

PAULINE ADOPTION AND T. F. TORRANCE'S DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

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The particularity of the incarnation and resurrection forms the basis for the ongoing particularity of the redeemed of the church, while simultaneously eradicating the binary categories that inscribe hierarchies in the old age. As a metaphor, adoption confirms the continuity of personal identity in this way, which results in dignification of the embodied particularity of individuals in Christ.

In his short work, *When Christ Comes and Comes Again*, T. F. Torrance is emphatic in his exposition of the *individuality* of Jesus. Here he states, "It is not with God in general that we have to do in the Christian faith, but with the personal God who comes in this particular individual, Jesus, so that in and through Jesus we are each summoned to meet with God individually, and to hear from Him the Word of His Love."¹ Torrance then goes further in claiming that Jesus not only came as an individual to individuals in the incarnation, but this same *individual* Jesus will come again, and "each one of us will have to meet Him individually face to face."² In both *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* and in his longer work, *Incarnation*, Torrance is primarily concerned with the link between Christ's incarnation and soteriology. Yet the shape of his doctrine of the incarnation raises important questions regarding the nature of a redeemed individual *qua individual*. Is Christ's individuality and

¹ T. F. Torrance, *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957), 36.

² *Ibid.*



particularity a model and a basis for the ongoing particularity of those in Christ? Or does Christ's individuality supplant the individuality of the redeemed thereby eradicating their individual differences? Further, can Torrance's doctrine of the incarnation provide a way through the exegetical maze of metaphors in Galatians 3:28–4:7, which itself has recently become a hotly debated portion of the Pauline corpus in regard to Paul's anthropology?³

Two dominant streams of Pauline studies take very different tacks for interpreting Paul's assertion that there is no longer "Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female" (Galatians 3:28). First, interpreters within the "Apocalyptic School," which tends to emphasize the discontinuity of this present age and the age to come, argue for the eradication of the binaries that characterize the old age. However, some within the apocalyptic school also, as I will show below, seem to argue for an eradication of the self. In contrast, interpreters within the "Paul within Judaism School" read Galatians 3:28 as an affirmation of Paul's insistence on pneumatic transformation. This emphasis, as I will argue below, reifies the binaries of the old age, particularly in regard to ethnicity, and also seemingly eradicates marks of differentiation in the age to come. I contend that Paul's adoption metaphor in Galatians 4 provides us with a third way forward, because this metaphor stubbornly insists on the persistence of the self/subject as a differentiated individual while simultaneously undermining the binary hierarchies Paul includes in Galatians 3:28. Moreover, the nascent Christology of Paul's creedal language in Galatians 4:4–5 affirms Christ's particular identity, and holds up Christ's particularity as both the means for, and the model of, the deliverance and dignification of embodied and particular individuals who have received adoption *in Christ*. Paul thus does not envisage reifying existing hierarchies in service of protecting the Jewishness of Jesus, nor does he envisage the obliteration of the marks of individuality and differentiation. Instead, the particularity of Christ's flesh dignifies the multitude of particularities and individual differences expressed by

³ Research on the nature and impact of metaphor is flourishing in a range of scholarly disciplines, but particularly in cognitive linguistics. For an overview of this research see Raymond Gibbs Jr., ed. *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For cognitive approaches to metaphor see also George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), idem. *Metaphors We Live By*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

those who are adopted in Christ. In the age of the Spirit then, marks of individuality will no longer be bound by hierarchical binary structures, but instead these marks will participate in a “symphony of difference”⁴ wherein individuality and differentiation is expressed in familial and interdependent bonds.

Adoption as the Key to a Mediating View

In a recent article, John Barclay has helpfully suggested that the self’s identity in Christ is “a form of identity that is radically contingent on the creative action of God.”⁵ Barclay grounds his assertion in his exegesis of Paul’s use of *huiiothesia* (adoption) in Galatians and in Romans. In Barclay’s view, through “adoption they [those in Christ] do not develop a natural or inherent sonship status but receive it through a divine initiative that is beyond their control and outside their choice.”⁶ Barclay further states that “being an adopted child of God is not a higher identity on the same scale [as ethnicity, class, gender], but an identity of a different sort, which reconfigures the significance of those other identities but does not erase them.”⁷ The crux of Barclay’s argument is his insistence that the God-given identity brought about through adoption is qualitatively different from the ethnic, religious, or gendered categories mentioned in Galatians 3:28, because “to be a child of God is to be suspended from a divine decision.”⁸ Thus for Barclay, divine kinship in Paul is relentlessly theological.

