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The Church Fathers' Interpretations and Modern Exegesis of Gal 3,28c: A Comparative Analysis

I. Introduction

What are the implications that can be drawn from the Church Fathers' uses and interpretations of Gal 3,28c to the current discussions on the meaning of the text in question?[1] Despite the growing scholarly interest in Paul's statement in Gal 3,28c, giving rise to a vast plethora of writings, articles and commentaries, Gal 3,28c increasingly continues to be a source of controversy among Pauline exegetes. Among the many issues raised is that most Pauline exegetes use and interpret Gal 3,28c outside of its context, and have failed to come to terms with the traditional understanding of the text.[2] Unfortunately, scholars who make such assumptions overlook the fact that the way in which Gal 3,28c has been interpreted in much contemporary discussions is influenced deeply by patristic thoughts, especially in their hermeneutical and theological

[1] In our citations of the Fathers, we have used *Biblia Patristica, Clavis Patrum Graecorum* and *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* as our primary sources in identifying best critical editions of the works of the Fathers. Wherever possible, an English or French translation is provided and they are taken from commentaries or critical editions of the work in question. We are aware that there are recent electronic tools to search the writings of the Fathers that might generate more quotes of Gal 3,28c. However, most of what these recent tools will generate is a prototype of what we have already in this study.

[2] Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28: Conundrum or Solution?", in: Alvera Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible*, Downers Grove/IL, InterVarsity Press, 1986, 156; 161, has criticized most recent trends and their scholarships on Gal 3,28. In his opinion, Gal 3,28c has «become a hermeneutical skeleton key by which we may go through any door we choose». Explaining further he specifies, «none of the major teachers in the history of the Church thought Galatians 3:28 abolished the male-female role distinction in marriage or the Church». What he means is that most recent views on Gal 3,28 have deviated from the so-called traditional understanding of the text. The question of whether or not the above supposition could be sustained is yet to be surveyed.

approaches to Gal 3,28c. As Mosies Silva points out in his study of the history of interpretation, «no aspect of the current hermeneutical crisis developed spontaneously without any prior connections».[3]

Not much work has been done on the history of interpretation of Gal 3,28c. The present study surveys scholarship on Gal 3,28c by comparing patristic comments with modern exegesis on the text.[4] It seeks to discern how patristic exegeses of the text in question came to form part of the Christian scholarly heritage, and possibly, the basis of the so-called traditional position on the passage. It attempts to answer the question; in what way does a comparison of modern interpretations with patristic exegesis improve our understanding of Gal 3,28c? And how can this improved understanding influence debates on Gal 3,28c in present Pauline scholarship?

In both patristic and modern interpretations of Gal 3,28c, we distinguish the following four positions: (1) Gal 3,28c understood in the context of baptism. In the framework of the immediate literary context of Gal 3,28c, especially 3,27 which states **osoi gar ei~ Criston ebaptisqhte, Criston enedusasqe**, Gal 3,28c is interpreted in the light of the generative and transformative experiences of male and female believers in Christ. (2) Gal 3,28c understood in the context of human sexuality. On the background of the creation account in Gen 1,27 and of the fall in *Genesis* 3, some patristic and modern scholars will read Gal 3,28c as a statement either affirming or negating human sexuality or either affirming or negating the division of humankind into two sexes. (3) Gal 3,28c understood in the context of creation. With reference to the creation account in Gen 1,26-27 LXX that describes **arsen kai qhlu** as created in the image of God, and Gen 2,21-24 that describes the formation of Eve from a rib taken from Adam, some patristic and modern scholars will suggest that Gal 3,28c is a reference to the restoration of humanity in the image of God. (4) Gal 3,28c understood in the context of equality in Christ. Reading Gal 3,28c in connection with 3,28d which states **pante~ gar umei~ ei~ este en Cristw Ihsou**, some scholars

[3] Moisés Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible?: The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues* (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, 1), Grand Rapids/MI, Zondervan, 1987, 27. See also Daniel Patte, "Augustine's Reading of Romans: A Model for the Practice of 'Scriptural Criticism", in: Daniel Patte – Eugene TeSelle (eds.), *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation*, Harrisburg/PA, Trinity Press International, 2003, 237-269: 241.

[4] We gratefully acknowledge the many insights that we found in the recent work of Pauline Nigh Hogan, *No Longer Male and Female: Interpreting Galatians 3:28 in Early Christianity* (LNTS, 380), New York/NY, T & T Clark, 2008. While her focus is on the general view of women in the Church Fathers' use of Gal 3,28, my study takes a very specific look not only at references to Gal 3,28c in early Christian writings but also at the import of the exegesis of the Fathers on Pauline scholarship today. See also Martin Meiser, *Galater* (NTP, 9) Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, 173.

are of the opinion that Gal 3,28c is centrally concerned with the oneness of the believers in Christ. Others too argue that the text deals with the full equality of both male and female in the community of the believers and in every other aspect of human life.

II. Gal 3,28c in the Context of Baptism

The Church Fathers' conception of Gal 3,28c as speaking of the generative and transformative experiences of those who have been initiated into Christ by baptism differ in no respect from modern scholarly discussions on the text. The Church Fathers saw in Gal 3,28 an appropriate text for their advocacy for good Christian living, to express their views concerning the status of the believers as children of God, and to emphasize the importance of baptism in the life of the believers.

One of the Cappadocian Fathers Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330-379) in his *De Baptismo,* book 1 argues that Gal 3,28 speaks concerning the categories of people who could experience the transformative effect of baptism. The transformative effect, he illustrates, gives the believers a new identity in Christ, and with their new identity, bearing now the image of God, the believers have equal access to God's grace.[5] In book 2, chapter 1 he emphasises that baptism in Christ is a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.[6] He speaks further of the practical

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[5] «**outw kai o baptizomeno~, eite Ioudaio~ eite Ellhn, eite arsen eite qhlu, eite doulo~ eite eleuqero~, eite Skuqh~, eite Barbaro~, eite allo~ en oidhpote diafora genou~ onomazomeno~, en tw aimati men tou Cristou apekdusameno~ ton palaion anqrwpon sun tai~ praxesin autou,dia de th~ didaskalia~ autou en agiw Pneumati endusameno~ ton neon ton kata Qeon ktisqeta en dikaisunh kai osioyhti th~ alhqeia~,ton anakainoumenon ei~ epignwsin katΔeikona tou ktisanto~ auton axio~ ginetai katanthsai ei~ thn eudokian tou Qeou, hn o Apostolo~ paredwken eipwn:**»: Basil of Caesarea, *De Baptismo* Book 1 (Migne PG, 31: 644), 1560-1561. For the French translation, see Basile de Césarée, *Sur le Baptême*, Book I, trans. Jeanne Ducatillon (SC, 357), Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1989, 176-77: «Il en est ainsi de celui qui reçoit le baptême: qu'il soit Juif ou Grec, homme ou femme, esclave ou homme libre, qu'il soit Scythe, barbare, qu'il soit appelé d'un autre nom à cause d'une quelconque différence de race, du moment que, dans le sang du Christ, il a dépouillé le vieil homme avec ses pratiques et que, grâce à l'enseignement de ce Christ, il a revêtu dans l'Esprit-Saint l'homme nouveau, celui qui a été créé selon Dieu dans la justice et la sainteté véritables et qui se renouvelle pour connaître, à l'image de son créateur, il devient digne de rencontrer la complaisance de Dieu, comme l'Apôtre l'a enseigne en disant...».

