

# The Holy Spirit and Deification in Paul: A 'Western' Perspective

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*The Holy Spirit is the driving force of the life of Paul's churches.* Paul's letters provide ample evidence for this thesis. In order to illustrate this perspective on Paul's pneumatology and ecclesiology, we could, for example, turn to 1 Thessalonians and find out about the work of the Spirit in initiating and sanctifying Christian life. Or we could walk through 1 Corinthians and study the vitalizing and community-building effects of the Spirit and spiritual gifts in Paul's assemblies. Or we could look at the epistle to the Galatians and explore the significant role of the Spirit in Paul's response to his opponents who insisted on the works of the law as essential for those who follow Jesus the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> This list could easily be continued, and most students of Paul's epistles will find this broad perspective on the intimate relationship between the work of the Spirit and the spirituality of Paul's congregations uncontroversial.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, I want to use this contribution to focus on one of the

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<sup>1</sup> On the role of the Spirit in these three epistles, see, e.g., V. RABENS, "1 Thessalonians," in *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit* (ed. T. J. Burke and K. Warrington; London, 2014), 198–212; W. P. ATKINSON, "1 Corinthians," in *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit* (ed. T. J. Burke and K. Warrington; London, 2014), 146–159; J. M. G. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (SNTW; Edinburgh, 1988), 106–215; V. RABENS, "'Indicative and Imperative' as the Substructure of Paul's Theology-and-Ethics in Galatians? A Discussion of Divine and Human Agency in Paul," in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter* (ed. M. W. Elliott, S. J. Hafemann, N. T. Wright, and J. Frederick; Grand Rapids, 2014), 299–305.

<sup>2</sup> For general introductions to Paul's pneumatology, see, e.g., M. TURNER, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts – Then and Now* (Carlisle, 2nd ed., 1999), 101–132; V. RABENS, "Power from In Between: The Relational Experience of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in Paul's Churches," in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner* (ed. I. H. Marshall, V. Rabens, and C. Bennema; Grand Rapids, 2012), 138–155; and the in-depth treatment in G. D. FEE, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, 1994). The most extensive study in German has been provided by F. W. HORN, *Das Angeld des Geistes*.

more debated aspects of the vitalizing and community-building effect of the Spirit in Paul's communities. This aspect should be of special interest to our East-West dialogue because it concerns the nature of the transformation that the Spirit works in those that he indwells. In particular, I want to investigate *the transforming work of the Spirit from the perspective of deification or theosis*. Human deification has a long-standing tradition, especially in Orthodox theology,<sup>3</sup> but it has sometimes been treated with suspicion in Western approaches to Paul and Pauline pneumatology.<sup>4</sup>

Is it appropriate and illuminating to use the concept of deification when trying to fathom Paul's notion of human transformation by the Spirit? While one may think that employing this terminology in the context of our discussion is a proprium of Orthodoxy theology, a brief look at recent Anglo-American scholarship shows that it has almost become *en vogue* among some "Western" exegetes to use this language too. For instance, Stephen Finlan, Michael Gorman, Ben Blackwell, David Litwa, Tom Wright, and others are eager to describe Paul's theology from this perspective.<sup>5</sup> However, does the

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*Studien zur paulinischen Pneumatologie* (FRLANT 154; Göttingen, 1992); see also the short treatment in V. RABENS, "Begeisternde Spiritualität. Geisterfahrungen im Leben der paulinischen Gemeinden," *GLern* 26 (2011), 133–147. For a critical overview of the crucial literature on the Holy Spirit in Biblical Studies (including five sections on Pauline literature), cf. J. R. LEVISON and V. RABENS, "The Holy Spirit," *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0094.xml>.

<sup>3</sup> See the expositions of theosis in Eastern and Western traditions by the contributions to M. J. Christensen and J. A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids, 2007); and V. Kharlamov, ed., *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology. Vol. 2* (Eugene, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Thus recently, e.g., by G. MACASKILL, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford, 2013), 42–76.

<sup>5</sup> S. Finlan and V. Kharlamov, eds., *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology. Vol. 1* (Eugene, 2006); S. FINLAN, "Can We Speak of Theosis in Paul?," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (ed. M. J. Christensen and J. A. Wittung; Grand Rapids, 2007), 68–80 (n. 3); M. J. GORMAN, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, 2009); B. C. BLACKWELL, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria* (WUNT II.314; Tübingen, 2011); M. D. LITWA, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology* (BZNW 187; Berlin, 2012); N. T. WRIGHT, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (COQG 4; Minneapolis, 2013), 546, 1021–1023; M. J. GORMAN, "Paul's Corporate, Cruciform, Missional Theosis in 2 Corinthians," in *"In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (WUNT II.384; ed. M. J. Thate, K. J. Vanhoozer, and C. R. Campbell; Tübingen, 2014), 181–208; M. J. GORMAN, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids, 2015), esp. 261–296.