Barclay gives an elegant solution for how universal and particular identities can co-exist non-competitively in the body of Christ in the present age, but I would like to press his argument further. Barclay’s exegesis of the *huiiothesia* metaphors rightly underscores their capacity to gift a new identity to an adopted son. However,

⁴ J. Kameron Carter used this term in a personal conversation about Pauline anthropology, and I am indebted to his articulation of a covenantal reading of Christ’s flesh in the reading of Galatians 3–4 I present below; see his *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

⁵ John Barclay, “An Identity Received From God: The Theological Configuration of Paul’s Kinship Discourse,” *Early Christianity* 8, no. 3 (2017): 356.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 370.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 368.

these metaphors also contain an interesting dialectic of continuity and discontinuity that might shed further light on the nature of the self who passes from slavery in this present evil age into sonship in the age to come, which Barclay's article does not treat. As an eschatological act, the implications of adoption must be considered alongside resurrection, which for Paul is an embodied and particular existence beyond the binaries of Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female. Significantly, Paul places adoption and redemption of the body side by side in Romans 8:23, which strongly suggests that adoption and resurrection should be considered together. Thus it is not only necessary to countenance universality and particularity as they are currently experienced in Christ, but also to consider if and how individual and embodied particularity persists in the age to come, or following Torrance, "when Christ comes again."

As a metaphor, adoption (*huiiothesia*) is well-suited to underscoring the continuity of the self who passes from the present evil age into the age of the Spirit, and to eradicating Paul's binary categories. The practice of adoption that Paul would have known presupposes both relational discontinuity and the persistence of personal identity. Paul's use of *huiiothesia* in Galatians 4:5 is trading on the Roman practice of adoption, which enabled fathers to create sons by decree rather than by circumstance or birth.⁹ In the Roman Empire, adoption accomplished the legal transfer of a son from one family to another. As far as the law was concerned, an adopted son was a stranger to his natural family so long as he remained in his adoption. An adopted son also became, in the eyes of Roman law, a full and rightful heir to the inheritance of the father, and any of the son's previous debts were cancelled. Thus the practice of adoption rests on strong notions of relational discontinuity, and it likewise assumes that adoption is an effective tool for creating new relational bonds between the adoptive father and his adopted son.

However, this picture of clear-cut discontinuity is slightly complicated by other extant evidence regarding adoption in the Roman world. First, adoption most often occurred between two adult men, so although legally a son experienced discontinuity, adoption most certainly did not entail an eradication of his "old"

⁹ For a fuller discussion of the Roman practice of adoption, see Erin M. Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

personhood, nor did he become an entirely “new person” in his adoption.¹⁰ Significantly, funerary inscriptions of adopted sons record *both* their adopted lineage and their biological lineage.¹¹ The presence of both lineages strongly suggests that the adopted son defined himself in relation to both his biological family and his adoptive family; he did not, and indeed existentially could not, discard his former self. Thus adoption presumes the continuity of the selfhood of the son who undergoes adoption. A son by adoption is able to remember and articulate that he once was a son of *X* but is no longer, and is now a son of *Y*. Yet in both sentences, the subject “he” persists and is, without a doubt, the same person.

Importantly, the relational discontinuity brought about through adoption does not result in the annihilation of the self, but instead results in the self’s transformation through the more complex and hybrid narrative forged by his adoption.¹² This hybrid and multivalent narrative has much in common with the “I” in Paul’s statements in Galatians 2 who has been crucified with Christ, who no longer lives, and yet also lives by the faithfulness of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). The multi-layered, complex narrative of the “I-yet-no-longer-I” is the result of the persistence of the self despite the self’s relational discontinuity with sin and the law (Galatians 2:19), and this same self’s experience of new relational bonds with Christ (2:20–21).

¹⁰ *Pace* Barclay who argues, “There was nothing “fictive” about adoption: the legal procedure *created* a new person in the sense that from henceforth the adopted son was in every respect the son and heir of the father” (“An Identity Received From God,” 363, *emph. orig.*). Barclay is right to say that adoption created new kinship ties, but he goes too far in claiming that the legal procedure *creates* a new person. The language of “creation” is misleading, and disregards the continuity of selfhood in the adopted son.

¹¹ For examples of Greek and Roman epigraphical evidence of adoption see Mario Serge, *Iscrizioni di Cos* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2007), no. 854; Peter Herrmann, *New Documents from Lydia* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 31-32, 64; Marie-France Auzépy, “Campagne de prospection 2007 de la mission Marmara,” *Anatolia Antiqua* 15 (2007): 342-43; Hasan Malay, and Marijana Ricl, “Some Funerary Inscriptions from Lydia,” *EA* 39 (2006): 71 no. 45; Klaus Hallof, ed., *Inscriptiones Chii et Sami cum Corassiis Icarique* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), no. 837, 838; Christiane Kunst, *Römische Adoption: Zur Strategie einer Familienorganisation* (Frankfurter althistorische Beiträge 10, Hennef: Marthe Clauss, 2005), 253-57.

¹² See also Barclay’s argument that the multiple identities are non-competitive because they are qualitatively different (“An Identity Received From God,” 370-372).

Although Paul undoubtedly evokes the Roman practice of adoption in Galatians 4:5,¹³ there are important differences between Paul's evocation of *huiiothesia* in the text and the practice itself. First, unlike in Roman custom which traditionally marked a son's attainment of maturity at *Liberalia* and bestowed upon him the *toga virilis*,¹⁴ in Galatians 4 the Father *appoints* the time of majority (4:2). The Father also sends the Son on a mission to make more sons, which in a human practice of adoption would have been nonsensical, since the point of adoption was to secure a single heir to whom a *paterfamilias* would pass his *patria potestas*. Furthermore, Paul's analogy begins with an underage natural-born heir, and then in a shocking turn this heir receives "adoption" by the Father.¹⁵ Of course, a natural son has no need of adoption, which makes Paul's inclusion of *huiiothesia* all the more surprising. In the text, the sons' adoption is secured by the Father sending his Son who was born of a woman, and under Torah in order to redeem those enslaved to the "elemental forces of the world" (Galatians 4:3). So although Paul's analogy begins with an underage son, in the end the sons are, in fact, slaves who require emancipation rather than maturity.