[6] Combining Gal 3,28 with Rom 6:3-4, Basil of Caesarea, *De Baptismo*, Book 2 (Migne, PG, 31: 652), 1580, asserts, « **Hagnoeite, adelfoi, oti osoi ebaptisqhmen ei~ Criston Ihsoun, ei~ ton qanaton autou ebaptisqhmen; Sunetafhmen oun autw dia tou baptismato~ ei~ ton qanaton, ina, wsper hgerqh Cristo~ ek nekrwn dia th~ doxh~ tou Patro~, outw kaihmei~ en kainothti zwh~ peripathswmen, kai ta exh~ kaien eterw topw entreptikwteron kai safesteron hmin paradedwsi toiouton dogma, eipwn osoi ei~ Criston ebaptisqhte, Criston enedusasqe. ouk eni Ioudaio~, oude Ellhn: ouk eni doulo~, oude eleuqero~ ouk eni arsen kai qhlu. pante~ gar umei~ ei~ este en Cristw Ihsou**». For the English translation, see Basil, *Ascetical Works*, trans. M. Monica Wagner (FC,

implications of baptism. By baptism believers should be able to live in accordance with the gospel – i.e., they are called to follow and imitate Christ in their actual Christian life and experiences in view of the joy of the Lord they will attain in the last day.[7] Here too, Basil speaks of the oneness of the believers; by baptism believers are one in union with Christ and from the vantage point of their union with Christ they will all be saved as one.

In his *De Trinitate* book 8, chapter 8, the fourth century scholar, Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 300-368) uses Paul's statement in Gal 3,28 to present his principal conceptions about the true identity of the believers as the body of Christ.[8] In his view, the body of Christ is one and by baptism the believers are embodied in the one identity of Christ. In this one identity of Christ, believers have come to participate in the one faith, one hope, one God, possessing one heart and one soul irrespective of differences and diversities. In addition, all who have been baptised in Christ have been baptised in the fullness of the Godhead by which they enjoy equal access to God's divinity.

Like the Church Fathers, most modern scholars evaluate Gal 3,28 in the context of Paul's theological exposition of baptism, suggesting also that the key issue in Gal 3,28 is about the generative and transformative experiences of the believers in Christ. The suggestions include, among others, the view that (1) Baptism in Christ provides a moment of passage from the «age of sin to that of grace».[9] (2) It transforms believers into a

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9), Washington/D.C, Catholic University of America Press, 1950, 391: «by the same token, we are all equally bound to hold the same doctrine regarding Baptism; for the Apostle says to all alike, who are baptized: "Know you not, brethren, that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life"», and so on. In another place, he teaches this doctrine more explicitly and in a manner more calculated to arouse feelings of reverence: «As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus».

[7] Here, Basil of Caesarea, *De Baptismo*, Book 2 (Migne, PG, 31: 653), 1581, uses Gal 3,28 to discuss the meaning of Mt 25,21: «**en toutoi~ de kai toi~ toioutoi~ dogmasi palin legwn ouk eni Ioudaio~, oude Ellhn ouk eni doulo~, oude eleuqero~ ouk eni arsen kai qhlu. pante~ gar umei~ ei~ este en Cristw Ihsou, ina axioi genwmeqa oi pante~, w~ eiì, akousai: deuroΔagaqe doule: epi oliga h~ pisto~, epi pollwn se katasthsw eiselqe ei~ thn caran tou Kuriou sou:**». For the English translation, see Basil, *Ascetical Works*, 393; «and yet again, with reference to the same doctrine, he says: "there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus". Thus, we all, as one, may become worthy to hear the words: "Come, then, good servant, thou wert faithful over a few things. I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord"».

[8] «quodquod enim in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis. Non inest Iudaeus neque Graecus, non inest seruus neque liber, non inest masculus neque femina. Omnes enim uos unum estis in Christo Iesu»: Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate,* ed. Pieter Smulders (CCSL, 62A), Turnhout, Brepols, 1980, 320.

[9] D. Mollat, "Baptismal Symbolism in St Paul", in: Augustin George (ed.), *Baptism in the*

new life in the Spirit, since through it believers come to faith in Christ. (3) By baptism believers identify themselves in union with Christ; they are incorporated into Christ and now share in his benefits.[10] (4) Baptism effectively enables believers to become like Christ;[11] it effects identity transformation, thereby making all male and female persons sons of God through faith in Christ.[12] (5) Baptism, furthermore, entails a sharing in the Abrahamic covenant blessing including justification by faith and salvation in Christ.[13] (6) It overcomes the use of distinctions to create abuses or to give a more privileged position to a specific group with respect to access to the covenant and to God (equality «coram Deo»).[14] (7) Baptism nullifies every value judgement based on distinctions of race, status and gender»*.[15] To put if differently, baptism in Christ cautions against the use of human sexuality, especially the use of masculine gender as the ideal gender that could be responsible for and has exclusive right and validity over all forms of leadership, relationships, community sharing, policy making in the community of the believers and so on.[16]

New Testament: A Symposium, London, Chapman, 1964, 63-112: 63.

[10] Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (NICNT), Grand Rapids/MI, Eerdmans, 1968, 148. Ben Wiebe, "Two Texts on Women (1Tim 2:11-15; Gal 3:26-29) a Test of Interpretation", Horizons in Biblical Theology: An International Dialogue 16 (1994) 54-85: 67.

[11] Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC), Clark, Edinburgh, 1968), 204.

[12] Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God - Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of all Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background* (AnBib, 83), Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1979, 165-74, James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC, 9), Peabody/MA, Hendrickson, 1993, 202; Carolyn Osiek, "Galatians", in: Carol Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (ed.), *The Women's Bible Commentary*, London, SPCK, 1992, 334.

[13] See Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*, Grand Rapids/MI: Baker Academic, 2008, 299.

[14] Madeleine Boucher, "Some Unexplored Parallels to 1 Cor 11:11-12 and Gal 3,28: The New Testament on the Role of Women", CBQ 31 (1969) 50-58: 51; Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC), Grand Rapids/MI, William B. Eerdmans, 1982, 189, Raphael Loewe, *The Position of Women in Judaism*, London, SPCK, 1966, 52-53. See also John Jefferson Davis, "Some Reflections on Galatians 3:28, Sexual Roles, and Biblical Hermeneutics", JETS 19 (1976) 201-08.

[15] Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman", JAAR 40 (1972) 283-303: 293. Susan Rakoczy, *In Her Name: Women Doing Theology*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster, 2004, 104 and 107 stresses that the statement also implies a real transformation of social structures in Christian churches that bears directly on aspects concerning oppression and domination of women.

[16] Ronald Beverly Allen, *Liberated Traditionalism: Men and Women in Balance*, Portland/OR, Multnomah Press, 1985, 134; Sheila Briggs, "Galatians", in: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures 2: A Feminist Commentary*, New York/NY, Crossroad, 1994, 218-36; Walter G. Hansen, *Galatians*, (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series), Drowners Grove/IL, InterVarsity, 1994, 112-13, Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, Grand Rapids/MI, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975; Duane A. Litfin, "Evangelical Feminism: Why Traditionalists Reject It", BS 136 (1979) 246-66; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York/NY, Crossroad, 1990^2, 218; Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman..."; Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Herme-*

(8) By baptism believers become one in Christ.[17] (9) As Agersnap argues, «baptism is concerned with the equality of believers in Christ».[18]

Both patristic and modern exegetes also agree that the transformative experience of baptism informs the believers' existential situation and mode of conduct. For some modern scholars, as we have seen above, baptism does not only effect in the believers a spiritual transformation, but does extend to, and include, social and ecclesiological transformations.

Equally interesting is the fact that in both patristic and modern exegeses on Gal 3,28, references to the passage occur together with other scriptural passages, namely, 1Cor 12,13 and Col 3,11. This indicates that both scholarships saw these passages as thematically closely connected. In modern scholarship, however, a further remark follows the above observations, namely that the key to the similar expressions found in 1Cor 12,13, Gal 3,28 and cf. Col 3,11 lies in Paul's use of a pre-Pauline baptismal formula. Following the lead of Wayne Meeks, scholars have popularly argued that in Gal 3,28 Paul is using an early Christian baptismal liturgical formula.[19] This alleged liturgical tradition, together with the theme of the immediate context of Gal 3,28 provide the theological basis for understanding and interpreting Gal 3,28 in the context of baptism.

