trinities, but rather is the culmination of Their relation to the creation and Their inner relationship as well. What human beings exalt in doxology is not merely the redemptive work of the Trinity, but also the Trinity, the giver of the life (Kim 2008:49). Thus, worship is the only place for *Sitz im Leben* for the Trinity, both the immanent and economic Trinity, where in worship the inner relationship among the three divine Persons and the co-work of the Trinity in the world is glorified by the appreciating knowledge of God.²⁴⁶ LaCugna understands that the mystery of God (the immanent Trinity) shines through the redemptive work of God (the economic Trinity) in doxology. Thus, while Moltmann distinguishes the immanent Trinity as the content of doxological theology and the economic Trinity as the object of kerygmatic and practical theology (1993:152), LaCugna views *oikonomia* and *theologia* as united in doxology (LaCugna 1991a:320; Kim 2008:88).

A study by Jonathan Edwards on the doctrine of deification was published recently. According to Strobel, doxology, or the glory of God, ties the immanent and economic Trinity for Edwards. Strobel

²⁴⁵ See 2.2.1.4.

²⁴⁶ Moltmann, however, only applies the *Sitz im Leben* to the immanent Trinity (1993:152).

(2012:270) evaluates Edwards' theology of the glory of God in a threefold movement from *The End for which God Created the World*.²⁴⁷

First, the glory of God consists of God's eternal fullness. Second, glory is also used in Scripture to describe both God's inner life as well as the communication of himself. Last, glory consists in the effect of glory in rational creatures. In other words, as God's fullness is communicated to creatures created by God to receive his glory, they receive and rebound that glory back to their God. Edwards is clear that this rebounding, which he calls "remanation," is considered by the biblical text to be an aspect of God's own glory.

The first and the second movements are related to the immanent Trinity, and the third is related to the economic Trinity. That is, God reveals His glory in the inner relationship among the three divine Persons and invites His creatures into His glory, thereby forming the outer relationship with them. The particular character of the glory opens the participation of the creatures in doxology of the Trinity. The word "remanation" which Edwards uses can be given in the plainer word "response". The glory of God is not something that is stuck in one stationary locus, but makes relation, uniting and tying together two ontologically different beings.²⁴⁸ The three divine Persons glorify one another, and this glorification confirms Their relationship; in the same way, our glorification enables us to enter into the relationship with the Triune God. In the glory, we can enter into relationship with the Trinity, participate in the life of God, be united with God, and ultimately, become God. As such, the Triune God by doxology becomes and maintains oneness. Thus, doxology is the ontological aspect of the being of the Trinity, and the oneness of the Trinity is shared with us, which is understood in the doctrine of deification.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Edwards, J, *Ethical Writings*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards vol. 8, ed by Ramsey, P. New Haven: Yale University Press (1989: 527-529).

²⁴⁸ In this sense, the specific character of liminality (see 5.2.5.) is also seen in the glory of God.

5.3.3 Deification through Doxology: John 17

We now turn to biblical exegesis on John 17, to see how the Trinity glorifies from the inner relationship and how the Son petitioned for our participation in the doxological relationship. John 17 is normally analysed according to its contents as a threefold petition: for the unity between the Father and the Son (vv.1-5), for the unity of the disciples (vv. 6-19), and for the unity of the all believers to come (vv. 20-26). However, the threefold petition can be put together in the light of doxology, as the theme of glorification unites all three sections (Stibbe 1993:179). From the doxological perspective, keeping the doctrine of deification in mind, the contents can be analysed as 1) mutual doxology of the Trinity, which forms the union of the Trinity (vv. 1-5); 2) deification (the union with the Trinity) of the disciples by doxology (vv. 6-19); and 3) deification (the union with the Trinity) of the all believers by doxology (vv. 20-26). In this analysis, the inner glorification of the Trinity is the means of the unity among the three divine Persons, and it is extended to outer glorification for and by human beings. In short, our union with the Trinity can be made possible in doxology.

