

SAMUEL D. FERGUSON

The Spirit and
Relational Anthropology
in Paul

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zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe
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Falls Church, Virginia, May 2020

Samuel D. Ferguson

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ALUOS	Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
AYBC	Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich <i>Greek–English Lexicon of the NT</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CCWJWCW</i>	<i>Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish & Christian World</i>
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CSRT</i>	<i>Columbia Series in Reformed Theology</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
DLNT	Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments
DNTB	Dictionary of New Testament Background
DPL	Dictionary of Paul and His Letters
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>EA</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
ECNT	Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
EGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
EKKNT	Evangelisch – katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EMSP	European Monographs on Social Psychology
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EJPR</i>	<i>European Journal for Philosophy of Religion</i>
<i>EuroJTh</i>	<i>European Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GNS	Good News Studies
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HB	Hebrew Bible
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HeyJ	The Heythrop Journal
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
INT	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBPR</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JITC</i>	<i>Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones Greek–English Lexicon
LXX	Septuagint
MNTC	Moffatt NT Commentary
<i>MTZ</i>	<i>Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
NA ²⁸	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle–Aland, 28th ed.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RA	Relational Anthropology
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VCaro</i>	<i>Verbum Caro</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Wesleyan Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

<i>WW</i>	<i>Word & World</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Part 1

Introduction

How interpreters conceive of Paul's anthropology exerts influence, often unknowingly, upon their broader understanding of his thought. Topics such as sanctification and ethics, for example, will be approached differently depending on how one views the corporeal aspect of humanity (e.g., 1 Cor 6:12–20). Whether or not the Pauline person is seen as inherently autonomous, or irreducibly corporate, likewise affects how one construes of topics such as justification and ecclesiology. From Christology (e.g., Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7) to soteriology (e.g., Rom 3:23; 5:12–21) to ecclesiology (e.g., 1 Cor 12:12–13, 27), understanding Paul requires understanding his anthropology.¹

It is surprising, therefore, that during the modern era of biblical scholarship Paul's anthropology has not received the same attention as other areas of this thought. It is also significant that within the notable exceptions that did address the topic, a tendency persisted to conceive of the Pauline person as a predominantly autonomous being. Whether through Bultmann's existentialist approach,² or the substance-ontology questions of the monism and dualism debate,³ treatments of Paul's anthropology during the early and middle part of

¹ As an example, Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*, trans. T. McElwain (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 2, made such a point when he suggested that E. P. Sanders, in his comparison of "patterns of religion," did not "sufficiently take into account" anthropological dimensions, which notions of agency and soteriology always presuppose. See also, Laato, "Paul's Anthropological Considerations: Two Problems," *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vols. 1–2, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, WUNT 2.140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 343–59.

² Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 1:191, is well known for his dictum, "Paul's theology is at the same time anthropology." Bultmann interpreted Paul's anthropology through Heideggerian existentialism, which tended toward individualism. Bultmann's work is considered below.

³ The monism and dualism (and trichotomy) debates tended to focus the anthropology question on the individual qua individual. In analyzing the constitution of human beings, how external factors influenced existence was often unaddressed. For an overview of the monism and dualism debate, see John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1–20. For an exegetical defense of dualism, see Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); in

the 20th century largely focused on the individual qua individual.⁴ However, responding to both a dearth in research on the one hand, and overly individualistic readings on the other, a renewed interest in Paul's doctrine of humanity is emerging.⁵ Here, the assumption is that persons are who they are only in relation to another, and analysis accounts not only for "anthropological terms,"⁶ but also for the pervasively participatory atmosphere surrounding the Pauline person: e.g., persons are "in Adam" or "in Christ" (Rom 5:12–21), "members of the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:12–13; Rom 12:3–5), and existence is impacted by cosmological and eschatological factors.⁷ The present study

support of a trichotomous anthropology in Paul, see George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*, WUNT 1.232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 219; 298–312; for biblical scholars favoring monism, or a complex holism, which is the view of this study, see H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1947); Bultmann, *TNT*, 1:190–227; J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), 11–33; W. David Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man: In Relation to Its Judaic and Hellenistic Background* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1956), 121–241; M. E. Dahl, *The Resurrection of the Body: A Study of 1 Corinthians 15* (Naperville: A. R. Allenson, 1962), 1; D. R. G. Owen, *Body and Soul: A Study on the Christian View of Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 163–221; E. Earle Ellis, "Sōma in First Corinthians," *Int* 44 (1990): 132–44.