Finally, just as in the Patristic interpretation of Gal 3,28 there is an aspect of hermeneutics, so too in modern scholarship. Although Gal 3,28 appears within the context of Paul's argument on baptism, we see in the Church Fathers' use of Gal 3,28 a kind of hermeneutical appropriation of the text to their teaching on baptism and to issues related to the culture of their time. With Basil, for instance, so many issues are raised in connection with baptism; regeneration into new life in Christ, worthiness to encounter the willingness of God, equal access to God's grace and living in accordance with the scripture. Modern scholars also understand the meaning of Gal 3,28 in a broader sense than just what

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neutics, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Facet Books. Biblical Series, 15), Philadelphia/PA, Fortress, 1977, 34-43.

[17] Ragnar Bring, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom, Philadelphia/PA, Muhlenberg, 1961, 180-87, Sam K. Williams, "Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul's Reading of Scripture", JBL 107 (1988) 227-31: 228-29.

[18] Sven Agersnap, *Baptism and the New Life: A Study of Romans 6.1-14*, trans. Christine Crowley, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1999, 106.

[19] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity", HR 13 (1974) 165-208: 180-83. See also Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible) Philadelphia/PA, Fortress, 1984, 181-201; Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *There Is No Male and Female: The Fate of a Dominical Saying in Paul and Gnosticism* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion, 20) Philadelphia/PA, Fortress, 1987, 17-63; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 33A), New York/NY, Doubleday, 1998, 378-83.

could be presupposed from the text. As Meeks' comments illustrate, the major exegetical issue in Gal 3,28 is that of function: it is not about what the word says but the function of the phrase; namely, «what it does».[20] In this context, the question is, how does baptism function in the life of the believers; in their religious and social practices, relationships, and all other matters associated with living together?

Evaluation

While patristic and modern exegetes evaluate the meaning of Gal 3,28 from the point of view of baptism, what we see in both scholarships is an approach to or rather an interpretation of Gal 3,28 that takes into consideration the very religious experiences and social concerns of the reader. There are not very significant differences between patristic and modern views of Gal 3,28 in the context of baptism. This in turn raises the question of how patristic interpretations could set forth interpretive or rather hermeneutical models for contemporary reading of Gal 3,28. To put it differently, how can patristic exegesis of Gal 3,28 help us better to understand and appropriate the meaning of the passage for today? It should also be pointed out that the numerous interpretations of Gal 3,28 by patristic exegetes call into question the assumption that there is a traditional understanding of Gal 3,28. Noting that the so-called traditional position on Gal 3,28 is clearly hermeneutically oriented, it seems appropriate that we give serious considerations to the way scholars discuss the meaning of the passage today – setting standards as to what could be a justifiably acceptable interpretation and being open to how Paul's statement in Gal 3,28 continues to shed light on our present day situation.

III. Gal 3,28c in the Context of Human Sexuality

Our assessment of the history of the interpretation of Gal 3,28c shows that the passage in question has also been taken up by both patristic and modern exegetes from the point of view of human sexuality. Both patristic and modern scholars would appeal to Gal 3,28c when dealing with theological issues concerning human sexuality such as morality and sexual asceticism. The bases for the assumption is that (a) the words **arsen** and **qhlu** are terms related to human sexuality, and (b) in Gal 3,28c Paul is citing Gen 1,27 LXX that speaks of the creation of human sexuality.

[20] Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne...", 166.

In the study of how the Church Fathers used Gal 3,28c to deal with issues concerning human sexuality, we note the following. First, the youngest of the Cappadocian Fathers Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335 - after 394) and Jerome (ca. 347 - 420) were of the opinion that Gal 3,28c can be used to speak about sexual asceticism – the value of virginity, renunciation of marriage, bodily and sexual pleasures in the pursuit of holiness of life.[21] Second, Clement and Basil understood Gal 3,28c as a reference to sexual distinctions, i.e., how male and female represent the division in human sexuality. These sexual divisions, they opine, are led by the impulses of the flesh. Thus, Paul's argument in Gal 3,28c is about the overcoming of the impulses of the human flesh that is the agent of sin,[22] the overcoming of the life of the flesh with its vice,

[21] In his reflections on sexual asceticism, Gregory of Nyssa combines Col 3,11 and Gal 3,28c to stress the advantage of the state of virginity over married life and to emphasize that virginity is equally meant for men and women. While earlier in chapter 7 of his *De Uirginitate*, ed. M. Aubineau (SC, 119), Paris, Les Éditions du: Cerf, 1966, 348-52, Gregory has stated that marriage could be combined with the contemplative life, in chapter 20, 492-503, he insists that contemplative life is the best choice because one cannot serve the bodily pleasures and, at the same time, reap the enjoyment of God. Explaining this statement Gregory exalts virginity as a way to be completely concerned about and dedicated to the things of the Lord. In a conflation of Gal 3,28c and Col 3,11 «**kaqw~ fhsin o apostolo~, ouk eni arsen kai qhlu, panta de kai en pasi Cristo~**», Gregory uses these two passages in order to stress that in the life of virginity there is no male and female because Christ is the unifying factor. It is a spiritual marriage where «Christ is all things for all human beings... and the soul, clinging to its incorruptible bridegroom, has a love of true wisdom which is God», 502-03. Jerome, *Epistulae* 75, ed. Isidorus Hilberg (CSEL, 55), Part 2 Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996, 31. From the background of an assumed relative superiority of celibacy over marriage, Jerome interprets Gal 3,28c as abolishing either femaleness or maleness in view of practicing celibacy. In exhorting Lucinius' widow Theodora to persevere in her state as a widow, Jerome insists that our sexual differences while essential to marriage are not as such for those who devote themselves to consecrated virginity. Here, he interprets Gal 3,28c as saying that even in the flesh, in a commitment to sexual asceticism, we are neither male nor female *non sumus … masculus et femina*, but all are one in Christ. Furthermore, Jerome argues that the situation Gal 3,28c describes is all the more true in the *eschaton* when this corruptible body has put on incorruptibility and when our mortal existence has put on immortality. In another work, *Apologeticum adversus Rufinum*, Jerome also presents Gal 3,28c as emphasizing the putting off of sexual distinction. In sexual asceticism, Jerome argues, the ascetic transcends his or her sexual differentiation by living a life of chastity. Thus, where chastity is observed between man and woman, they are being changed into angels, among whom there is neither male nor female. Jérôme, *Apologie Contre Rufin*, Book 1, Chapter 29 (SC, 303), Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1983, 80.

[22] Against Julius Cassianus' understanding of the *Gospel of the Egyptians* as implying the abolition of sexual relationships, Clement writes, the idea of the two genders becoming one to such an extent that there is no more male or female as contained in the *Gospel of the Egyptians* implies the overcoming of the impulses of the flesh in Christian marriage. Similarly, when the apostle says «**ouk eni en umin ouk arsen, ou qhlu**», he means, according to Clement, the overcoming of unruly sexual habits through self-control and continence among married couples, helping them to be united in their spirit and soul in caring for the things of the Lord. We refer to Julius Cassianus here as mentioned by Clement in his *Stromata*, Book 3, Chapter 12, ed. Otto Stählin and Ludwig Früchtel (GCS, 52), Berlin, Akademie Verl., 1960, 93:239. The same discussion has been referred to in Hippolytus Romanus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (PTS, 25) Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1986, 146. In his *Homilia in Psalmum*

carnal desires and passions. In saying this, Clement further claims that the true nature of the human person is the soul, which he refers to as an androgynous being.[23]

For Origen (185 - 253 or 254), the focus of Gal 3,28c is on the spiritual relationship between Christ and the believer. In his allegorical reading of *Song of Songs* 2,6, Origen cites Gal 3,28c to support his view that what *Song of Songs* 2,6 speaks of is a spiritual reality, even though the writer of the passage has used human language to describe the experience. Concerning *Song of Songs* 2,6, Origen explains that the relationship between the bride and the bridegroom is a type of the relationship between Christ and the universal Church and between the Word hidden in the figure of Christ (**logo~**) and the sanctified individual soul, and none of these categories is either male or female. Thus, although the author of the *Song of Songs* did adopt a human language in identifying the bride and the bridegroom, and in like manner, «although the "Word" of God is of the masculine gender in Greek, and neuter with ourselves, yet all these matters with which this passage deals must be thought in a manner that transcends masculine and neuter and feminine, and everything whatever to which these words refer». Origen immediately supports his argument by citing Gal 3,28c, «for as the apostle says, "in Christo enim neque masculus neque femina, sed omnes in ipso unum sumus"».[24] From his point of view, the statement in Gal 3,28c supports the idea that in matters of spiritual things, bodily or sexual differentiations are insignificant.