Mutual doxology of the Trinity which makes the union of the Trinity (vv. 1-5)

The chapter starts with the mutual doxology of the Father and the Son: “Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you” (v. 1, *NTV*). “Mutual” means that the Father’s glorification to the Son is completed by the Son’s glorification to the Father (Hilary of Poitiers, *on the Trinity*, *ACCS NT IVb* 228; also see Kasper 1989:303). Then, what does the glorification mean concretely? Bruner (2012:976-978) categorises three interpretations of the meaning of glorification: Firstly, the best-supported one is that glorification in the Gospel of John occurs in Jesus’ Crucifixion; in addition to the first one, the second interpretation includes the resurrection of Jesus, which followed the Crucifixion; and the third interpretation that Bruner introduces is an old one from Hilary of Poitiers, in *On the Trinity*, that the Son was glorified by the *prodigia* of the Cross such as the darkened heavens, split veil, shaken earth, broken rocks, raised saints (Matthew 27:45, 51-54). Regardless of which interpretation

we follow, the fact that glorification culminated in the cross of Jesus is unchangeable. On the cross, the counsel of the Three divine Persons and salvation for human beings are encountered; the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are identified.

Michaels (2010:861) suggests that the passages have a kind of chiasmic structure as presented below:

- a “Glorify your Son” (v. 1a)
- b “So that the Son might glorify you” (v. 1b)
- b’ “I have glorified you” (v. 4)
- a’ “And now glorify me” (v. 5)”

In agreeing with him, it should be remembered that the most significant point in the chiasmic structure is to be placed in the middle. In addition to the chiasm arranged by Michaels, verse 3 thus is to be located in the middle of the structure: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (*NIV*). The new chiasmic analysis is given below:

- a** glorify your Son (v. 1a)
- b** so that the Son might glorify you (v. 1b)
- c** the eternal life is to know the Father and the Son (in doxology) (v. 3)
- b’** I have glorified you (v. 4)
- a’** glorify me (v. 5)

Here the knowledge which entails eternal life is produced by the mutual doxology between the Father and the Son. Knowing that the Father and the Son glorify one another is the life-giving knowledge for human beings, because in the same doxology, the disciples and the believers to come also have eternal life. As Sloyan (1973:197) indicates, the glory of God in this text is “godhead itself or a property of godhead or a gift transmissible from the divine to the human”. Sharing the glory thus means that we participate in the divine nature, although not in essence. Also, eternal life belongs only to God; thus

eternal life in this sense is synonymous with becoming God.

In doxology the Son is re-united with the Father; that is, He would ascend and sit on the right hand of the Father. Thus, doxology in this sense makes the Father and the Son one (Michaels 2010:854). As Thomson articulates, doxology is not an action of the people in the first instance, but rather the action of God the Trinity, therefore “an inner Trinitarian event” (Thomson 1994:101). The event is then extended to the outside for the disciples and the believers to approach. In short, the disciples and the believers would be one with the Father and the Son as They are one in doxology.

Deification (the union with the Trinity) of the disciples by doxology (vv. 6-19)

Jesus asks the Father to protect the disciples so that “they may be one as we are one” (11, *NIV*). “One” in this petition should not be understood in the numerical sense but, as Origen indicates, is used to mean harmony and likeness (*Fragment 140 on the Gospel of John, ACCS NT IVb: 245*). Moltmann also points out that the union between the Father and the Son is not a numerical union, but that it refers to Their fellowship. Then he continues, explaining that this Trinitarian union is an open union that is extended to the disciples to be one with the Triune God (Kim 2008:55). Billings articulates this as the immanent oneness and the economic oneness. As the three divine Persons are one, but at the same time indwell mutually, Christ, the disciples and the believers to come are one and indwell one another (Billings 2005:324n43). Thus, in the union of the disciples with the Trinity, the arithmetic sense is not applied, that is, the oneness with God means true fellowship and relationship. The same is found in Calvin: “Just as he [Christ] is one with the Father, let us become one with him”.²⁴⁹ For Calvin, this Trinitarian union is the final end of human beings (Billings 2005:324, see also 324n43).

Becoming one with God, i.e. having true fellowship and relationship with God, of course does

²⁴⁹ Calvin and Moltmann refer the Son to whom the union of human beings is applied. However, the Son is already one with the Father, and the Holy Spirit; thus, we can say the union with the Son is the union with the Triune God.

not mean becoming, fellowship and relationship in essence. Thus, Athanasius emphasises that we shall be one with God, but “not as the Father is by nature in the Son and the Son in the Father, but according to our own nature” (*Discourse Against the Arians*, ACCS NT IV: 246).