In its context, these oddities in Paul's analogy in Galatians 4:1–7 underscore the sharp division between two eras: the age of minority in this present, evil age (Galatians 1:4), and the age of emancipation (Galatians 4:4–5). The sharp juxtaposition of these two eras highlights the prerogative of the Father to bring

¹³ Pace James M. Scott who sees a solely Jewish framework for adoption in Galatians 4:5 (*Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* [WUNT II 48, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992]). For a detailed critique of Scott's argument, see Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 112–147.

¹⁴ See John F. Miller, "Ovid's *Liberalia*," in *Ovid's Fasti: Historical Readings at Its Bimillennium*, ed. Geraldine Herbert-Brown (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 199–224.

¹⁵ Though Scott has argued that the underage heir is a veiled exilic reference, there are numerous difficulties with this solution. First, the "heirs" in verse 29 undoubtedly reference Paul's gentile audience and it is unlikely that there is a shift in referent from 3:29 to 4:1. Second, although Scott has attempted to identify the *epitropoi* and the *oikonomoi* with the Egyptian slave masters, the more likely resonance is with figures in a Roman household. Third, although it is possible that there is a shift in referent between "those under the law/ we (Jews) who receive adoption," and "since you are sons," it is unlikely since Paul's whole point seems to revolve around the gentiles receiving Abrahamic lineage apart from ethnicity, which is precisely what adoption does. For a fuller discussion, see Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 156–162.

about the adoption of believers through the mission of the Son. However, although there is certainly discontinuity between the ages, Galatians 4 also emphasizes continuity in the determinative actions of the Father who brings the sons from one state (slavery) to another (sonship) in Christ. The prominent dialectic of continuity and discontinuity in the analogy comes to a head in “adoption,” which, in a single metaphor, contains Paul’s entire eschatological scheme that underlies his discourse regarding Abraham’s seed in Galatians 3:1–4:7. The adoption metaphor draws attention to the qualitative difference between the two ages, and it sharply underscores that the Galatian believers have been “rescued from the present evil age” where the binaries of Jew/Greek, Slave/Free, and Male/Female structure existence in a series of hierarchical relationships (Galatians 3:28). However, adoption also points beyond the temporal discontinuity to an overarching and eternal continuity of identity.

Pauline Anthropology: Two Current and Divergent Streams

In regard to Galatians 3:28, a verse fraught with implications for theological anthropology, there are two major streams of Pauline scholarship that can be fruitfully brought into conversation with Torrance’s doctrine of the incarnation: the Apocalyptic School,¹⁶ and the Paul within Judaism School.¹⁷ The Apocalyptic School and the Paul within Judaism School have likewise reached very different conclusions regarding the function of Paul’s adoption metaphor in Galatians 4:1–7, and these conclusions are inextricably linked to their exegesis of Paul’s binary categories in Galatians 3:28. After briefly examining several treatments of this passage, I will put Paul’s adoption metaphor in conversation with Torrance’s doctrine of the incarnation

¹⁶ See, e.g., Susan Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul’s Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017); Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds., *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016); Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (Oxford: OUP, 2018); Paula Fredricksen, *Paul the Pagan’s Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); Caroline Johnson Hodge, *“If Sons, Then Heirs”: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).

in order to draw out some further implications about the nature of the eschatological community Paul envisions in Galatians 3:28.

If, as I have argued above, adoption presupposes the persistence of the self and also presupposes relational discontinuity, how then should we speak of individuals who have received adoption in Christ? My argument will thus proceed as follows: first, I will argue that neither the Apocalyptic School nor the Paul within Judaism School adequately account for the continuity between Christ's incarnate body "according to the flesh" and his resurrected body (Romans 1:3-4; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49), and therefore also do not sufficiently account for the persistence of embodied individuals and their distinctive identities in Paul's age of the Spirit. Second, I will argue that Torrance's insistence on Christ's own particularity in the eschaton provides a model for articulating the ongoing embodied particularity of those who have received adoption *in Christ*. Third, I will argue that an anthropology and ecclesiology consistent with Paul's Christology must embrace, dignify, and celebrate particularity in a way that undermines rather than reinscribes the binary hierarchies of this present age.

