

12. *Join Me In Becoming God*

The statement “Join Me in Becoming God” is one of a dozen short sentences used in meditation by Carthusian monks who live in an isolated valley near Grenoble in the French Alps. They live a very austere life, and “Join me in becoming God” distills the Christian life as understood by the monks. We learn from them that, essentially, the monks are not there to renounce nor to suffer; they are not there to learn nor be enlightened; they are not there to be righteous nor to judge. Instead, they are there to join with Jesus in becoming God.⁹³

If that is true, that the essence of the Christian life is to become God, then let me make a provocative statement: “Join me in becoming God” could be the best opening statement for any Unity minister this Sunday morning. Further, the essence of our life as metaphysical Christians is not enlightenment, healing, or prosperity. It is not community, forgiveness, or social justice. Certainly not morality or righteousness or judgment. We do not work for peace.

In fact, like the monks, we do not work at all. What we have, at its essence, is not a work but rather an invitation from Christ to “join me in becoming God.” To the extent that it is work, we consider the work to be a work of

consciousness. For that reason, “join me in becoming God” should resonate with many in the Unity movement.

What is deification?

“The Son of God became man so that we might become God” — Athanasius.

Take a close look at this statement by St. Athanasius, the founder of Christian monasticism. Note that it is a “so that” statement about the incarnation of Jesus. “So that” statements are powerful because they do not stress what is happening so much as they stress its impact⁹⁴. According to Athanasius, God incarnated *so that* we might become God.

What is important is not so much the *nature* of the incarnation — how two natures are combined into one person or how Jesus could be fully human and fully God. Instead, what is important is the *impact* of the incarnation — how we might become God *because God had become incarnated as one of us*. In theology, the idea that God became one of us so that we might become God is known as deification, or its Greek equivalent, *theosis*.

Deification is found in the writings of the best-known early church theologians: Clement, Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, and even Augustine. It was an accepted Christian doctrine in the Catholic church until

⁹³ *Join Me In Becoming God*. <https://www.truthunity.net/unity-and-christianity/join-me-in-becoming-god>

⁹⁴ Justo González, *Creation: Rediscovering a Misunderstood Doctrine*, <https://biologos.org/resources/creation-rediscovering-a-misunderstood-doctrine>

the ecumenical councils of the fourth century established limits on what could be considered orthodox doctrine. Even so, deification has remained popular in much of Christianity and is still highly regarded in the Eastern Orthodox church and other early branches, such as George Lamsa's Church of the East. It may surprise many, but deification remains part of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching.

"Human beings have a spark of divinity within" —
Unity.

Although the teaching of human deification remains an accepted doctrine in the mainstream church, many people struggle with the idea that humans could exhibit an inner, divine nature, at least in this life. It is an idea that, for many, is too idealistic. That is why most Christians think it is suspiciously radical that God became human so that humans might join in becoming God. I have never heard it taught in a Sunday homily, but, as we see in the Carthusian monastery, deification continues to be accepted in monastic settings and metaphysical religions, such as Unity.

If one thing genuinely represents metaphysical Christianity, it is that metaphysical Christians stress how we might become God. So here we are in Unity: we declare the most unorthodox of doctrines, that human beings have a spark of divinity within, and we find inspiration in the most orthodox of places, a monastery of Carthusian monks, who, by works of consciousness,

try to kindle that divinity into a complete image and likeness of God. Go figure.

We have agency, not autonomy.

I would stress to our Evangelical colleagues that the biblical basis for deification is found in Psalms 82:6, "You are gods, all of you are sons of the Most High" and in Second Peter 1:4, "he has granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature."

These passages clarify some misunderstandings about deification. First, while it is true that we may become partakers of God, we can do so because we are children of the Most High. That is to say that deification does not replace God and is not a cover for promoting non-theism. Second, deification is an eternal (timeless) process. As Christ is eternally begotten of the Father, so is our deification. Third, we are *partakers* of the divine nature, not *possessors* of the divine nature. We have agency, not autonomy.

Depravity or deification?

It may be that Unity and other metaphysical forms of Christianity have overstepped some of these limits in order to teach and promote human deification. Religious movements overstep theological boundaries all the time. But I would ask those in Evangelical and Catholic circles to consider which is the more significant error: to over-emphasize human deification or to under-emphasize human deification? What has been the spiritual cost of

teaching the total depravity of human beings? What has been the social and psychological cost of declaring that most of humanity is destined for hell?

The central theme of this book, as I say in the *Introduction* and the *Conclusion*, is: *Metaphysical Christianity is an authentic and distinct branch of the historic Christian church and that we are entering into the 3rd era in Christian history, which one day will be known as the Metaphysical Christian era.*

One characteristic of this new era will be a belief that Christ is incarnated in humanity so that we may *experience* joining Jesus in becoming God. Is now not the time to raise humankind so that we, individually and collectively, join with Jesus and enter into our rightful image and likeness of the 2nd person of the Trinity?

13. *Knowing Our Christ Within*

When people looking for a better way come to check out your church, they want to know: What do you teach about Jesus? We can respond with one of four possible answers.⁹⁵ The first two answers are from traditional Christianity and are known as low Christology and high Christology. The third answer is a classic metaphysical answer. The fourth, my choice, begins with metaphysical understanding but then expands to embrace the mystical experience. I hope this is helpful for you.

Answer 1: Jesus is raised up and appointed (a Christology from below).

Immediately coming up from the water, he saw the heavens parting, and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. A voice came out of the sky, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11)

The Church's earliest answer to questions about Jesus drew from Judaism, which recognized that from time to time, God raised up and appointed prophets, such as Moses and Elijah. Jesus, according to this tradition, was

⁹⁵ *What do you teach about Jesus?* <https://www.truthunity.net/unity-and-christianity/what-do-you-teach-about-jesus>