Deification (the union with the Trinity) of the all believers by doxology (vv. 20-26)

Jesus’ prayer, or speaking,²⁵⁰ is extended to all believers to come: “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (vv. 20-21, *NIV*). To understand this mutual indwelling, we used the term *perichoresis*. Ware more explicitly says that “as the three persons of the Trinity ‘dwell’ in one another in an unceasing movement of love, so we humans, made in the image of the Trinity, are called to ‘dwell’ in the Trinitarian God” (Ware 1993:231). Similar to the union between the Trinity and the disciples, doxology is the only possible way for the union of all believers with the Trinity: “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one” (v. 22, *NIV*). As we have seen in 5.3.1. in this dissertation, the Son will share the glory of God with all believers (Mosser 2002:45). It is the chief and final anticipation of human beings: “[W]hen the Son of God will be manifested in the glory of His kingdom, He will gather them together into the same fellowship with himself.” (Calvin 1960:392-393). Thus, in His *Parousia*, all believers will participate in the divine fellowship with the Triune God in doxology, as the Son is requesting the Father in the text.

We have assumed so far that it is Trinitarian glorification that is extended to the disciples and then the believers to come, but some raise the question that there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in the chapter. Sloyan (1973:196) simply deals with this matter from an eschatological perspective: “This [no mention of the Holy Spirit] may be owing to the confinement of that figure of consolation to the last days”. Yet, the role of the Holy Spirit to lead believers to the Father and the Son does not

²⁵⁰ Haenchen (1984:150) also points out that the text only refers to a “speaking” (εἰπεῖν), not to a “praying” (προσεύχεσθαι). Thus, he does not agree that John 17 is thought of as a so-called “high priest prayer”.

only belong to the future. Surely, eschatology does not only refer to future things, but has an “already but not yet” schema. However, Sloyan, by the above citation, indicates the future aspect of eschatology. Rather, it should be underlined that the union with God cannot take place for believers except through the divine action of the Holy Spirit (Thomson 1994:102).²⁵¹ Kasper (1989:303) states in this regard: “The Spirit is, and effects the concrete presence of the eternal doxology of Father and Son in the church and in the world”. Ambrose cites John 16:14, in which Jesus refers to the work of the Holy Spirit, to assure that the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son also includes the glorification of the Holy Spirit. For him, this reciprocal glorification of the Trinity is only substantial (*On the Christian Faith*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.10:298; cf. John 8:54).

5.3.4 Worship as a Locus of Doxology

We have seen that the two Trinities are one in doxology (5.3.2.) and that we are made one with God in doxology (5.3.3.). In short, human deification is fulfilled in doxology. Our attention is now focused on the question of where we glorify God.

As we have mentioned above, doxology firstly is the inner event of the Trinity. Thomson articulates this inner life of the Trinity as “an act of worship” (Thomson 1994:101). In the simplest of words, God worships Himself. He glorifies and worships Himself among the three divine Persons. All need of relationship and communication is fulfilled in the inner doxology of the Triune God. Our worship and doxology is therefore not necessary in terms of more and more glorifying the Triune God. However, the Trinity has Their *Sitz im Leben* in the praise and worship of the church (Moltmann 1993:152). He extends worship and doxology as the inner Trinitarian event to the outer event of the Church. Indeed, the glory of God, by its nature, invites others to join in life-long praise and worship (Hardy & Ford 1985:8). Thus, “God’s glory has its human counterpart in our praise and worship” (Thomson 1994:103).

²⁵¹ For example, 1 Cor 12:3 says: “no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit”.