⁴ Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 4–6, wonders if centuries of Pauline interpretation was uncritically filtered through a Cartesian dualism, with the latter prizing non-material and introspective aspects of being human – all factors tending toward individualism: "Descartes's dichotomy has mislead countless readers in their reading of ancient authors, Paul especially" (p. 6). We return to this topic in chapter 2.

⁵ Hans Dieter Betz refers to this renewed interest in Paul's anthropology and situates it vis-à-vis the earlier debate between Bultmann and Käsemann, e.g., Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000), 315, writes, "Ending a period of relative silence after the controversy between Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann in the 1960s, recent studies are evidence of a renewed interest in Paul's anthropology." We consider the debate between Bultmann and Käsemann later in chapter 1.

⁶ An important approach to Paul's anthropology is to consider various terms, such as σῶμα, σάρξ, etc. Here again, analysis can inadvertently over-focus on the individual qua individual, although this is not always the case. An exhaustive treatment of Paul's anthropological terms is Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971). Also see Alexander Sand, *Der Begriff "Fleisch" in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen*, *Biblische Untersuchungen* 2 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1967); Gundry, *Sōma*; Martin, *Corinthian Body*; Bultmann, *TNT*, 1:190–246.

⁷ An overview of the turn toward a participatory and relational notion of personhood is considered in depth in chapter 2. Indicative of this view are the words of Susan Grove Eastman, "Participation in Christ," *The Oxford Handbook of Pauline Studies*, ed. Matthew V. Novenson and R. Barry Matlock, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/>

joins this latter and developing approach to Paul's doctrine of humanity, recognizing the far-reaching importance of the topic, and asking how to understand Paul's anthropology in light of the communal and cosmic nature of existence.

The uniqueness of this study lies first in its argument that the concept "relation/relationship" presents a fruitful way to conceive of *how* the Pauline person situates alongside, and is in part constituted by, communal and external dynamics – whether these dynamics are personal relationships, cosmic and divine forces, or the natural environment. Developing this relational model of anthropology and situating it within the context of Pauline scholarship makes up Part 1 of this study. The second innovation of this study builds from Part 1, when in Part 2 the role of the Spirit in generating and sustaining relationships that reconstitute Christian personhood is analyzed.

oxfordhb/9780199600489.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199600489-e-005#oxfordhb-9780199600489-e-005-div1-1. n.p. Online publication, April 2014, "The structure of human existence is participatory without exception and without remainder. That is, whether 'in Christ' or under the power of sin and death, human life always is constrained and constructed in relationship to external forces that also operate internally." Eastman's work is considered in depth in chapter 2. See also the study of Sarah Harding, *Paul's Eschatological Anthropology: The Dynamics of Human Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), who argues that Paul's anthropology can only be understood by situating it within his cosmology and eschatology, e.g., "Humans are situated, both temporally and spatially, within a cosmological context" (p. 2). Harding's study has affinities with the present work inasmuch as eschatological aeons function as contexts/relational webs influencing personhood; i.e., "Paul's anthropological utterances are embedded within an eschatological dynamic, which accounts for the varied valuations accorded any anthropological 'part' or 'aspect' mentioned in his letters" (p. 42).

Chapter 1

Situating the Study

This study will argue that in Paul a person is not an autonomous reality, but rather his or her existence depends on another. Put another way, this study asks how corporate and cosmic realities affect the structure of human existence in Paul's anthropology. Focusing the approach to this broad interest is the comment of James D. G. Dunn, who, in his treatment of Pauline anthropology, highlights the significance relations may have upon human existence: "Paul's anthropology is not a form of individualism; persons are social beings, defined as persons by their relations."¹ Dunn's comment runs counter to earlier construals of Paul's doctrine of humanity highlighting individualism.² Moreover, if Dunn's conclusion is correct, that relations define persons, it has wide-ranging implications for Paul's broader thought. If personhood is constituted in a relational matrix, then a fresh paradigm may open for better understanding the participatory logic of Paul's thought: i.e., being "in Christ," or a "member of the body of Christ." Also, a relational view of anthropology may help explain how categories at times seen in antithesis, such as justification and participation, are inherently bound together.³

¹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 53, writes, "[Paul] was not concerned with God in himself or humankind in itself. The classical Greek philosophical debates about existence and subsistence and the later church debates about the natures of Christ are remote from Paul. As the opening of his exposition of the gospel in Rom. 1.16ff. clearly shows, his concern was rather with humankind in relation to God, with men and women in their relationship with each other, and subsequently with Christ as God's response to the human plight." For Dunn's overview of Pauline anthropology see *Theology of Paul*, 38–101.