Several modern exegetes share the same opinion with the Church Fathers that Gal 3,28c captures Paul's discussion concerning human sexuality and gender identity. Like the Church Fathers, the debate is also based on the assumption that in Gal 3,28c Paul is making use of the story of the creation of **arsen kai qhlu** in Gen 1,27b LXX and of the fall in *Genesis* 3. Given the view that the expression in Gal 3,28c

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114 (Migne, PG, 29: 203), 492, Basil is of the opinion that the human body in its present form will not survive the *eschaton*. He assumes that our bodily distinctions do not only reflect our gendered nature, but also are the driving force behind sexual desire and sexual temptation. In the resurrection fleshy temptations will not exist, Basil observes, «**dioti ouk eni arsen kai qhlu**».

[23] Referring a second time to Gal 3,28c in *Stromata*, Book 3, Chapter 12, 93:239, «**apostasa gar toude tou schmato~, w diakrinetai to arren kai to qhlu, yuch metatiqetai ei~ e swsin, ouqeteron ousa**», Clement concludes that Gal 3,28c ultimately points to the future state of life in heaven. «The soul stands aside from the mere appearance of shape whereby male is distinguished from female and is transformed into unity, being neither male nor female». For the English translation, see Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis: Books One to Three*, trans. John Ferguson (FC, 85), Washington/D.C., The Catholic University of American Press, 1991, Book 3, Chapter 13, 313-15: 314.

[24] Origen, *In Canticum Canticorum*, Book 3, ed. W.A. Baehrens (GCS, 33), Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1925, 196. See also Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies* ed. R.P. Lawson (ACW, 26), London, Longmans, 1957, 201.

is about human sexuality or rather a reflection on the biological differences of human nature, the discussion is twofold: first, Gal 3,28c is either understood as a reference to the nature of human sexuality in the *eschaton* or to the overcoming of human sexuality in the spiritual realm. Second, it is understood as a reference to the place and function of gender identity in actual social and religious conditions in the community of believers.

Related to the first, most scholars are of the opinion that in Gal 3,28c Paul affirms the absence or irrelevance of sexual distinctions as a requirement for baptism and full membership in the Christian community. In addition, the passage refers to the equality of men and women in the sight of God and of their equal access to grace.[25] Others too have challenged the above spiritual interpretation of Gal 3,28c by stressing that in Gal 3,28c Paul is arguing that the use of sexual distinctions in order to ground social or religious differences is «de facto» abolished. Its implication is that in Christ sexual distinctions are present but they are no longer used to support biological and religious differences which have social, ecclesial, political and religious effect on the relationship between believers (male and female) in Christ.[26] In this discussion, Schüssler Fiorenza, for instance, points out that a proper interpretation of *Genesis* has to do with «procreation and fertility». Thus, the implicit allusion to Gen 1,27 LXX in Gal 3,28c does not assume the dissolution of man and woman in Christ, but has more to do with the relationship between male and female in marriage. In other words, in Gal 3,28c the concern is with the patriarchal constitution of marriage; thus insisting that the sexual relationship between male and female is no longer constitutive of the new community in Christ.[27]

Hans Dieter Betz proposes a middle position. He suggests that Gal 3,28c is about the «eschatological reversal» of human sexuality that has

[25] Boucher, "Some Unexplored Parallels...", 55-58, Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences*, Ann Arbor/MI, Servant Books, 1980, 137-63: 141, Davis, "Some Reflections on Galatians 3:28..."; Ernest DeWitt Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC), Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1921 (reprint, 1968), 206-07; Hartwig Thyen, "..Nicht mehr männlich und weiblich: Eine Studie zu Galater 3.28", in: Frank Crüsemann – Hartwig Thyen (eds.), *Als Mann und Frau geschaffen: Exegetische Studien zur Rolle der Frau*, Gelnhausen, Burckhardthaus-Verlag, 1978, 107-201: 109-110; 116; Ben Witherington, "Rite and Rights for Women - Galatians 3.28", NTS 27 (1981) 593-604: 599.

[26] James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (FRLANT, 109) Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1972, 144; Lone Fatum, "Image of God and Glory of Man: Women in the Pauline Congregations", in: Kari Elizabeth Børresen (ed.), *Image of God and Gender Models in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, Minneapolis/MN, Fortress Press, 1995, 51-133; Robert Jewett, "The Sexual Liberation of the Apostle Paul", JAAR 47 (1979) 55-87; Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her...*, 210.

[27] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her...*, 211.

already been inaugurated in the present.[28] In the present reality, a new order is born according to Betz wherein sexual distinctions between man and woman are deemed to have lost their significance. Its effect extends to the abolishment of social, cultural and religious prerogatives as the content of the realised eschatology.[29] In the spiritual reality, Gal 3,28 affirms the eschatological restoration of male and female in Christ, a situation where male and female will be reunited as one in Christ, the androgynous *anthropos*.[30]

On the basis that *Galatians* addresses the issue of circumcision, other scholars view Gal 3,28c as Paul's reaction against the use of circumcision as a mark of biological descent from Abraham to distinguish between male and female, and to exclude women from the Abrahamic covenant. According to Bernard H. Brinsmead, when Paul declares **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu** his intention was that the removal of the male's foreskin is no longer a differentiating feature between male and female in Christ.[31] This view also reflects the argument of Brigitte Kahl. In her *No Longer Male: Masculinity Struggles Behind Galatians 3:28*, she wants to demonstrate that the egalitarian vision of the text is a «remarkable emphasis on masculinity».[32] Articulating Paul's attitude towards male body language (expressions of male sexuality such as circumcision, adoption and seed/sperm) and finding its parallel in the Septuagint (Gen 17,10-14), Kahl suggests that Gal 3,28c speaks of the realization of a messianic time wherein «physical maleness (**arsen**) cannot any longer bear the identity marker of circumcision for those who enter into the messianic communities from the Gentile side».[33]

Others too situate the expression of Gal 3,28c in the context of sexual asceticism. Judith M. Gundry-Volf develops this ascetic dimension in her work entitled *Male and Female in Creation and New Creation: Interpretations of Galatians 3:28c in 1 Corinthians 7*. Starting by discussing how scholars presuppose **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu** (Gal 3,28c) as a background to Paul's concern on the question of whether or not one ought to marry in 1Cor 7, she goes on to explain that Paul's theology in 1Cor 7 comes as a response to the meaning and implications of Gal 3,28c – «the relationship of the *eschaton* or the redeemed order

[28] Betz, *Galatians*..., 199.

[29] *Ib*., 183-84.

[30] *Ib*., 195-200. See also Clement's opinion about the eschatological reunification in page 8 and footnote 23.

[31] Bernard H. Brinsmead, *Galatians-Dialogical Response to Opponents* (SBLDS, 65), Chico/CA, Scholars Press, 1982, 150-51. See also Troy W. Martin, "The Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) and the Situational Antitheses in Gal 3,28", JBL 122 (2003) 115-25.

[32] Brigitte Kahl, "No Longer Male: Masculinity Struggles Behind Galatians 3:28", JSNT 79 (2000) 37-49: 40.