Sharp Discontinuity according to the Apocalyptic School

In keeping with their emphasis on the radical discontinuity between the present age and the age to come, interpreters in the Apocalyptic School likewise tend to emphasize the discontinuity that a person "in Christ" has with her former identity. Though articulated in various nuances, interpreters in the Apocalyptic School broadly agree that in some sense, an individual's previous identity ceases to exist, and instead is replaced or supplanted with Christ's own identity. For example, in his commentary on Galatians 3:28, Martinus De Boer remarks that in Christ "the ethnic/religious/cultural distinction between Jew and Gentile (just as the social distinction between slave and free person, and the sexual distinction between male and female) gives way to what amounts to a new humanity, defined by Christ."¹⁸ Even more colorfully, J. Louis Martyn remarks of Paul's inclusion of Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female in Galatians 3:28, "to pronounce the nonexistence of these opposites is to announce nothing less than the end of the cosmos." Martyn

¹⁸ Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: WJK, 2011), 244.

continues by arguing that “in Christ,” religious, social, and sexual pairs of opposites are not replaced by equality, but rather by a newly created unity. . . . [P]ersons who were Jews and persons who were gentiles have been made into a new unity that is so fundamentally and irreducibly identified with Christ himself as to cause Paul to use the masculine form of the word ‘one.’ Members of the church are not one *thing*; they are one *person*.”¹⁹ Thus for Martyn, in Christ believers have been “stripped of their old identity” and have acquired “a new identity that lies beyond ethnic, social, and sexual distinctions.”²⁰ This, to be sure, is a very different reading of the passage than Barclay’s model of reconfiguration, though one could argue that Martyn’s conclusions more directly reflect Paul’s stark insistence that the binary marks of the old age (Galatians 3:28) have come to an end.

As seen above, Martyn’s exegesis of this passage, which has been foundational for interpreters in the Apocalyptic School, is predicated upon a sharp and definitive break between the present evil age and the age to come; the nonexistence of the binaries signals the *end* of the cosmos. Moreover, Martyn’s view also seems to suggest that the self’s ontology is bound up in the binaries of the present evil age, which imbues the categories of Jew/Greek, slave/free, and male/female with ontic significance.²¹ If it is the case, as Martyn argues, that the categories are “non-existent,” then the individuals who populated those categories likewise cease to exist, and new individuals are created “in Christ.” For Martyn, the only identity that remains in Christ is Christ’s own identity. Ethnicity, social position, and gender, are all peeled off like old clothes upon entering the waters of baptism (Galatians 3:27), and the believers emerge re-clothed with Christ himself. Thus, at

¹⁹ J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 377.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 374.

²¹ On the problem with ascribing ontological value to race, see Carter, *Race: A Theological Account*, 157–193. Carter critiques Cone for being beholden to “ontological blackness,” which “is the tendency toward racial reification,” and “makes race . . . the exhaustive principle of identity.” Rather than reproducing the “aberrant theology of modern racial reasoning,” Carter wishes to go beyond Cone in order to identify “what makes whiteness a *theological problem* (*ibid.*, 159, *emph. mine*). In doing so, Carter denies race an ontological status, which makes his theological account particularly well-suited to examining Paul’s similar denial of race’s ontic status in Galatians 3:28.

least in his exegesis of Galatians 3:28, it is unclear how, if at all, Martyn envisages the individuation of believers in Christ.

Although it is clear that Paul envisages radical changes “in Christ,” especially in regard to reimagining social, ethnic, and gender hierarchies, the appearance of *huiiothesia* (adoption to sonship) in Galatians 4:5 does not naturally imply the “stripping” or eradication of the self and the creation of an entirely “new person” who is radically discontinuous with the old self of the present age. Instead, as I will show below, the adoption metaphor is better understood as pointing to a transformation that is analogous to Christ’s own in his humiliated and glorified state. In adoption (*huiiothesia*), there is continuity and persistence of the “I” who undergoes this transformation. Thus, in my view, Martyn’s reading of Galatians 3:28 throws the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. His insistence on sharp discontinuity and new creation brings to light an important Pauline motif; however, it is not the *self* that is eradicated and reconstituted, but rather it is the binaries of the old age in which the self participates and by which the self is oppressed and enslaved that are, as Martyn observes, pronounced to be “non-existent.” Instead of obliterating the particularity of the self, as I will argue below, individuation and particularity in Christ are multiplied rather than reduced, which simultaneously undermines the hierarchical binaries Paul lists in Galatians 3:28 that characterize this present age.

Sharp Discontinuity according to the Paul within Judaism School

In an altogether different stream of Pauline interpretation, there has been a recent trend toward interpreting Paul’s use of the Abrahamic blessing in Galatians 3 as pointing to Paul’s belief that the reception of the Spirit brings about a substantive, ontological change in his gentile believers because Paul’s conception of *pneuma* is substantive.²² Though the arguments from this stream of Pauline studies differ

²² This stream of Pauline interpretation is heavily influenced by Stoic conceptions of *pneuma*, especially as explained in the foundational work of Troels Engberg-Pedersen: *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000). This line of reasoning has subsequently been picked up by Johnson Hodge (*If Sons, Then Heirs*), and Thiessen (*Paul and the Gentile Problem*).

dramatically in their subject and substance, they too underscore a sharp discontinuity between the fleshly identities of Paul's gentile believers, and their transformed spiritual bodies in the resurrection. This line of interpretation reifies the binary categories of Galatians 3:28, particularly in regard to ethnicity, because the primary concern is to underscore that this transformation is something needed by *gentile* flesh rather than by *all* flesh.