concept of deification help us to understand better the apostle's pneumatology and ecclesiology, and is it an accurate way of describing Paul's thought?<sup>6</sup>

In order to answer this question, we first of all need to provide a working definition of deification for the purpose of the present study. Constantine Campbell wonders whether the term deification

is actually helpful or if it dies the death of a thousand qualifications. Perhaps it is analogous to the term "mysticism" with reference to Paul's theology of union with Christ. It had to be qualified to such an extent that it ultimately failed to be useful.<sup>7</sup>

Michael Gorman agrees with this criticism of the use of the term "mysticism" regarding union with Christ, because it bears the danger of being understood merely as a private love affair (although he admits that in contrast to this individualistic misunderstanding, already Albert Schweitzer's *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*<sup>8</sup> had sensitivities to the corporate dimensions of Paul's spir-

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<sup>6</sup> This study utilizes and builds on my work in V. RABENS, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (WUNT II.283; Tübingen, 2nd ed., 2013), and V. RABENS, "Pneuma and the Beholding of God: Reading Paul in the Context of Philonic Mystical Traditions," in *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Ekstasis 5; ed. J. Frey and J. R. Levison; Berlin/New York, 2014), 293–329. The passages from Philo discussed in "Pneuma and the Beholding of God" provide further support for the model of relational transformation in Paul advanced in the present chapter as they form part of Paul's religious context. (At least) Two helpful articles related to these issues in Philo have been published since then: F. TIMMERS, "Philo of Alexandria's Understanding of πνεῦμα in *Deus* 33–50," in *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Ekstasis 5; ed. J. Frey and J. R. Levison; Berlin/New York, 2014), 265–292 (on the nature of the Spirit), and M. D. LITWA, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria," *SPA* 26 (2014), 1–27 (on deification). Litwa's work on Philo appears to be more nuanced than that on Paul, which I have critically engaged at greater length in "Pneuma and the Beholding of God" (cf. section 2 below). Litwa admits that in many places Philo comprehends Moses' godhood in metaphorical terms (thus the thesis of R. BAUCKHAM, "Moses as 'God' in Philo of Alexandria: A Precedent for Christology?," in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner* [ed. I. H. Marshall, V. Rabens, and C. Bennema; Grand Rapids, 2012], 246–265). However, Litwa's point is that "Philo can also think in ontological ways about Moses's participation in divinity. The different ways that Philo can speak about Moses's deification do not represent a vacillation, in my judgment. Rather, they represent the complexity of his theological thought, as well as his ability to modify his teachings to suit the occasion or the text that he is interpreting." Philo presents a form of deification in which Moses did not directly participate in the Existent; rather, he is "deified by participating in the *Logos*, the Mind of God, and Philo's 'second God'" (LITWA, "Deification of Moses," 27).

<sup>7</sup> C. R. CAMPBELL, *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, 2012), 366.

<sup>8</sup> A. SCHWEITZER, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London, 2nd ed., 1953).

ity).<sup>9</sup> However, as I have argued elsewhere, there is no need to dismiss certain terminology from the study of religions as long as one provides some qualification on how it (i.e., “mysticism”) is being employed with regard to the study of Paul.<sup>10</sup> When it comes to theosis, Gorman then concurs with this approach.<sup>11</sup> In his most recent book, Gorman defines theosis – which is used interchangeably with the terms deification, Christification, and Christosis<sup>12</sup> – as “Spirit-enabled transformative participation in the life and character of God revealed in the crucified and resurrected Messiah Jesus”.<sup>13</sup> This definition is open enough to be agreeable to many New Testament scholars.

For the sake of our discussion of Spirit-induced transformation in Paul in the context of our dialogue between Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions, it seems useful to turn to a more detailed definition of theosis that is informed by the developments in the Early Church.<sup>14</sup> This approach has the potential of equipping us to uncover aspects of Paul’s pneumatology and ecclesiology that we have not seen before. However, it also requires methodological caution lest one forces Paul’s thought into a procrustean bed of later developments. Ben Blackwell has recently provided a study that looks at Paul’s soteriology in the light of deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria. He distinguishes two ways of understanding deification in the ancient world: memorial/cultic (as in the apotheosis of heroes and emperors) and ontological deification. The latter category is the more dominant one. It can be divided into two different aspects: an essential ontology or an attributive ontology.

With *essential deification*, the human shares ontologically in the essence of the divine, or rather they contain a divine element within themselves ... Those proposing *attributive deification* maintain that humans remain ontologically separate from the divine primarily

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<sup>9</sup> GORMAN, “*Missional Theosis*,” 194–195 (n. 5).