² For the tendency for 19th and 20th century treatments of Paul's anthropology to focus on the individual *qua* individual, see above, Part 1.

³ How frameworks of Paul's anthropology impact understandings of justification will be noted later in this chapter. It is also the case that a relational view of anthropology impacts views of sanctification, which at times have been overly individualistic. E.g., James H. Howard, *Paul, the Community, and Progressive Sanctification: An Exploration into Community-Based Transformation within Pauline Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 2, explains, "The role of the believing community in this process [of sanctification] has consistently been overlooked in traditional exegetical and theological studies ... the community, while important, is not essential in the process of growing in maturity." Howard goes on to explain that a reason for this is that "the Western world [has] long emphasized the individual aspect of biblical truth. [This] has resulted in a highly individualized systematic theology in the Western church."

Despite the significance of his claim, Dunn unfortunately does not probe the anthropological assumptions that would make sense of relationally defined persons. By stating persons are defined by relations does Dunn simply point out the obvious, that relations “add on” to otherwise self-contained identities, such as when the relationship of marriage adds to “woman” being “wife”? Or, does he suggest something more fundamental, that personhood requires relations? Though not a detailed explanation, Dunn’s further comment witnesses to a more fundamental reality: “In Pauline perspective, human beings *are as they are* by virtue of their relationship to God and his world.”⁴

The present study is concerned with probing what anthropological assumptions might make sense of Dunn’s statement. What view of human existence explains the fact that for Paul, life and salvation are not matters of self-possession or self-understanding, but rather always construed in relation to another?⁵

This question – how relations constitute and affect persons – needs to be framed in light of Paul’s broader thought: how do individuals and communal (corporate, cosmological) elements interrelate in Paul?⁶ Does the Pauline individual simply sit awkwardly, or autonomously, amid the communal and cosmic atmosphere around him or her? Or, is this individual constituted, at least in part, in connection to (relation to) surrounding realities? Put this way, our anthropological interest situates within a wider conversation in Pauline studies, referred to by Stephen Barton as the “explosion of interest in the communal dimension of earliest Christianity.”⁷ A wide-ranging turn toward the communal and corporate aspects of Early Judaism and earliest Christianity has impacted a plethora of theological issues, including not only views of soteriology and justification, but also anthropology.⁸ As such, this study’s

⁴ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 53. Emphasis added.

⁵ Even Paul’s vision of salvation (new life) is a decidedly non-autonomous affair, as Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 53, points out. For Paul “salvation is of man and woman being restored to the image of God in the body of Christ.”

⁶ For a thorough overview of this question, see Ben C. Dunson, “The Individual and Community in Twentieth- and Twenty-first-Century Pauline Scholarship,” *CBR* 9.1 (2010): 63–97.

⁷ Stephen C. Barton, “The Communal Dimension of Earliest Christianity: A Critical Survey of the Field,” *JTS* 43.2 (1992): 399, overviews the “explosion of interest in the communal dimension of earliest Christianity” in recent NT study, detailing nine reasons for it, then explaining its presence across an array of NT areas, including Pauline studies. On this communal interest, see also James G. Samra, *Being Conformed to Christ in Community: A Study of Maturity, Maturation and the Local Church in the Undisputed Pauline Epistles*, LNTS 320 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 28–32.

⁸ Krister Stendahl’s work is a prime example of how the turn away from individualism and turn toward communal aspects affects views of soteriology and justification. E.g., writing in 1963, Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *HTR* 56.3 (1963): 199–215, critiqued traditional Western ways of reading the Pauline letters

interest in the relational aspect of Pauline anthropology is relevant also to the apostle's more extensive theology, especially in addressing how individual and communal aspects interrelate.