It is increasingly common to hear interpreters within this stream of Pauline studies speak of the reception of the Spirit as the basis for a qualitative change in the post-mortem bodies of gentile believers. Representative of this line of thinking, Matthew Thiessen argues that the post-mortem existence shared by those who are Abraham's seed entails "astralization or angelification or even deification."²³ Thiessen further states, "Paul understands the promises to Abraham and to his seed to mean that they would become like the stars in a qualitative sense. . . . [T]his promise requires that they would become divine or semi-divine beings like the angels."²⁴ Despite the concern of scholars in this stream of Pauline studies to preserving the distinct ethnic identities of Jews and gentiles, these distinct ethnic identities are only ever discussed in terms of gentile inclusion in the lineage of Abraham.²⁵ According to this line of reasoning, ethnically Jewish flesh has no need for transformation in order to be included Abraham's lineage.

Moreover, interpreters in this stream of Pauline studies do not discuss the persistence (or non-persistence) of ethnic identity in the post-resurrection body. Indeed, in Thiessen's work the astral bodies of the resurrection are only described in terms of their indestructibility and their star-like substance. So it could be that this sort of account of the resurrected body is compatible with the persistence of the embodied self and marks of particularity, but the interpreters pursuing this line of argument do not consider the question. Indeed, the emphasis on the

²³ Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem*, 160.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁵ Barclay makes a similar observation about Caroline Johnson Hodge's work: "The whole point of Pauline theology . . . is not to erase or deny ethnicity, but to reformulate gentile ethnicity in Christ as a form of aggregation or affiliation to Israel, and at the same time to affirm the superiority of Jewish ethnicity, which remains unaffected by the gentile-focused work of Christ" ("An Identity Received From God," 356).

transformation of flesh leads to a sort of post-resurrection “whitewashing” or, more accurately, “star-washing” of bodies that ultimately demeans rather than dignifies gentile flesh, and by extension, belittles the particular, embodied existence of all selves who receive the Spirit in Christ.²⁶ Thus although scholars in this school rightly emphasize the ongoing importance of the Jewishness of Jesus (and of Paul), the shape of their arguments regarding the transformation of gentile flesh essentializes and reifies ethnic and religious hierarchies rather than dismantling them.²⁷

The Shape of Christ’s Incarnational Particularity

The Incarnate and Resurrected Body of Christ in Paul’s Letters

In both the Apocalyptic School and the Paul within Judaism School of Pauline interpretation, eschatology rightly plays a prominent role in the exegesis of key passages. However, neither school looks specifically to Christ’s own eschatological humanity as the foundation for the eschatological humanity of the believers who receive adoption (Galatians 4:5), and neither school considers how Christ, as an embodied and particular person, interacts with the binary categories in Galatians 3:28. Here then, re-centering the discussion on Torrance’s observations regarding *Christ’s* incarnate and resurrected body will provide further clarification of the nature of the eschatological bodies of those who have received adoption in Christ,

²⁶ Hodge and Buell would likely agree that the hierarchical structure is problematic and demeaning to gentile flesh. While they insist that Paul’s use of ethnic language ultimately rank gentiles and Jews in a hierarchical structure, they likewise recognize that this construal is not ideal, “insofar as it structurally subordinates one ethnoracial group to another.” Instead, Hodge and Buell argue that those wishing to combat racism should emphasize “the fluidity and messiness of ethnoracial categories” in Paul (“The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 251).

²⁷ This, I note, is not an unintended consequence, but rather something interpreters within this stream of Pauline studies recognize as a necessary, if somewhat lamentable, component of their interpretation. For example, Hodge and Buell assert, “we read Paul as preserving not simply ethnic differences within Israel but also power differences among its members,” and further assert, “We read Paul as structuring the relations between Judeans and gentiles hierarchically” (“The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 249–250).

and also then on the eschatological self's relationship to the binaries in Galatians 3:28.

It is clear from reading Paul's descriptions of the resurrected Christ that Christ's eschatological body is not devoid of marks of his earthly particularity. Indeed, his particularity and individuality persist from his incarnation through to his resurrection and ascension. As Torrance argues, it is precisely the incarnate Jesus who is raised and who will come again.²⁸ Torrance's descriptions of Christ jibe well with key Pauline texts that describe Christ's glorified body. For example, Paul portrays Christ's crucifixion as positively related to his exaltation (e.g. Galatians 6:17; Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 15:3–4, 38–39, 42–54; 2 Corinthians 13:3–4). Thus Paul can preach "Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:18), and also declare that it was on account of Jesus' death on a cross that God "exalted him beyond measure" (Philippians 2:9). Moreover, there is at least some indication that Jesus' marks of crucifixion persist in his resurrected body (Galatians 6:17; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4). If Christ's distinguishing marks persist into his resurrected state, is Christ's particular identity as a Jew from Nazareth, which is to say his identity as an embodied and particular individual, a necessary part of what it meant for Christ to be human and to *remain* human in his exalted state? If so, are analogous marks of individuality likewise necessary and present for all redeemed humans?