Chrysostom, commenting on John 17:4, pays attention to the phrase “on earth”. According to him, the glory of Jesus is already fulfilled and He is always glorified and worshipped by the angels in heaven and Jesus, in fact, “always possesses that glory in its fullness even if no one glorified him” (*Homilies on the Gospel of John*, ACCS NT IVb: 234-235). Irenaeus also stresses that the service of human beings cannot bring any profit to God. In the inner relationship of the Trinity, God is perfect and blessed with doxology. Thus, the worship service of human beings is not necessary on God’s side, but rather is necessary on the side of humans. Irenaeus continues: “For as much as God lacks nothing, that is how much we stand in need of fellowship with God, because our glory consists in continuing and remaining permanently in God’ service” (*Against Heresies*, ACCS NT IV: 261-262). Thus, worship is the proper and only human response to the Trinity and His glory.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Having spoken of deification, we do not even know and understand the being we will become. Rather, to become the new being would be to enter into a new mystery for us (Louth 2008:41). No language can deliver the mystery of the Trinity and human deification as well, but we experience and worship the Trinity in our life and liturgy with the eschatological hope of deification. Doxology remains the most proper language whereby the doctrine and the life of the Trinity may be comprehended, through faith. We will share doxology with the Triune God in the everlasting Kingdom of God, but in this world worship on Sunday is an authorised time and place of doxology for us.

Chapter 6

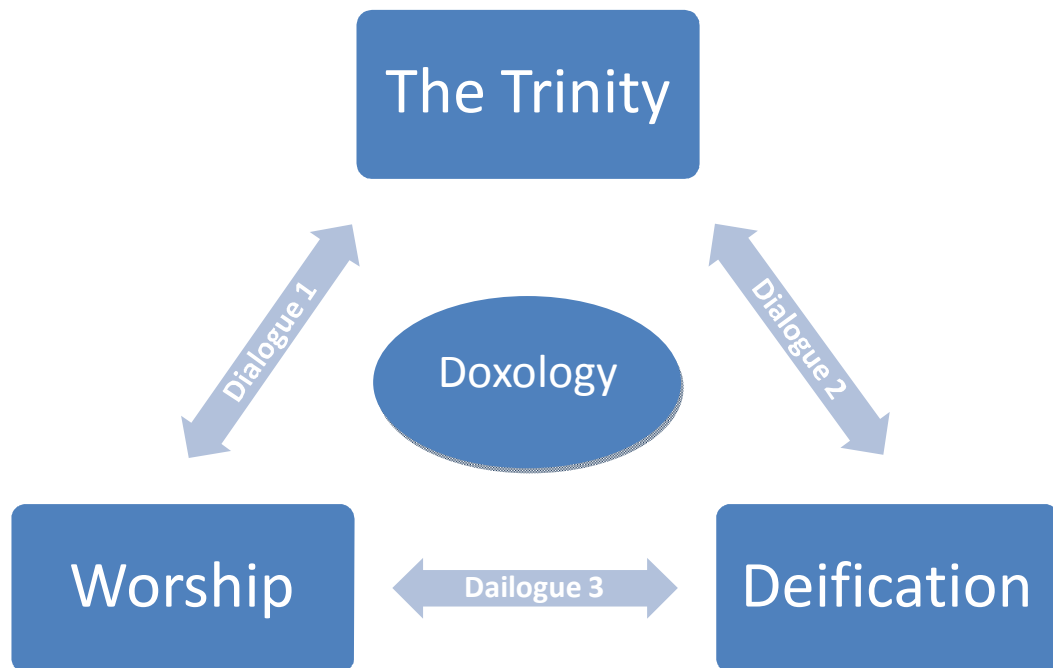
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our study commenced in the tension between being and becoming, which happens in worship. To explain this we needed to investigate the doctrine of deification, because the doctrine literally means “becoming God” and the doctrine assisted our study in many parts. To understand the doctrine practically and biblically, our investigation had to be applied and remain in the Trinitarian perspective, because becoming God in Christianity means becoming the Trinity. Lastly, we anchored our study at the liturgical locus, because worship is a place where the Triune God enters into covenantal relationship with us and where our being is becoming in the relationship with God. Thus, the study was started from practical conflicts and, having completed the doctrinal journey, we have arrived at the practical field again. Thus, our main methodology for the study, that is, *lex orandi lex credendi*, was therefore applied throughout the dissertation.

In this last chapter, as concluding remarks, a summary is offered with the use of a figure; further study on deification within the context of South Korea from where the author has come and of South Africa, where the author is currently staying, is suggested – but only in broad strokes - and this is followed by a final examination of whether the tension between being and becoming in worship, the motivation for this dissertation, is resolved or could be.

