

Chapter 2

Three Times Three is ONE

The three approaches to truth yield three experiences of Ultimate Reality. Yet it is also true that these three experiences are parts of one experience. Further, the Reality being experienced is One. Indeed, "ONENESS" can be another word for Ultimate Reality. This is the witness of all three of the basic monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is a witness found in most mystical East-Asian religions as well. Even primitive polytheistic religions reflect an awareness of an unifying ONENESS that flows through the manyness of their Awe-filled experiences.

In Christian theology, The Awesome, The Awed, and The Awe are viewed as the three major aspects of this ONENESS. This threeness is not a division either in Reality or in our experience of Reality. This threeness is a division created by the human mind. The finite mind of Christian theologizing has discriminated three aspects of the one experience of infinite ONENESS. We might say that ONENESS has three faces. Human intelligence reflects on one experience but looks at that experience in three ways and thereby sees three different faces of that one experience. These faces, sometimes called "persons," are what Christians (those who know what they are talking about) are pointing to with the symbol of the Trinity. In the following chapters I aim to make this assertion more plausible.

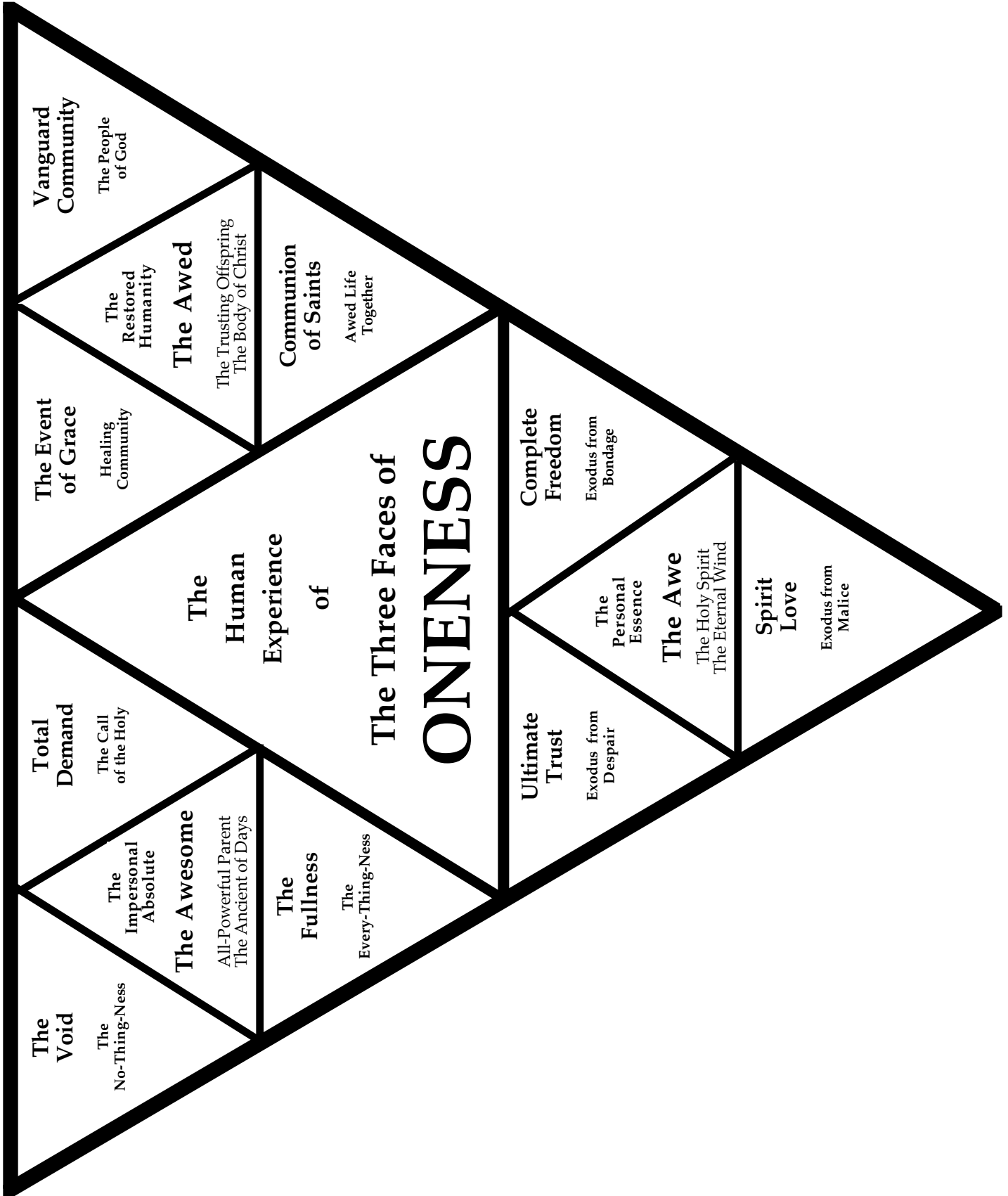
Furthermore, the ever curious theological mind can discriminate aspects of each of these three faces of the ONENESS. The chart on the next page depicts **nine major aspects** of the human experience of ONENESS.