<sup>10</sup> RABENS, “*Pneuma and the Beholding of God*,” 294–295, esp. note 7 (n. 6).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the title of his recent article which uses three (important) qualifiers: “Paul’s Corporate, Cruciform, *Missional Theosis*.”

<sup>12</sup> BLACKWELL, *Christosis* (n. 5); GORMAN, *Becoming the Gospel*, 7 (n. 5).

<sup>13</sup> GORMAN, *Becoming the Gospel*, 4, 261 (n. 5). He adds that there is no official definition of theosis but that “the fundamental theological axiom of theosis is the formulation by church fathers such as Irenaeus and Athanasius that God (or Christ) became what we are so that we might become what God (or Christ) is. This axiom is rooted in Pauline ‘interchange’ texts such as Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21; and 2 Cor 8:9 ... As a spiritual theology, theosis is predicated as well on the Pauline and Johannine experience of Christ’s indwelling (see, e.g., Gal 2:19–20; Eph 3:17; Col 1:27; Rom. 8:1–17; John 15; 17:20–23)” (p. 3–4, n. 9).

<sup>14</sup> This is not to suggest that Gorman would be unaware of the church fathers (cf. our previous note). However, in Blackwell’s study, the Fathers are explicitly set up as dialogue partners for Paul.

due to a distinction between the Creator and the created, but humans are ontologically changed as they share in particular divine attributes such as immortality.<sup>15</sup>

How does this terminological differentiation relate to our investigation of human transformation by the Spirit in Paul? Blackwell submits that

one distinction between essential-transformational deification and attributive deification is the nature of *pneuma*. With essential-transformational deification, the *pneuma* is the divine material in which believers come to share and by which they are constituted. In contrast, attributive deification maintains the agency of the Spirit as one who mediates the divine presence and thus always remains distinct from believers, who nonetheless come to take on a pneumatic body through the relationship.<sup>16</sup>

Blackwell provides two examples for these two lines of interpretation:

While not characterizing their discussion as deification, the contrast between essential-transformative and attributive deification directly parallels the distinction of the role of *pneuma* in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford, 2010), and Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (WUNT II.283; Tübingen, 2010).<sup>17</sup>

One of the aims of my paper is to elucidate the difference between these two approaches to human transformation by the divine Spirit in Paul. I have called the former approach to Paul's pneumatology, which Blackwell identifies as essential-transformational deification, *infusion-transformation*. My own approach, which Blackwell categorizes as attributive deification, conceptualizes the work of the Spirit in Paul as *relational transformation*. It should be noted at the outset that "relational" neither means "metaphorical"<sup>18</sup> nor "not ontological".<sup>19</sup> Paul's thinking moves beyond these false adjacency pairs.<sup>20</sup> We will look at both approaches in turn.

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<sup>15</sup> BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 104 (n. 5), italics added.

<sup>16</sup> BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 104 (n. 5).

<sup>17</sup> BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 104, note 13 (n. 5).

<sup>18</sup> It is somewhat confusing that Blackwell equates his category of "attributive deification" with Russel's category of "metaphorical deification" (BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 102–105, drawing on N. RUSSELL, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* [Oxford, 2004], 1–3). Attributive deification is a subcategory of ontological deification, whereas "metaphorical" may suggest to the majority of readers that the transformation is not ontological.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. n. 57 below.

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, my work has sometimes been (mis)read through these lenses. See the preface to the second edition of RABENS, *Spirit*, V–VII (n. 6). Cf. n. 28 below.

## 1. The Spirit's Work in Paul as Infusion-Transformation ("Essential-Transformational Deification")

The approach to the transforming work of the Spirit that Blackwell categorizes as "essential deification" has been championed in recent scholarship by the work of Friedrich W. Horn and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (although this is not the terminology).<sup>21</sup> It can build on a long-standing scholarly tradition that argues that the religious-ethical life of believers derives from an ontic change achieved by the infusion with divine πνεῦμα-substance. For example, Wrede, for whom salvation "is an *ontic transformation of humanity* which produces ethical transformation as its result", explains that Paul "appears to understand him [the Spirit] as a *heavenly substance* that transforms the human being substantially".<sup>22</sup> This view of the religious-ethical work of the Spirit can be called "infusion-transformation" because it suggests that a material πνεῦμα-substance<sup>23</sup> is like a "fluidum" poured into the believer. On the basis of its physical nature, the Spirit transforms the human soul (which is presupposed to be physical too) and makes it divine. Religious-ethical life flows almost automatically from this new nature.