6.1 A SUMMARY

The three dialogues we have dealt with can be schematised as follows:



●Dialogue 1 (Chapter 2):

- 1) The Trinity exists as relational being, inwardly as well as outwardly.
- 2) The relational God enters into a relationship with us through worship.
- 3) That God is relational drafts the foundation of deification.

●Dialogue 2 (Chapter 4):

- 1) Deification has two dimensions: transformation of our being and relationship with the Trinity.
- 2) Those are proved by biblical and doctrinal study.
- 3) These theoretical studies call for liturgical study to be vitalised.

●Dialogue 3 (Chapter 5):

- 1) Deification is actualised in worship from this life, and will be continued.
- 2) All relationships that entail tensions find their dialectic position in Doxology.

In addition to these three dialogues, we also needed to advocate for the doctrine of deification in Chapter 3 with a historical study, for the doctrine has been regarded as an unfamiliar theological concept in the West in many parts.

6.2 FOR FURTHER STUDIES

6.2.1 The South Korean Context: The Possibility and Limitation of Worship as a place of Deification in the Korean Church

In applying the doctrine of deification to a specific practical context, how the people in the context have previously regarded the doctrine in their lives should be considered. That is to say, whether their tradition and current culture are in conflict with the doctrine and whether they have a liturgical background in which the doctrine is applied are to be examined.

With regard to the South Korean context, on the one hand, deification is a very popular idea in South Korea, and on the other hand, little is known about the doctrine of deification in the South Korean Church. In South Korea, firstly, there are many different religions, including Confucianism, Buddhism and traditional shamanism. These religions do not include a concept of god that is analogous to the Christian understanding of God, i.e. the Trinity. Even the instruction of Confucianism lacks any reference to a god. As we have seen, the statement “becoming God” is only possible in Christianity, which has a relational God. Thus, ‘becoming god’ in the South Korean religious tradition is a strange and misleading concept. However, in social and political meaning, the terminology of deification is popular among people.

The Korean nation has been divided between two countries since 1945: North Korea and South Korea. The three leaders of North Korea and two presidents of South Korea share a point in common,

having taken deification or idolatry of themselves as the means of governing: in North Korea, Ilsung Kim reigned from 1945 until his death in 1994, his son Jungil Kim reigned from 1994 until his death in 2011, and his son, Jungeun Kim, is reigning now. In South Korea, Seungman Lee reigned between 1948 and 1960, and Junghee Park, reigned from 1963 until 1979. Many statues, memorial halls and monuments to them still exist in North and South Korea. Their supporters regard them as almost flawless in words and deeds. In addition to those governors, Sunmyung Moon, who was a very famous heretic religious leader in South Korea, also supported the idea of deification or idolatry of himself. Therefore, the term “deification” is viewed negatively by people in South Korea, both politically and also heretically.

Secondly, the South Korean Church, for most part, is under the influence of Western theology, where deification hardly has a place in theological thought and liturgy. The Western forensic concept of justification and sanctification is mainly taught in seminaries and in the Church, while the theology of the Eastern Church is not taught. Furthermore, there is much misunderstanding of the Orthodox Church in South Korea, especially in conservative denominations. Thus, the doctrine of deification can be regarded simply as heretic teaching, or as an Eastern Orthodox doctrine which they cannot accept.

The application of the doctrine of deification to the South Korean context thus has this advantage and, at the same time, disadvantage. That people have heard the term anyhow can be to its merit, but that people mainly have a negative image of the doctrine can make its application difficult. Therefore, changing the social and political connotation of the term for it to become acceptable in Christian language, and to introduce it into Eastern theology without bias, should precede the application of deification in the liturgy of the South Korean Church.

6.2.2 South African Context: Deification and Theology of Perfection of Andrew Murray

As we have observed, many studies on deification from each era by many prominent theologians such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin have been contributed up to the 20th century. One of the theologians we have not dealt with is Jonathan Edwards, but studies on Edwards in terms of deification have been conducted by several scholars in the U.S.A.²⁵² As we have seen in the study of theologians from the early Church to the contemporary era, it, in many cases, is not important that one uses the terminology of deification directly. Rather, we examined whether they considered the idea of deification and resolved it in their own language, whether as union, participation, divinisation, justification, sanctification, or glorification. Edwards also did not use the term directly, but the idea of deification is clearly expressed in his writings, according to Strobel, McClymond and Holmes (Strobel 2012:260).