1.1. Thesis of This Study

This study, therefore, organizes around one fundamental question: how do relations impact human existence in Paul? It will be argued that in Paul persons are constituted in a web of relations, ranging from relationship with their Creator, to embeddedness in a world, to domination by outside forces, to relationships with each other. An entirely autonomous existence is an impossibility. Employing the term "Zusammenhang" ("interrelations"), Udo Schnelle's explanation of human existence in Paul points in the direction of this study:

The idea prevailed within the Pauline symbolic universe that human life by nature exists within a comprehensive set of interrelations [dass menschliches Leben natürlicherweise in einen übergreifenden Zusammenhang eingeordnet ist]. People cannot live out of themselves, on their own resources, for they always find themselves in a previously existing force field where various powers already hold sway. As a creature, the human being is not autonomous [Als Geschöpf ist der Mensch nicht autonom] but is exposed to the powers that prevail in creation: God, and evil in the form of sin.⁹

Along with the general claim that persons are not absolutely autonomous in Paul's thought, Schnelle's words signal two further aspects of this study.¹⁰ It will be argued that relations are not a secondary, but an essential feature of personhood in Paul – "human life *by nature exists* within a comprehensive set

as documents of human consciousness, asserting, "Especially in Protestant Christianity – which has its roots in Augustine and the Middle Ages – the Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther's struggle with his conscience" (p. 200). Stendhal's point throughout the influential article is that centuries of NT scholarship were filtered through an individualist lens, anachronistic to the NT writings.

⁹ Udo Schnelle, *Paulus: Leben und Denken* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 565; Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 494. Emphasis added.

¹⁰ This thesis does not deny any notion of autonomy to the subject ("I"), which would in effect dissolve the subject. Rather, we understand human existence as a "limited autonomy" [*begrenzter Autonomie*], where an "all or nothing" distinction between autonomy and heteronomy is avoided. Therefore, while it is in a sense correct to say human existence is not autonomous, this needs to be qualified and nuanced. See Jürgen Straub, "Personale und kollektive Identität: Zur Analyse eines theoretischen Begriffs," in *Identitäten*, ed. A. Assmann and H. Friese (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998), 81–82.

of connections.”¹¹ This is over against any notion that personhood can be realized or maintained in an entirely autonomous, self-referential framework.¹²

Second, Schnelle alludes to two possible “realms of relations/connections” within which human life may find itself constituted: “God, and evil in the form of sin.”¹³ This suggests a possible transference from one relational web to another. Therefore, this study also focuses on the reconstitution of the person who has been transferred from a realm of *lethal relations* and placed within a web of *life-giving relations*.¹⁴ Examining this aspect draws the study’s attention to the Spirit, who will be shown, through examinations of Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 12, to generate and sustain new relational networks within which personhood is reconstituted.

To anticipate some of the work below, in Romans 8 the relational nature of personhood is on display, along with the work of the Spirit. The person in relation to sin and according to the flesh (Rom 7:7–25)¹⁵ stands juxtaposed to the person in relation to Christ and according to the Spirit (Rom 8:1–17). As the chapter unfolds, persons-as-enemies (Rom 5:10; 8:7) become persons-as-children-of-God, heirs of God, fellow heirs of Christ; and all this is actualized through *Spirit-wrought relationships*:

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the *Spirit* of adoption as *sons*, by whom [the Spirit] we cry, “*Abba! Father!*” The *Spirit* himself

¹¹ Schnelle, *Apostle Paul*, 494. E.g., according to Rom 5:12–21, a person is who they are in relation to Adam or Christ; there is no existence outside of this “relation.”

¹² Bultmann’s existentialist anthropology risks such autonomy, as discussed below.

¹³ Schnelle, *Apostle Paul*, 494.

¹⁴ The language of a realm of “lethal relations” borrows from Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 105, who understands “sin as a lethal ‘relational partner’ in Romans 7.” Her work is considered more below.

¹⁵ The identity of the “I” in Rom 7:7–25 is widely debated. Defending whether or not the “I’s” voice pertains to a pre- or post-Christian experience is not essential to the argument of the present thesis. However, we do treat the text more carefully in chapter 4, where we will read a “generalizing ‘I,’” evoking the voice of Adam, which echoes the voice of all men. And, we will also read the voice of the “I” as indicative of humankind living without the Spirit, whether that be a non-believer or a believer who is not “putting to death the deeds of the body *by the Spirit*” (Rom 8:13). In our view we follow the work of Will Timmins, *Romans 7 and Christian Identity: A Study of the ‘I’ in Its Literary Context*, SNTSMS 170 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 8, who says the following regarding the “I” in Rom 7:7–25: “Paul portrays the *anthropological* condition of the ἐγώ as an Adamic state of powerlessness, without direct reference to the ἐγώ’s *relational ontology*, viz. without reference to being ‘in the Spirit’ (Rom 8:9). The ἐγώ’s condition is a lingering, lasting solidarity with the old order, but, as an *anthropological* condition, it remains with the ἐγώ even when he is no longer in the flesh, under the law.” Timmins’s reference to “relational ontology” also points in the direction of the anthropological model of this study, as does the qualifying statement, “viz. without reference to being ‘in the Spirit’ (Rom 8:9).”