[33] *Ib*., 41.

to the created order».[34] Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to practice self-control in conjugal relations is because the eschatological message of Gal 3,28c has been inaugurated in this present age, which introduces a very new, radical and different understanding of the Corinthians' present existence.[35]

Evaluation

Just as in the previous section modern scholarship closely parallel patristic thought on Gal 3,28c, so too in this study of Gal 3,28c in relation to human sexuality. Interestingly, modern scholarship with its increased emphasis on the literal meaning of the text still share some views with patristic theology on Gal 3,28c. Certainly, these parallels are compelling, and provide important clue that aid our understanding of Gal 3,28c. In both patristic and modern views on Gal 3,28c, we see already different interpretations and understandings of the meaning of Gal 3,28c. And these different viewpoints echo major concerns and issues of their respective time. In current discussions on gender issues, we too easily dismiss patristic assumptions concerning the text of the scripture, especially in their use of scripture against women. But it is interesting to note, from the examples given above, that the problem of contextualization is not unique to modern approaches to Gal 3,28c. While most current readings of Gal 3,28c are primarily concerned with human sexuality as it relates to questions concerning gender issues, the question is, can the meaning of Gal 3,28c go beyond what we can analyze using a grammatical and historical method and beyond the text's historical context? If the answer would be in the affirmative, then, we suggest that there is something to be learned from the Church Fathers for a meaningful reading of Gal 3,28c for today's world.

IV. Gal 3,28 in the Context of Creation

The theological anthropology of the Church Fathers concerning Gal 3,28c is that the passage asserts the restoration of humanity created in the «imago Dei». This theological anthropological presupposition is based on the assumption that in Gal 3,28c **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu**

[34] Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Male and Female in Creation and New Creation: Interpretations of Galatians 3:28c in 1 Corinthians 7", in: Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva (eds.), *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry* (JSNTSS, 100), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, 95-121. See also Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*..., 211.

[35] Gundry-Volf, "Male and Female in Creation...", 105.

Paul is using the reference to the creation of **arsen kai qhlu** which we find in Gen 1,27. The connection between Gal 3,28c and Gen 1,27 LXX rests on three assumptions: (1) The understanding of Gen 1,26-27 LXX as defining the purely spiritual or rational being made in the «imago Dei» and the interpretation of Gal 3,28c as entailing the restoration of humanity to its primal spiritual God-image, (2) the understanding of Gen 1,26-27a (27b) LXX as presenting men's exclusive representation of the «imago Dei» and the interpretation of Gal 3,28c as referring to the restoration of the original primal male being, (3) the understanding of Gen 1,26-27 LXX as referring to the sexless nature of humanity made in the «imago Dei» and the interpretation of Gal 3,28c as entailing the overcoming of gender distinctions in view of the restoration of the sexless nature implied in the «imago Dei».[36]

The first assumption, i.e., that Gal 3,28c points to the restoration of humanity to its primal spiritual God-image, is perceivable in the works of Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430). According to both Fathers, the twofold creation account in *Genesis* discusses two different kinds of humanity created in the «imago Dei». The first creation account in Gen 1,26-27 LXX discusses the creation of humanity in the image of God. Here the «imago Dei» refers to the rational and spiritual parts of humanity.[37] The second creation account

[36] We gratefully acknowledge the scholarly contributions in Børresen (ed.), *The Image of God: Gender Models*... Their many interesting insights have been of help in our present discussion concerning Patristic interpretation of Gal 3,28c in the light of the context of the creation account in Genesis.

[37] «corpus autem hominis postea, cum ait scriptura: "et finxit deus hominem de limo terrae" – ut, quod dictum est: – "fecit", ad spiritum pertineat, quod autem: finxit, dictum est: fecit, ad spiritum pertineat; quod autem: "finxit", ad corpus, nec adtenderunt masculum et feminam nonnisi secundum corpus fieri potuisse. Licet enim subtilissime disseratur, ipsam mentem hominis in qua factus est ad imaginem Dei, quamdam scilicet rationalem uitam, distribui in aeternae contemplationis ueritatem, et in rerum temporalium administrationem; atque ita fieri quasi masculum et feminam illa parte consulente, hac obtemperante: in hac tamen distributione non recte dicitur imago Dei, nisi illud, quod inhaeret contemplandae incommutabili ueritati»: Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, Book 3, ed. Joseph Zycha (CSEL, 28/2), Vienna, Tempsky, 1894, 88-89. For the English translation, see Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book 3, Chapter 22, ed. John Hammond Taylor, (ACW, 41) New York/NY, Newman Press, 1982, 99, but that his body was created afterwards where Scripture says, «And God formed man of the slime of the earth», we should then take the expression, «God created man», to refer to his spirit; whereas the statement, «God formed man», would apply to his body. But they do not realize that there could have been no distinction of male and female except in relation to the body. There is, of course, the subtle theory that the mind of man, being a form of rational life and precisely the part in which he is made to the image of God, is partly occupied with the contemplation of eternal truth and partly with the administration of temporal things, and thus it is made, in a sense, masculine and feminine, the masculine part as the planner, the feminine part as the one that obeys. However it is not in this double function that the image of God is found, but rather in that part which is devoted to the contemplation of the immutable truth. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (NPNF Second Series, 5), Grand Rapids/MI, Eerdmans, 1979, chapter 16, 405, writes «I presume that everyone knows that this is a departure from the

in Gen 2,21-24 discusses the creation of the gendered humanity created as male and female.[38] This gendered humanity, Gregory argues, is something temporary because humanity image God at the level of «presexual God-likeness».[39] Male and female possess the divine image in equal measure and in this regard, Gal 3,28c refers to an eschatological life where humanity will be restored to its original God image.

For Gregory Nazianzen (ca 329-390) as well as Athanasius (ca. 293-273), Gal 3,28c points to the restoration of the asexual image of God in human beings. In his eulogy for his brother Caesarius, Gregory draws on the creation story in *Genesis* and Paul's statements in both Gal 3,28c (and cf. Col 3,11) to discuss the theological significance of the human nature of Christ as well as the restoration of humanity in God's image through Christ.[40] According to Gregory, Christ has taken our

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prototype: for "in Christ Jesus", as the apostle says, "there is neither male nor female". Yet the phrase declares that man is thus divided. Thus the creation of our nature is in a sense twofold: one made like to God, one divided according to this distinction: for something like this the passage darkly conveys by its arrangement, where it first says, "God created man, in the image of God he created him" and then, adding to what has been said, "male and female created He them", a thing which is alien from our conceptions of God». See also Gregory of Nyssa, *De Opificio Hominis*, (Migne, PG, 44/1), 181.

[38] With regard to the creation of humanity as male and female, Gregory's interpretation of Gal 3,28c differs from that of Augustine. The latter assumes that the divine image is reflected only in man – thus regarding males as the possessors of the divine image and females as having been made in the image of man. Augustine, *Expositio ad Galatas*, 28 (Migne, PL 35), 2125, proceeds to explain, «differentia ista vel gentium, vel conditionis, vel sexus, jam quidem ablata est ab unitate fidei, sed manet in conversatione mortali; ejusque ordinem in hujus vitae itinere servandum esse, et Apostoli praecipiunt, qui etiam regulas saluberrimas tradunt, quemadmodum secum vivant pro differentia gentis Judaei et Graeci; et pro differentia conditionis, Domini et servi; et pro differentia sexus, viri et uxores, vel si qua talia caetera occurrunt; et ipse prior Dominus, qui ait: "Reddite Caesari, quae Caesaris sunt, et Deo, quae Dei sunt"». The former argues, as described by Verna Harrison, "Male and Female in Capadocian Theology", JTS 41 (1990) 441-71: «there is no gender in the eternal Godhead since even within the human condition gender is something temporary»; see footnote 39.

[39] See Harrison, "Male and Female...", 441. The term "presexual God-likeness" is taken from Kari Elisabeth Børresen, "God's Image, Man's Image?", in: Børresen (ed.), *The Image of God: Gender Models*..., 198.