At this point, the question of the persistence of individual identity could well launch this discussion into the realm of metaphysics, but Paul is not dealing with Christ's humanity in the abstractions of either current or ancient discussions of metaphysics.²⁹ Paul's anthropology is not conceptual, it is concrete; what it means to be human is both revealed by and grounded in the person of Jesus. Thus a

²⁸ Torrance, *When Christ Comes and Comes Again*, 25–26.

²⁹ On this point, see also Bruce McCormack's distillation of Barth's Christocentric anthropology. McCormack observes, "if, in order to speak of God in His otherness, we first speak of something else — be it cosmology (as in the ancient world) or anthropology (as in the modern world) — we are doing "metaphysics." . . . [T]he problem with metaphysics in either the ancient or the modern form is that it cannot yield knowledge of the true God (i.e., the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ)" ("Why Should Theology Be Christocentric?: Christology and Metaphysics in Paul Tillich and Karl Barth," *Weslyan Theological Journal* 45, no. 1 (2010): 64).

Pauline anthropology must derive its definition of what it means to be human directly and solely from Christ's own humanity. In Romans 5, Paul calls Adam the *túpos* of Jesus, the one to come (Romans 5:14). The Greek word *túpos* is best understood here to refer to Adam, who is modeled or patterned after Christ, and Christ is, as Barth says, "the *norm* of *all* anthropology."³⁰ Barth continues his exegesis of Romans 5:14 by arguing that

Man's essential and original nature is to be found, therefore, not in Adam but in Christ. In Adam we can only find it prefigured. Adam can therefore be interpreted only in the light of Christ and not the other way around.³¹

This comports well with Paul's similar sentiments in 1 Corinthians 15, which emphasizes the priority of Christ as the "man from heaven" who sets the pattern for the nature of resurrected bodies (1 Corinthians 15:45–49). Thus Paul's theological anthropology begins with Christ rather than with Adam, since Adam's humanity is patterned after Christ (Romans 5:14). It is in Christ's own humanity that true humanity is fully and eschatologically revealed for what it will be in the age to come. Paul makes the shape of eschatological humanity clear when he describes believers as formed from the pattern of Christ in the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:45–49). Thus Christ, who in the *kenosis* becomes in the incarnation fully human, and remains fully human in his death, resurrection, ascension, and Second Coming (Philippians 2:6–11), is the pattern of eschatological humanity to which those in Christ will be conformed, and this must be borne in mind when considering the place of the binaries in Galatians 3:28 in Paul's anthropology. If Paul sees Christ's humanity as the pattern for those in Christ, what then are the implications for Pauline anthropology for Christ being, as Torrance claims, an *individual*? Indeed, what features of Christ's embodied existence persist from his pre- to post-resurrected and ascended human existence, and how do these features fit with the binaries Paul mentions in 3:28?

³⁰ Karl Barth, *Christ and Adam*, trans. T. A. Smail (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 14 (emph. orig).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

Torrance's "Individual Christ" and the Ramifications for "Individuals" in Christ

Not only is Torrance concerned to clearly affirm that the incarnate Jesus is the self-same Jesus who will come again, Torrance also insists that Christ be understood as an *individual*.³² I note here that Torrance is not concerned to give a philosophical defense of personhood, or indeed even of what he means when he speaks of Christ as an "individual."³³ However, Torrance does make several statements within the course of his explication of the incarnation that point toward his assumption that Jesus' individual and particular, *embodied* identity is a *necessary* entailment of his incarnation. In his consideration of the meaning of flesh, Torrance states that Jesus "became a particular man . . . that is the way he became flesh, by becoming one particular man."³⁴ Moreover, Torrance's explanation of Jesus as a particular man includes Jesus' religious and covenantal (ethnic) identity.³⁵ In his discussion of Jesus' identification with Israel, Torrance states, "When at last God came into the world he came as a Jew."³⁶ Torrance goes on to explain that the *egeneto sarx* (the word became flesh) is a "*completed event*" that has taken place "once and for all," but is "also a historical event, a dynamic event, a real happening in the time of this world which is coincident with the whole historical life of Jesus."³⁷ Torrance understands the *egeneto sarx* as forever joining together the historical moment of the incarnation with the eternal plane of existence, with the result that the entirety of Jesus' life, from his birth to his resurrection "is also

³² Torrance, *When Christ Comes and Comes Again*, 36.

³³ T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 50–52.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁵ I include "ethnic" here reluctantly, since theologians working in theologies of race are right to problematize the notion of Jesus having "ethnic" or "racial" flesh. Jesus' identity as a Jew is better understood as a covenantal identity, which simultaneously picks out a particular people group while undermining notions of racial hierarchies since Israel's identity is theological, not ethnic, and furthermore, ethnic identity has no ontological status; see Carter, *Race: A Theological Account*, 11–36.