bears witness with our spirit that we are *children of God*, and if children, then *heirs – heirs of God* and *fellow heirs with Christ*. (Rom 8:15–17)¹⁶

Ideal existence is not self-understanding or autonomy, but an experienced relationship with God as “Abba! Father!” Put succinctly, this thesis will argue that Paul’s anthropology is relational; the Pauline person is constituted in a web of relations, a fact further attested by the work of the Spirit.

1.2. Distinctiveness of This Study

In asserting that personhood is relational in Paul, this study joins a nascent but growing conversation in Pauline anthropology. Since 2001, at least six Pauline scholars have devoted monographs to this general topic.¹⁷ In varying degrees, how individual persons interrelate with corporate and cosmic aspects of Paul’s thought animates these studies, and specifically in regard to what such interrelationships reveal about his anthropology. The diverse nomenclature employed in these studies evidences the complexity and newness of this discussion. For example, what this thesis describes as “relational anthropology” (RA), these studies refer to as “corporate anthropology,”¹⁸ “the individual-in-community,”¹⁹ “participatory relationships/Christosis,”²⁰ “relational ontology,”²¹ “relational transformation,”²² “being oneself-in-

¹⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural quotations in English of the HB and NT are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV). Citations of the Greek NT come from NA²⁸.

¹⁷ Considered in more detail below, these works include: Sang-Won (Aaron) Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul’s Usage and Background* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2001); Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*, WUNT 2.314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Ben C. Dunson, *Individual and Community in Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, WUNT 2.332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, WUNT 2.283 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); Emmanuel L. Rehfeld, *Relationale Ontologie bei Paulus: Die ontische Wirksamkeit der Christusbezogenheit im Denken des Heidenapostels*, WUNT 2.326 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Eastman, *Paul and the Person*.

¹⁸ Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*.

¹⁹ Dunson, *Individual and Community*, 176. Dunson states his thesis succinctly, “The individual and the community belong together in Paul’s theology; there is no Pauline individual outside of community, just as there is no community without individuals at the heart of its ongoing life” (p. 1).

²⁰ Blackwell, *Christosis*, 106.

²¹ Rehfeld, *Relationale Ontologie bei Paulus*.

²² Rabens, *Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 123, in regards to how human transformation happens in Paul, argues, “It is primarily through deeper knowledge of, and an intimate

another,”²³ “participatory personhood,” and “second person perspective.”²⁴ Although drawing from these previous studies, this thesis takes a unique direction in two ways, the first in regards to specificity, the second in regards to the Spirit.

First, more so than asserting that the phenomenon of RA exists in Paul, this study asks with more specificity how it works, addressing the mechanics of how relations define and determine personhood. Previous studies highlight the corporate aspect of Paul’s anthropology,²⁵ and that both the individual and community are prominent factors in Paul’s thought.²⁶ However, to date no study has asked how relations affect persons in Paul by considering with any systematic organization various components and aspects of the person. Only with a sharpened view of the Pauline person can a study answer how relations may constitute that person. For example, do relations merely impact the whole person in each instance? Or might they affect human identity in one case, but human agency in another? Other studies have hinted at differing areas or aspects of personhood impacted by relations, such as “agency”²⁷ or

relationship with, God, Jesus Christ and with the community of faith that people are transformed and empowered *by the Spirit* for religious-ethical life.”

²³ Susan Grove Eastman, “Oneself in Another: Participation and the Spirit in Romans 8,” in *In Christ in Paul*, ed. Michael J. Tate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, WUNT 2.384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 103–25. The phrase “self-in-relation-to-others” is also used by Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 7.