[40] «**Cristw sunta fhnai me dei, Cristw sunanasthnai, sugklhronomhsai Cristw, uion gegesqai Qeou, Qeon auton. orate toi proiwn anhgagen hma~ o logo~. Mikrou kai carin omologw tw paqei, w toiauta efilosofhsa, kai diΔo mallon erasth~ egenomhn th~ enqende apanastaew~. toutp hmin to mega musthrion bouletai. toutp hmin o eanqrwphsa~ diΔhma~ kai ptwceusa~ Qeo~, ina anasthsh thn sarka kai anaswshtai thn eikona kai anaplash ton anqrwpon, ina genwmeqa oi tante~ en en Cristw, genomenw ta panta en pasin hmin teleiw~ osaper estin auto~, ina mhketi wmen arren kai qhlu, Barbaro~, Skuqh~, doulo~, eleuqero~, ta th~ sarko~ gnwrismata, monon de ferwmen en hmin autoi~ ton qeion carakthra, parΔou kai ei~ o gegonamen, todouton afΔautou morofwqente~ kai tupwqente~ wste kai apo monou ginwstesqai**.»: Fernand Boulenger, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours Funèbres en l'honneur de son frère Césaire et de Basile de Césarée*, *Éloge de Césaire*, Chapter 23, Paris, Alphonse Picard, 1908, 52. For the English translation, see Gregory Nazianzen, *Panegyric on his Brother S. Caesarius*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, (NPNF 2nd Series, Vol. 7), Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1996, *Oration* 7, chapter 23, 237: «I must be buried with Christ, arise with Christ, be joint heir with Christ, become the son of God, yea, God

human nature, he asserts, in order to restore the divine image that was lost. The same idea is also reflected in Athanasius' *Discourses against the Arians*. In his theological discussion on the redemptive mission of Christ, Athanasius claims that Gal 3,28c illustrates the eschatological restoration of humanity in the resurrection. In the resurrection, he argues, there will be a new creation in Christ, and humanity will be like the angels neither male nor female – a sexless image of God.[41]

Hilary holds a different notion of the meaning of Gal 3,28(c) in relation to the nature of humanity made in the «imago Dei» and its restoration. In his *Tractatus Mysteriorum* he combines Gal 3,28 (and cf. Col 3,11) to emphasize the resurrection of the bodily and the spiritual nature of humanity in the *eschaton*. According to Hilary, in the resurrection there will be a bodily resurrection of all of humanity just as the resurrection of Christ is a bodily resurrection. He illustrates this point by arguing that the manner in which Eve was created (the combination of flesh and bone – a perfect body), and the resurrection of the dead prefigured in Ez 37,4-11 foreshadow the bodily resurrection of Christ. The Church in relation to Christ is the body of Christ. Just as Christ's resurrection is a bodily resurrection, in the same manner, all who believe in Christ, Jews and Greeks, Barbarians and Scythians, slaves and free, male and female, their resurrection will be of the same pattern as that of Christ – a resurrection of our real bodies.[42]

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himself. See whether our argument has carried us in its progress. I almost own myself indebted to the disaster which has inspired me with such thoughts, and made me more enamoured of my departure hence. This is the purpose of the great mystery for us. This is the purpose for us of God, Who for us was made man and became poor, to raise our flesh, and to recover His image, and remodel man, that we might all be made one in Christ, who was perfectly made in all of us that He Himself is, that we might no longer be male and female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free (which are badges of the flesh), but might bear in ourselves only the stamp of God, by Whom and for Whom we were made, and have so far received our form and model from Him, that we are recognized by it alone».

[41] Athanasius, *Oratio 2 Contra Arianos*, (Migne, PG, 26/2), 293: «**en gar th anastasei oute gamousin, oute gamizontai, allΔeisin w~ aggeloi. kai en Cristw Ihsou kainh ktisi~ estai. kai oute arsen, oute qhlu, alla panta kai en pasin estai o Cristo~**». For the English translation, see Athanasius, *Discourse* 2, Paragraph 69, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (NPNF 2nd Series, Vol. 4), Grand Rapids/MI, Eerdmans, 1991, 386, in the resurrection they neither marry not are given in marriage, but are as the Angels; and in Christ Jesus it shall be a new creation, and 'neither male nor female, but all and in all Christ.

[42] Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus Mysteriorium*, Book 1, Chapter 5 (SC, 19), Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1947, 84: «Qui enim in Christo sunt, secundum Christum resurgent, in quo iam uniuersae carnis consummata est resurrectio, ipso illo in carne nostra cum Dei, in qua ante saecula genitus a Patre est, uirtute nascente. Et quia Iudaeus et Graecus, barbarus et Scyta, seruus et liber, masculus et femina, omnes in Christo unum sunt, cum caro recognita ex carne sit et ecclesia Christi corpus sit, et mysterium, quod in Adam atque Eua est, in Christum et in ecclesiam praedicetur, perfectum iam sub Adam atque Eua in exordio saecula est, quicquid in consummationem temporum per Christum ecclesiae praeperatur». For further reading see Luis F. Ladaria, "La Cristología de Hilario de Poitiers", *Analecta Gregoriana, 255* (Analecta Gregoriana. Series Facultatis Theologicae. Sectio A, 32) Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana,

The debate that Gal 3,28c can be read in the context of the creation theology in Gen 1,26-27 LXX also appears in modern scholarship. From the modern point of view, however, Paul's use of **arsen kai qhlu** as found in Gen 1,27 LXX must be investigated closely together with the argument concerning Paul's use of a pre-Pauline baptismal formula in Gal 3,28. In addition to these two Pre-Pauline sources, scholars will go on to explain the meaning of Gal 3,28c focusing on the implications of Gal 3,28d **ei~ este en Cristw Ihsou** for the theology of creation. The argument will be built on Christ as the one in whom believers will be (re)united. They would either argue that in Christ sexual distinction in creation is overcome because sexual distinction is assumed in Christ,[43] or because in Christ our sexual differences as male and female have become insignificant.

Suggesting that Gal 3,28 probably echoes the wording and practice of a baptismal ceremony (i.e., a pre-baptismal formula), which in turn reflects Hellenistic rites of passage and the Jewish understanding of human being's primeval androgynous state linked with the creation narrative in *Genesis*, Meeks describes the baptismal formula in Gal 3,27-28 as a rite that annuls sexual differentiation.[44] Emphasizing the Gnostic idea of ontological unity, Meeks suggests that Gal 3,28c refers to the eschatological restoration of human being's original divine, androgynous image.[45] In this understanding, the original humanity returns to the original image of God, i.e., the androgynous image which was modelled after Adam (masculofeminine).[46] Betz supports the androgynous reflections of Meeks. Unlike Meeks, however, he emphazises that Christ is ultimately the androgynous *anthropos*.[47] Thus, when Paul says **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu**, it would mean the «metaphysical removal of the biological sex distinctions» as male and female are now included in the body of Christ who is the androgynous redeemer figure.[48]

In reaction to Meeks' and Betz's interpretations of the bisexual aspect of the (re)united androgyny as providing grounds for interpreting Gal 3,28c, Lone Fatum argues that the way the pre-Pauline baptismal formula and Gen 1,27b are related to one another results in understanding Gal 3,28c in terms of asexuality i.e., in Christ, male and female have become one comprehensive expression of human sexuality. «Thus,

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1989, 87-103: 101.

[43] The above assumption is based on the interpretation of «**ei~ este en Cristw Ihsou**» (3,28d) in terms of the believers becoming like Christ, one male person.

[44] Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne...", 195-96.

[45] *Ib*.

[46] *Ib*., 185.

[47] Hans Dieter Betz, "Galatians, Epistle to the", in: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, II, New York/NY, Doubleday, 1992, 872-75.

[48] Betz, *Galatians*..., 196, 199.

when Gal 3,28c speaks of the annulment of sexual differentiation, it must be taken to mean both that the addition [female being] has been annulled, and the breach healed; through Christ man has again become what he originally was, a unity and an entity in God's image».[49]

Faced with the problem of determining which gender identity stands as the norm to represent human sexuality in the restoration of the androgynous humanity (where male and female either become equal in the disembodied spiritual existence or their gender differences are erased), Antoniette Clark Wire opts for the genderless Christ. As such, when Paul says, in Christ **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu**, he means that the spiritual or eschatological realization of a new creation in Christ is marked by a sexually undifferentiated identity.[50]

Judith Gundry-Volf refutes the idea of a sexually undifferentiated humanity in Christ as the aspect of the restored humanity and suggests that the argument Paul sets in Gal 3,28c is the desensitization «of sex difference in a new creation where being male or female is no advantage to God and others and where man and woman are reconciled and united as equals».[51]

Daniel Boyarin objects to the idea of corporeal erasure of sexual distinctions in Christ and suggests an understanding of Gal 3,28c in terms of spiritual androgyny. In his view, the consequence of new life in Christ is not the erasure of corporeal, sexual or gender differences; it entails, rather, a "putting off" of the individual specificity of the body, and a "putting on" of Christ, exemplified in «the non-corporeal body of the risen Christ». The believers, thus, enter «into the body of Christ in the spirit».[52]

Contrary to reading Gal 3,28c from the perspective of spiritual unification in Christ, J. Louis Martyn is of the view that in Christ, polarity in creation gives way to a new creation that does not erase sexual differences but seeks an end to the social hierarchies and privileges that go with maleness.[53] Here, sexual differentiations are seen as elements of this world, and as such, newness of life in the order of creation entails the overcoming of dichotomies in creation.