³⁶ Torrance, *Incarnation*, 43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

happening with in the eternal Word.”³⁸ Moreover, through Jesus we who are contingent historical beings are now capable of being “in communion with the eternal.”³⁹ It is key for Torrance that the eternal Word has been joined with the *historical* Jesus, which is to say the *particular* Jesus. Thus Torrance affirms that Jesus the eternal Word not only *became* flesh, but *remains* enfleshed in his particularity in his exaltation. In Torrance’s view, Jesus was not merely born a Jew, but “to this very day Jesus remains a Jew while still the eternal Son of God.”⁴⁰

Before applying Torrance’s insights regarding the significance of Jesus’ particularity to Galatians 3–4, it is necessary to further clarify the terms “individual” and “particularity” as they refer to Jesus, and thus by extension, how they apply to those in Christ. We have seen above that for Paul, Jesus is the *týpos* after which eschatological humanity is patterned. As Torrance observes, in the incarnation as it is described in Galatians 4:4–5, the eternal Son enters into humanity as he is born of a woman; he is enfleshed and embodied. Moreover, other Pauline texts show that Jesus remains an embodied human in his resurrection and exaltation (1 Corinthians 15:45–49; Philippians 2:7–11). If then, for Paul, Jesus is a human par excellence, then for Paul it follows that to be human necessarily entails embodiment.⁴¹ Human particularity follows necessarily from embodiment in Paul.⁴² If Paul’s anthropology is embodied, then, as Torrance notes, it is also particular. The human called “Jesus” is this particular human (with this particular body), and not that other human (or that

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁴¹ In several places Paul seems to envision a disembodied intermediate state (e.g., 2 Cor 5:1–10; Phil 1:20–25), but the language he uses to describe such a state as temporary and, in some sense, “unnatural” or “incomplete.” A person without a body is “unclothed” shows that human personhood is retained without a body, but it likewise indicates that the body is not an incidental or accidental feature of human personhood (2 Cor 5:4–5). Significantly, in Philippians 2, Paul’s statement that Jesus “took the form of a human” meant embodiment (Phil 2:7).

⁴² Though I note here that the Son is “particular” (i.e., differentiated) prior to his embodiment in the incarnation. Thus prior to the incarnation, particularity existed in the Godhead apart from embodiment, but this divine particularity of the processions is not identical to the embodied particularity proper to Jesus’ humanity in the incarnation.

body). Jesus's incarnate body had distinguishable features, and the exalted body of Jesus retains at least some of these distinguishable features (e.g., Jesus is still described in masculine terms, and he still bears the marks of his crucifixion). If Jesus is, to use Torrance's descriptor, an "individual" who was and remains embodied and particular in his exaltation, then we must conclude that both embodiment and particularity are, in fact, proper to Jesus' human nature in the eschaton. If they are proper to Jesus' eschatological humanity, then they are also proper to eschatological persons *in Christ*.

Taking a cue from Torrance's doctrine of the incarnation, a close examination of Galatians 3:28 within its larger framework of 3:15–4:7 will show that Jesus's own particularity in his humanity is properly understood as affirming and dignifying the particularity of all individuals. Just as Jesus retains his human particularity in his post-resurrection and ascension state, so too does redemption in Christ dignify the individual *qua* individual who receives adoption from the Father. In a way analogous to Christ's own exaltation, the community depicted in Galatians 3:28–4:7 has experienced a transformation that *dignifies* individual, particular, and embodied persons within the community of Galatian believers while simultaneously undermining the binaries of ethnic, social, and gender hierarchies that Paul lists in Galatians 3:28. However, this claim needs to be further explained and defended, and further clarification is also required for how "the self" is constituted in Paul. Then it must be further shown that the metaphors Paul uses to depict the believers' life in Christ in Galatians 3:28–4:7 likewise uphold their ongoing individuality and particularity.

The Pauline Self as an Individual in Relation

There is some danger in conflating Torrance's proper insistence on Christ's particularity with Western notions of a bounded self, which is a notion that is foreign to Pauline concept of a person. Thus it is necessary to clarify the Pauline concept of the "self," which, if it is to be truly Pauline, must apply to both Jesus *and* to those in Christ. In her work on Pauline anthropology, Susan Eastman defends the notion that for Paul there is no "bounded self," which is to say that a "self" is always in relation to other "selves." For Paul, Eastman argues, "the self is a self-in-relation-

to-another."⁴³ Nevertheless, Eastman's treatment the "self" clearly portrays humans as individual, particular persons (who are in relation to other individual, particular persons). Eastman eloquently stated that a person is "one for whom Christ has died," which contains both an element of individuality ("one") while simultaneously emphasizing the relatedness of this "one" to Christ.

This necessarily raises the question of Jesus's own self as "self-in-relation." For Paul, Jesus's personhood is most often described in terms of his mission. Jesus is the sent Son who came to redeem humanity (Galatians 4:4-5), and the Son who was in very nature God and took on human likeness (Philippians 2:6-7). Each of these Pauline formulations present Jesus' assumption of humanity as a purposeful, relational movement of the divine into the sphere of human existence in order to bring about redemption (Galatians 4:4-5) and reconciliation (Romans 5:10-11), both of which are inherently relational terms. It is beyond the scope of the argument here to delve into the divine relations between persons *in se*,⁴⁴ but it suffices to say here that Jesus' *humanity* is irreducibly relational in Pauline thought. In Romans 5 Paul describes the reconciliation of sinners taking place through the death of Christ, which is to say that even his death is relationally effectual. Furthermore, Jesus is described as the "firstborn among many brothers and sisters (Romans 8:29)," which likewise entails that Christ's resurrected and embodied self is still a self-in-relation with those in Christ (i.e., the many brothers and sisters).