²⁴ Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 9, writes, “Paul’s anthropology is participatory all the way down.... For Paul the self is always a self-in-relation-to-others.” This so-called “participatory anthropology” is variously referred to by Eastman as the “self-in-relation-to-another” (pp. 7, 105) and “second-person perspective” (pp. 15, 16, 117). Eastman defines “second-person perspective” as “a standpoint for intellectual inquiry in a variety of subjects including philosophy, psychology, and sociology. This standpoint is disclosed by the grammar of second-person address more than either first-person, self-referential modes of knowledge or third-person, objectifying and distancing modes of knowledge. The other to be known is a ‘Thou,’ who addresses and knows the inquirer also as a ‘Thou.’ The self therefore always also exists as the recipient of an address, in the presence of an interlocutor” (p. 15).

²⁵ E.g., Son, *Corporate Elements*, overviews five areas that point to a corporate nature to Paul’s view of human existence. Son does not, however, probe how Paul’s anthropology is actually construed via corporate phenomena. Son’s work is considered in detail below.

²⁶ E.g., Dunson, *Individual and Community*, for example, demonstrates eight “types” of individuals within Romans, as well as the pervasive nature of community in that letter. Dunson’s work does not, however, move into the question of how the individual is uniquely constituted by this communal atmosphere. Dunson’s work is considered below.

²⁷ Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 13, for example writes, “The question is not whether Paul speaks as a robust ‘self’ addressing other ‘selves’ as well as communities, but how that *personal agency* and speech are qualified by participation in a larger relational environment and by indwelling agents.” Emphasis added. Here she makes explicit how RA might affect personhood, namely, by impacting agency. Her work is considered in detail in chapter 2.

“cognition.”²⁸ Some also suggested that relations affect a person by changing the “heart,”²⁹ or through “an experience of intimacy.”³⁰ None of these studies, however, has first considered what aspects might be indicative of the Pauline person and then probed how various relations affect specific aspects. This study, therefore, will address how relations affect persons by first delineating a model of personhood. Developed in chapter 3, we suggest the Pauline person be viewed aspectively, keeping in view the aspects of *identity*, *agency*, and *heart*.³¹

In tandem with a more detailed notion of personhood, this study also more carefully differentiates between various types of relations. Relations may constitute personhood in Paul, but not all relations are the same. Some relations may be *personal*, such as that between believers and Christ. Other relations may be *impersonal*, such as that between a corporeal person and her environment. Both relations, however, affect personhood. Therefore, this study

²⁸ Rabens, *Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 131–32, for example, argues “that a primary mode of the Spirit’s enabling for religious-ethical life occurs in the context of *Spirit-designed intimate relationships* ... [through which] ethical transformation and empowering of believers [happens by] their receiving *true knowledge* of the Lord and his message through the Spirit.” Emphasis added. I.e., relations affect the person’s cognitive capacities by revealing knowledge.

²⁹ Rehfeld, *Relationale Ontologie bei Paulus*, 319, sees “the heart (*das Herz*) as the place where the relational-ontological determination of man occurs (*der relational-ontologischen Bestimmtheit des Menschen*).” Rehfeld is certainly correct that the “heart” – especially in the Pauline and Jewish sense of it being the motivating center of man – is a key location where relations affect persons. However, as this study will show, there is also the fact of relation within the world, where agency may be affected by embeddedness in a perishable cosmos (e.g., 1 Cor 15:44–50). Rehfeld’s work will be considered more below, as will the various ways relations affect persons.

³⁰ Rabens, *Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 131–32, states “that a primary mode of the Spirit’s enabling for religious-ethical life occurs in the context of *Spirit-designed intimate relationships*.... [And] in Paul’s letters a major aspect of transformation and empowering for religious-ethical life is the experience of *the intimate presence, love and immediacy* of the divine by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal 4:4–9; Rom. 5:5; 8:12–17; etc.).” Emphasis added.

³¹ Here we follow the broad distinction made by Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 54, that, “Greeks regard the human being as made up of distinct parts, Hebrew thought saw the human being more as a whole person existing on different dimensions.” Though Paul could use Greek terms and concepts, he essentially has a Hebraic and holistic view of the person. That does not mean, however, that he cannot see human beings via different aspects. Brevard Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 199, explains that according to Hebrew thought, humanity “is a complete entity and not a composite of parts from body, soul and spirit. Yet it is also true that the Old Testament views man from different holistic perspectives. He can be described in terms of his will, or his emotions, or his physical prowess.” In this study, we will highlight three *aspects* of the person; however, in viewing them always keep the whole in mind. More will be said on our model in chapter 3.

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