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[49] Fatum, "Image of God and Glory of Man,,", 62.

[50] Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*, Minneapolis/MN, Fortress Press, 1990, 125.

[51] Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Christ and Gender: A Study of Difference and Equality in Gal. 3:28", in: Ch. Landmesser – H.J. Eckstein – H. Lichtenberger (eds.), *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift: Studien zur Hermeneutic des Evangeliums*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1997, 439; 450-59.

[52] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, (Controversions: Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture and Society, 1) Berkeley/CA, University of California Press, 1994, 24.

[53] Martyn, *Galatians...*, 100-01; 379-80; 393-406. See also Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians...*, 189.

Evaluation

Thus far we have seen several instances of how the Church Fathers and modern scholars used Gal 3,28c to deal with a number of related issues on theological anthropology. Using Gal 3,28c to discuss the creation theology in *Genesis*, scholars have investigated on issues such as the understanding of the image of God, the meaning of the creation of humanity in God's image, the image or form humanity will assume in the resurrection, the relation of the human soul to the body, the concept of the body of Christ, the role of Christ in the restoration of the divine image that was lost and the ultimate fate of humanity after death.

While we observe the many similarities in the ways in which patristic and modern writers unfold their understanding of Gal 3,28c from the point of view of creation, what is particularly noteworthy is that this is one of the interpretations of Gal 3,28c that is highly debated among scholars. One of the most controversial issues is that of the kind of theological anthropology that has emerged from patristic understanding of Gal 3,28c in relation to Gen 1,27 LXX. In recent years, there has been a long standing debate between those who insist that patristic theological anthropology on Gal 3,28c has a very negative attitude toward women, especially the theological presuppositions of Augustine which is regarded as the classical source for the later Western Christian tradition on this type of anthropology, and those who insist that the above assumption is somewhat exaggerated.[54] At present, scholars are not only trying to bring patristic theological anthropology into conversation with modern exegesis, but also reviewing the historical context of the former and asking questions on how that could shed more light on what is at stake in the present.

V. Gal 3,28c in the Context of Equality in Christ

On the question of how patristic and modern exegetes interpret Gal 3,28c as referring to the equality of the believers in Christ, it must be made clear from the outset that the interpretation of Gal 3,28 in the context of equality in Christ presents us with a few problems, not the least of which is the question of what is the meaning of equality? How does **ouk eni arsen kai qhlu** speak concerning the equality of men and women? And what does it mean to say that all men and women are equal in Christ?

[54] For a classic collection of essays on this debate, see Børresen, (ed.), *Image of God and Gender Models*... See also Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man – Is Woman Included?" HTR 72 (1979) 175-206; Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, Boston/MA, Beacon Press, 1983, 93-115.

In patristics, we have two examples of the use of Gal 3,28c in the context of equality. First, in his discussion concerning the equality between men and women with regard to Christian fasting, Basil teaches in his *De Ieiunio Oratio* 3 that fasting is meant not only for men and elders, but also for women and children, because «youth is renewed, nature transformed into masculine virtue, for in Christ Jesus there is no male and female.[55] Thus, he insists that females and children, no less than men, are equally capable of observing the practice of fasting.[56]

In his *Paedagogus* book 1, chapter 4, Clement, like Basil underscores the equality of men and women on the level of their spiritual commitment to acquiring Christian virtue(s) or ability to live virtuously. Additionally, he points to the equality of men and women in relation to their spiritual status and salvation in God. Granted that Clement interprets Gal 3,28c in the context of the spiritual equality of men and women in God, he is equally aware that Gal 3,28 can be read in ways that support the equal opportunity, access and participation of men and women in the community of the believers. According to Clement, Gal 3,28 also emphasizes the oneness of the believers, i.e., the oneness of God necessitates the oneness of the believers and forms the basis for the believers sharing equally in intellectual capacity, membership in God and equality in human relations.[57]

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[55] Basil of Caesarea, *De Ieiunio*, *Oratio 3*, (Migne, PG 31, 622), 1508: «**kalei de outo~ ouk andra~ kai presbuta~ monou~, alla kai gunaika~ kai paida~. twn men ananewn thn neothta, twn de metaballwn thn fusin ei~ andrikhn arethn. en gar Cristw Ihsou ouk eni arsen kai qhlu**».

[56] The custom of Christian fasting in the early centuries of Christianity was a rigorous exercise. Its austere measures regarding the intake of food, as well as abstinence from wine and pleasure were considered only to be applicable to adult men.

[57] «**auth toinun pleon thn agaqhn aspasamenoi peiqarcian, as fa~ autou~ epidwmen kuriw ton bebaiotston th~ pistew~ autou exayamenoi kalwn, thn authn arethn andro~ kai gunaiko~ einai nenohkote~. ei gar a foin o qeo~ ei~, ei~ de kai o paidagwgo~ am foin. mia ekklhsia, mia swfrosuhn mia swfrosuhn, aidw~ mia, h trofh koinh, gamo~ suzugio~, anapnoh, of i~, akoh, gnwsi~, elpi~, upakoh, agaph, omoia panta. wn de koino~ men o bio~, koinh de h cari~, koinh de kai h swthria, koinh toutwn kai h areth kai h agwgh. en gar tw aiwni, toutw, fhsin. 'gamousi kai gamiskontai' en w dh monw to qhlu tou arreno~ diakrinetai, 'en ekeinw de ouketi', enqa tou koinwwikou kai agiou toutou biou tou ek suzugia~ ta epaqla ouk arreni kai qhleia, anqrwpw de apokeitai epiqumia~ dicazoush~ auton kezwrismenw. koinon oun kai tounoma andrasin kai gunaixin o anqrwpo~**». For the English translation, see Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor (Paedagogus)", in: Coxe Cleveland (ed.), *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria* (ANF, 2), Grand Rapids/MI, Eerdmans, 1994, 211: «Let us, then, embracing more and more this good obedience, give ourselves to the Lord; clinging to what is surest, the cable of faith in Him, and understanding that the virtue of man and woman is the same. For if the God of both is one, the master of both is also one; one church, one temperance, one modesty; their food is common, marriage an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love all alike. And those whose life is common, have common graces and a common salvation; common to them are love and training. For in this world, he says, they marry, and are given in marriage (Luke 20:34), in which alone the female is distinguished from the male; but in that

Certain aspects or rather an aspect of the patristic reading of Gal 3,28 in the context of equality could also be found in modern scholarship. Like Clement, some modern scholars are of the opinion that Gal 3,28c is also concerned with social matters, at least on the level of the possible implications of Gal 3,28c. The use of the concept equality in modern scholarship, however, includes not only equality in intellectual capacity, membership in God or equality in human relations, but also functional equality or role interchangeability as well as freedom, liberation, and equivalence of women to men.[58] Some scholars reject the views strongly identified with modern scholarship on the basis that the aforementioned concepts do reflect the ideals of the Enlightenment, a term that strongly resonates with political and social issues of the eighteenth century and has less to do with the meaning of scripture, and in particular with the intended meaning of Gal 3,28c.[59] Reacting against the claim that Gal 3,28c has no social implications, Lone Fatum's suggests that the words of Gal 3,28 (and 3,28c in particular) are prophetic.[60] That is to say, Gal 3,28c can be said to have transformative potential that opens the world to the equality of women with men, and creates spaces where women would have opportunities in every dimension of their Christian experience, just like men, including teaching and preaching in the community of those who have been baptised in Christ.[61]

Evaluation

In answering the question of whether Gal 3,28c does speak of equality and how, it is clearly not enough to simply oppose a view and propose

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world it is so no more. There the rewards of this social and holy life, which is based on conjugal union, are laid up, not for male and female, but for man, the sexual desire which divides humanity being removed. Common therefore, too, to men and women, is the name of man».