Among all of these nine aspects, the easiest to understand are the states of Awe. In the Christian heritage, especially Paul and Luther, the most important overall categories of Awe are Trust, Love, and Freedom. Other aspects of Awe are pointed to with words like: Rest, Peace, Tranquility, Joy, Bliss, Hope, and so forth. In the following triangular chart, I am suggesting that all aspects of **Awe** are aspects of **Ultimate Trust**, **Spirit Love**, and **Complete Freedom**. In other words, I intend these three categories to be inclusive categories that include all the aspects of Awe that the human mind can discriminate.

Similarly, the three inclusive aspects of **The Awesome** I have named **The Void**, **The Fullness**, and **The Total Demand**. And the three inclusive aspects of **The Awed** are named **The Event of Grace**, **The Communion of Saints**, and **The Vanguard Community**.

The nine-fold triangular model on the next page shows the relations to one another of these nine aspects of ONENESS. In breaking down the three to the nine the rational pattern used for the whole Trinity is replicated. Here is a chart that shows these associations.

Approaches to Truth	"It" Approach	"I" Approach	"We" Approach
The Trinity	The Awesome	The Awe	The Awed
The Awesome	<i>The Void</i>	<i>The Fullness</i>	<i>The Total Demand</i>
The Awe	<i>Ultimate Trust</i>	<i>Spirit Love</i>	<i>Complete Freedom</i>
The Awed	<i>The Event of Grace</i>	<i>Communion of Saints</i>	<i>Vanguard Community</i>



This nine-fold triangular model can be further divided into a twenty-seven-fold triangular model. A suggestion for such a model is shown on the next page. At the lower point of this triangle, Spirit Love has been further divided into the Affirmation of Self, the Enchantment with Being, and the Compassion for Others. These are intended to be inclusive categories for Spirit love and arranged in congruence with the whole triangular model.

Similarly, each of the nine basic subparts has been subdivided into its three inclusive aspects. For example, Vanguard Community can be quite meaningfully illuminated with these three inclusive aspects: Healing Witness, Shamanic Presence, and Pioneering Service. In this book, I will not attempt to describe each of these twenty seven aspects of ONENESS nor to explain why they are located where they are on the chart. This is a temporal model of our experience of the Infinite. I am sure that I and others will improve this chart in the future. Nevertheless, a modest amount of contemplation of this temporal chart can reveal the richness of this Trinitarian design. Also, one can imagine a triangle with 81 subparts of ONENESS. Such further breakdown could, in principle, be extended endlessly. This is a witness to the truth that this sort of charting is pointing toward our experience of Infinite Reality.

In this book, I want to illuminate only the first nine aspects of ONENESS. I will explore each of them with selections of great paragraphs from the four 20th Century theologians mentioned in the introduction. Each of the nine chapter titles of Part Two refers to one of the nine major aspects on the above triangle.

The order in which I will discuss these nine aspects will take the following pattern:

In the first three chapters of Part Two, I will discuss the upper left aspects of the three master triangles: the Awesome, the Awe and the Awed. These three, **The Void, Ultimate Trust, and The Event of Grace**, I have called "**The Awakening Trinity.**"

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of Part Two, I will discuss the lower aspects of the three master triangles: the Awesome, the Awe and the Awed. These three, **The Fullness, Spirit Love, and Communion of Saints**, I have called "**The Presence Trinity.**"

In the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters of Part Two, I will discuss the upper right aspects of the three master triangles: the Awesome, the Awe and the Awed. These three, **The Total Demand, Complete Freedom, and Vanguard Community**, I have called "**The Action Trinity.**"

All these abstractions need not make total sense at this point. But as the next nine chapters unfold, I hope that the reader will become more clear about how this Trinitarian mathematics can illuminate the wonder of our actual lives.