Thus, study regarding deification in the theology of Andrew Murray, one of the most outstanding theologians from South Africa, would also contribute much to the recent research on deification. Murray's theology on the "perfection of Christians", especially, can be compared to the idea of deification.

We can recognise the same or a similar idea to deification in the book *Be Perfect* in particular. First of all, the perfection of Christians, like deification, is God's intention for His people, and it is our duty as well as our hope (Murray 1894:6):

[T]here can be only one opinion as to the fact that God asks and expects His children to be perfect with Him; that He promises it as His own work; and that Scripture speaks of some as having been perfect before Him, and having served Him with a perfect heart. Scripture speaks of a Perfection that is at once our duty and our hope.

As deification is initiated by God from the Incarnation, perfection is also from God's perfection

²⁵² For example, Strobel (2012), McClymond (2004), and Holmes (2001). For the opposite side of the argument, see Caldwell III (2006).

(1894:39ff); we can be perfect by participation in Jesus' perfection (1894:40) as we are deified by participation in the divine nature;²⁵³ Murray uses the term 'union with God' as the synonym to perfection, as it is another expression of deification (1894:51).²⁵⁴ Yet, he refused the perfection of the body (1894:8): "Perfection, as the highest aim of what God in His great power would do for us, is something so Divine, Spiritual, and Heavenly, that it is only the soul that yields itself very tenderly to the leading of the Holy Spirit that can hope to know its blessedness". Thus, for him, being perfect means to have a "perfect heart". This differs from the teaching of deification in that deification includes the deification of the body from the eschatological perspective.

6.3 IS THE TENSION RESOLVED? BEING AND BECOMING

"Is" is always "is". One can become other thing, but will remain as one's being. No being can become God. The being of God cannot be created. Only God is always God. Gregory of Nyssa says: "God is a Father. It follows that He is what He is from eternity, for He did not become, but *is* a Father: in God that which was, both is and will be" (*Against Eunomius*, *NPNF 2nd* vol.5:144). Tertullian also emphasises that "God is in no danger of losing His own state and condition" (*On the Flesh of Christ*, *ANF* vol.3:523). Only the Being of God is not becoming. Although He became a man, His becoming is not about changing His Being. God *is* not man but He *became* man, man *is* not God but we are *deified*. In His becoming, we can take our becoming. As the Son participated in human nature, we participate in the divine nature. Origen as such distinguishes God with and without the article "the" to ensure that human deification is not in essence (*Commentary on John*, *ANF* vol.10:323).

We participate in the divine relationship of the Triune God, in which we are able to encounter God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. In this participation, a being is not absorbed, or disappears, or is mixed with God's being, but maintains its own being. Maximus the Confessor

²⁵³ "God is Love, who lives, not for Himself, but in the energy of an infinite life, makes His creatures, as far as they can possibly receive it, partakers of His perfection".

²⁵⁴ "In union with Him, the love of God is perfected in us, and we are perfected in love".

explained this with *perichoresis*. Fiddes depicts this with the figurative image of the round dance, and the African aphorism *Ubuntu* is delivered by Cilliers as having an appropriate meaning for those conceptions. However, although they are real and effective, it is to be assured that the participation and the relationship cannot penetrate God's own being. Palamas makes sure of this with the distinction between the divine essence and the energies, whereby many theologians could clarify the issue.

We turn back to the meaning of *Ubuntu*, the African aphorism which can be translated as "I am because you are" as we finish this dissertation. The Son *is* because The Father and the Holy Spirit *is*, the Father *is* because the Son and the Holy Spirit *is*, the Holy Spirit *is* because the Father and the Son *is*, and at the same time, we *are* because God *is*.²⁵⁵ We believe and confess that all this becoming happens in our worship on Sunday until His everlasting Kingdom comes in glory.

²⁵⁵ Not *vice versa*, however.

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