[58] See R. Jewett, "The Sexual Liberation of the Apostle..."; P.K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*..., 142; Klyne R. Snodgrass, "The Ordination of Women-Thirteen Years Later: Do We Really Value the Ministry of Women?", Covenant Quarterly 48/3 (1990) 26-43: 34, Witherington, "Rite and Rights for Women...", 602, n. 1.

[59] Davis, "Some Reflections on Galatians 3:28...", 202.

[60] Fatum reference missing***. For Reuther, *Sexism and God-Talk*..., 22-27, Gal 3,28c is prophetic. In as much as other prophetic and wisdom dimensions of scripture have helped the Christian tradition in promoting humanity and nature, so also should Gal 3,28 help promote the concerns of feminist theology. In addition, Schüssler Fiorenza points out that a critical engagement of the social historical world of scripture and that of our time will challenge our worldviews and break open the Patriarchal structures of authority; see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Patriarchal Structures and the Discipleship of Equals", in: Eadem, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-Logy of Liberation*, London, SCM Press, 1993, 211-48: 226. See also Theresa Okure, "Women in the Bible", in: Virginia Fabella – Mercy Amba Oduyoye (eds.), *With Passion and Compassion: Third Women Doing Theology*, Maryknoll/NY, Orbis Books, 1988, 47-59: 56; Rakoczy, *In Her Name*..., 199-254.

[61] Rakoczy, *In Her Name*...

another. Or to suggest that there is a traditional interpretation and meaning of the text and to bracket out the others as hermeneutical reflections or current views that do not reflect the authorial intention. While Basil's view on Gal 3,28c say relatively little on how the statement in Gal 3,28c speaks of equality in Christ. On the contrary, Clement's point about the one identity and the equality of the believers in Christ may shed further light on contemporary discussions on the oneness and equality of the sexes in Christ. Clement's *Paedagogus* contains one of the most affirming or positive views concerning the equality of men and women in Christ, as well as recognizes the essential differences in their nature. This understanding could closely be identified with the so called complimentarian view. Whether and how other feminist discussions on Gal 3,28c can be sustained from the Church Fathers' is beyond the scope of this article.

Suffice it to say that some of the patristic understanding of Gal 3,28c have been upheld by current discussions on the text. And as we have noted, like in patristic times, modern scholars have not given serious attention to the literary and theological character of Gal 3,28 and especially to the meaning and significance of the form of the pairing in Gal 3,28c. The statement in Gal 3,28c contains important message(s) and meaning, but to get better idea of what Gal 3,28c is saying, much more thorough exegetical study of Gal 3,28c needs to be done.

VI. Reusing the Church Fathers' interpretation of Gal 3,28c to address present day concerns on gender

The results of our investigation of the history of the reception of Gal 3,28c for a consideration of the relevance of the Church Fathers' exegesis of the passage for today are both positive and negative. With respect to the positive contributions, Patristic understanding of Gal 3,28c shows that there is more than one way of reading Gal 3,28c. In addition, it shows that the so-called traditional or common position on the meaning of Gal 3,28c encompasses what we call the patristic contextual reading and their hermeneutical appropriation of the text. It is precisely these latter aspects that offer us insight into how Gal 3,28c can be investigated both from the original historical setting of the letter and the historical setting of the contemporary reader. The arguments of Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte reinforce our point, emphasizing even more strongly that the interpretation of Scripture is an «interpretive process that interrelates three poles: (1) a scriptural text, (2) the believers' life context, and (3) the believers' religious perceptions of life».[62] What this implies is that a given text, such as is the case of Gal

[62] Cristina Grenholm – Daniel Patte, "Overture: Receptions, Critical Interpretations, and

3,28c, can have several meanings in as much as a reader is reading the text from different theological and cultural perspectives.

Negatively we have to reckon with the fact that the so-called traditional interpretation(s) of Gal 3,28, i.e., patristic approaches to the passage, are still very influential and dominant. When we compare the interpretations of the Church Fathers with modern exegeses on Gal 3,28c, it is not surprising to see that most modern scholars arrive at similar conclusions on Gal 3,28c as is found in the Church Fathers despite the differences in their historical and contextual situations. These parallel or rather similar assumptions reveal that both patristic and modern writers share similar analytical observations as well as similar theological issues on Gal 3,28c. While these aspects inform our understanding of Gal 3,28, they also raise questions about the strengths and weaknesses of previous discussions on Gal 3,28c. Although both patristic and modern scholars have offered a number of explanations on Gal 3,28c, one notices that their suggestions pay insufficient attention to the use of the passage within the context of the letter.[63] It is not possible, within the limited scope of this study to raise questions on how we can resolve the problem of the tension between Paul's statements in Gal 3,28c and the rest of *Galatians*. It suffices to say that we need alternate explanations for Paul's use of Gal 3,28c. Although Pauline exegetes adhere so strongly to specific interpretations of Gal 3,28c or the vast majority follows a particular reading of Gal 3,28c, it is not ipso facto an evidence of a correct reading of the passage. We have to be receptive to the possibility of other interpretations of Gal 3,28c than the so-called traditional assumptions. Patristic hermeneutical openness to the meaning of Gal 3,28c suggests to us that we cannot avoid the concerns of a contemporary reader of Gal 3,28c.

Scriptural Criticism", in: Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (eds.), *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*, Harrisburg/PA, Trinity Press International, 2000, 1-54: 14, and their development of what they call «scriptural criticism», an integrated tri-polar approach to the interpretation of the Scripture provides a good illustration of this ongoing debate.

[63] For the reasons already mentioned, most scholars have thought that Paul's statement in Gal 3,28c is influenced by the creation account in Gen 1,27b LXX. In this context, the majority argue that the key issue in Gal 3,28c is creation. The second argument is that Gal 3,28 (and 3,28c) has parallels in Paul's other letters and these parallels in turn allude to a pre-Pauline baptismal formula. As such Gal 3,28c is understood as referring to the transformative experiences of the believers as reason of their baptism in Christ. The third argument is that **arsen** and **qhlu** are naturally taken to refer to human sexuality. While this opinion could be partially right, one questions how such theme is worked out in the context of the *Letter to the Galatians*. The fourth assumption is that Gal 3,28c speaks of equality. This is one of themes that scholars are unease with largely because this theme is more presumed than proved. In the context of our larger project on Gal 3,28c, and which will be taken up in our next study, I believe that a similar theme can be sustained but need to be substantiated.

VII. Conclusion

The purpose of this comparative study of patristic and modern interpretations of Gal 3,28c has been to correct the lack of proper attention given to patristic comments on the passage in question when dealing with contemporary, especially feminist, approaches to Gal 3,28c. While most modern scholars are of the opinion that some contemporary assertions of Gal 3,28c deviate in significant ways from the traditional interpretation of the text, we have shown in this study, that most current discussions on Gal 3,28c echo themes previously raised by the Church Fathers. Does this conclusion have anything to say to us today? Our answer was in the affirmative. Given what has been discussed above, our view is that patristic exegeses on Gal 3,28c are of considerable value not only to show that there has been more than one approach or way to read Gal 3,28c, but also to show that the several meanings of the text in question were shaped by the different historical situations of the time. If, as we have presented thus far, that there is a continuity between the way the Church Fathers employed the text in question and modern writers, then, one could rightly acknowledge that there is so much to be learnt from patristic readings of Gal 3,28c to contemporary readings. The present day gender issue is one of the products of history, just as the Church Fathers used Gal 3,28c to ask and answer questions concerning their faith, social, cultural and religious experiences, we need also to search for better ways to explore the range of potential meanings and significance of Gal 3,28c.

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