If the self is constituted in relation to others, then it is likewise possible to conceive of the human self's historical particularity as a series of instantiations of that relational identity. Eastman's self thus can be understood as not only constituted by his or her relations to other individual "selves," but also to a particular time, place, social group(s), culture(s), and myriad other possible relations. Due to the change in relations that the self undergoes in Christ, Eastman's concept of the self understandably tends to emphasize elements of

⁴³ Susan Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 7.

⁴⁴ On this point see Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), and Matthew Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God and the Spirit in the New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

discontinuity of the human self-in-relation-to-sin vs. the self-in-relation-to-Christ. Likewise, Eastman downplays the continuity of the self who undergoes this transformation. However, a close examination of Christ's own identity and particularity that persists from his humiliation to exaltation adds an element of richness to Eastman's account that fleshes out the elements of continuity in the self "for whom Christ died." The same Jesus who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh was also raised and appointed the Son of God in Power (Romans 1:3-4). Jesus's old "self" is not completely extinguished in death, nor is his resurrected body an entirely new "self." Yet the task still remains to give an account of Jesus' ongoing particularity as an embodied individual human that is not grounded in the binary categories of this present evil age, and it is precisely here where Paul's language of adoption provides a way forward.

The Adoption Metaphor: Affirming the Eschatological and Ecclesiological Particularity of Those in Christ

Thus far I have argued that the Pauline adoption metaphor rests on assumptions of continuity of the self and of relational discontinuity, and that these presumptions must be considered when determining how the eschatological self relates to Paul's binary categories in Galatians 3:28. I have further argued that Torrance's doctrine of the incarnation provides a helpful lens through which to understand Paul's explication of Christ's eschatological humanity as *individual, particular, and embodied*. I have further suggested that Christ's humanity is, as Eastman rightly argues, always and irreducibly a self-in-relation. In the incarnation, Christ puts on the particularity of human flesh, and in so doing he brings about the possibility of all flesh in its multitude of particularities becoming selves-in-relation to God in Christ. The final step in my argument is thus to flesh out how Paul's eschatological vision of embodied humanity dignifies rather than erases the multitude of particularities in the age to come.

As I argued above, Christ's humanity is the model for the eschatological humanity of believers. Torrance winsomely remarks, "Christ is the way in which we are loved and elected." In its context, Torrance intends this statement to refer to

the mode of salvation, but I submit that Christ's own humanity is the *model* for how we are loved and elected as embodied and particular individuals. In Christ, our individuality reaches its fullest expression. Just as Jesus retains his marks of individuality in his eschatological body, so too in our eschatological bodies are we loved and known in our individual particularity.

Significantly, in Galatians 3:28, Paul writes "there is no longer," rather than "you are no longer." What has come to an end, then, is not an individual, but rather is the whole system of hierarchical binaries that governed the present evil age. The eradication of these binaries emphatically does not entail that persons become indistinguishable from one another, or that their individual differences are eradicated. As Carter argues, "bodies signify differently in his body."⁴⁵ The hierarchical binaries of the present age rank and signify bodies through othering and exclusion. But in taking on human, particular flesh (Galatians 4:4), Jesus enters into communion with his creation. His individuality does not supplant their individuality; instead, through adoption, individuals are known in the fullness of their particularity, which is only possible when the essentializing binary categories of the old age are pronounced "non-existent" in the age to come. As Torrance claims, "the movement was paradoxical in character — the more particular it became, the more universal it also became."⁴⁶ Having been set free from these binaries, individual particularity is able to come to its fullest expression as individuals are known fully apart from these essentializing categories. Being fully known by God (Galatians 4:8), the children of God can harmoniously and interdependently relate to one another as brothers and sisters within the *Familia Dei*.

Finally, just as Christ's own incarnational particularity restored communion between God and humans, Paul's vision of eschatological humanity insists individual particularity is necessary for communion within the body of Christ. In Paul's use of body metaphors in 1 Corinthians 12, and Romans 12, Paul suggests that members of the body of Christ are not truly whole without the other members — that is, because they are one body, Christ's own body, the different particularities between

⁴⁵ Carter, *Race: A Theological Account*, 366.

⁴⁶ Torrance, *Incarnation*, 51.

members become mutually constitutive rather than incommensurable. Indeed, as selves-in-relation to one another in Christ's body, those who have received adoption in Christ participate in the individual differences between members because, as selves-in-relation, these differences penetrate to the very core of their sense of self. In this sense it is proper for Paul to say that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male and female," since these binary categories cease to be meaningful ways to speak of selves-in-relation who share in the individual particularity of all other selves.

So then, by entering into embodied particularity, Christ affirms the particularity of each and every individual. Every person, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, whether male and female, is "one for whom Christ died." This statement dignifies every individual's particularity, because it is precisely in this particularity that Christ loved them and gave himself up for them, and precisely in this particularity that they are brought by adoption into the family of God.