This interpretation of the work of the Spirit in Paul usually locates the apostle in a Stoic context. However, an extensive examination of Greco-Roman literature reveals that these writings provide only very few direct links for the early Christian statement, "God has given us the Spirit".<sup>24</sup> Ac-

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<sup>21</sup> HORN, *Angeld* (n. 2); T. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford, 2010). Cf. M. D. LITWA, *Becoming Divine: An Introduction to Deification in Western Culture* (Eugene, 2013), 58–68.

<sup>22</sup> W. WREDE, "Paulus," in *Das Paulusbild in der neueren deutschen Forschung* (WdF 24; ed. K.H. Rengstorf; Darmstadt, 1969), 61: 58–59, italics added. Cf. O. PFLEIDERER, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology. Vol. 1: Exposition of Paul's Doctrine* (London, 1877), 201; H. GUNKEL, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit: The Popular View of the Apostolic Age and the Teaching of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia, 1979), 124–26. Thus also Asting: "on the basis of the fact that he receives the Holy Spirit, the Christian becomes a different person. The content of his soul is from now on divine ... and the Spirit brings forth a new, divine way of life" (R. ASTING, *Die Heiligkeit im Urchristentum* [FRLANT 46; Göttingen, 1930], 215).

<sup>23</sup> As the term "substance" is ambiguous, one should rather use "material or physical substance" in order to indicate that one operates with a concept of the Spirit as *Stoff* or (fine) matter. – Pauline scholars continue to apply a material concept of the Spirit to the letters of the apostle. See, e.g., most recently J. W. BARRIER, "Jesus' Breath: A Physiological Analysis of πνεῦμα within Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *JSNT* 37 (2014), 115–138; F. S. TAPPENDEN, "Embodiment, Folk Dualism, and the Convergence of Cosmology and Anthropology in Paul's Resurrection Ideals," *BI* 23 (2015), 428–455.

<sup>24</sup> See the more detailed treatment in V. RABENS, "Geistes-Geschichte: Die Rede vom Geist im Horizont der griechisch-römischen und jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur," *ZNT* 25 (2010), 46–55.

according to the teaching of the Stoics, everything and everyone “possesses” πνεῦμα. This is due to the fact that πνεῦμα was understood as a physical principle that permeates the entire cosmos and holds it together. No comparable distinction was made between divine and human S/spirit<sup>25</sup> as seems to be presupposed in Pauline texts like Romans 8:16 (“it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit ...”) and 1 Corinthians 2:10–12 (πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου / πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>26</sup> In Stoicism, the human spirit is a frag-

<sup>25</sup> Seneca’s “holy spirit that indwells within us” (*Ep.* 41.1) is no exception to this rule, for he explains a little later that this spirit is the god-given human soul that human beings should live in accord with (41.8–9).

<sup>26</sup> However, see the alternative interpretation of these passages by D. HELISO, “Divine Spirit and Human Spirit in Paul in the Light of Stoic and Biblical-Jewish Perspectives,” in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner* (ed. I. H. Marshall, V. Rabens, and C. Bennema; Grand Rapids, 2012), 156–76 (cf., more generally, J. R. LEVISON, *Filled with the Spirit* [Grant Rapids/Cambridge, 2009]). Heliso helpfully points out that the different contexts in which Paul uses πνεῦμα (such as Rom 1:9; 1 Cor 6:17; 12:13) indicate that Paul employs various linguistic expressions and imageries to describe his new understanding of πνεῦμα. “Paul – like others before, during and after him – uses divine and human categories but without implying the existence of two separate, distinct (metaphysical) entities.” Introducing a concept from Latin Christology, Heliso then argues for the *consubstantiality* between human spirit and divine spirit. However, although this position is theologically very attractive, it nonetheless seems to struggle to explain why Paul uses two different “linguistic expressions” for the same Spirit in the texts in question. Πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Cor 2:11 may indeed be of the same “substance” (as Gen 2:11 may indicate – though the talk of “substance” as such is problematic: see n. 23 above), but this common nature does not speak against the most obvious reading of the text. That is, on the one side, a human spirit is within the human being (πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; cf. 5:4; 14:14; 16:18; Rom 1:9) that knows what is truly human, and on the other side, only πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ comprehends what is truly God’s. However, 1 Cor 2:11 does not help us to understand what happens to the πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου when a person “receives” the πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ. Paul does not provide us with a systematic answer to this question. Nonetheless, what he says in Rom 8:15–16 certainly contradicts the Stoic concept of *toning up* the soul through philosophy – developing its muscles, assisting its use of its own capabilities more effectively, etc. (Seneca, *Ep.* 15; cf. 6.1 where Seneca uses *anima*, not *spiritus*). Rom 8:15–16 does not depict the human spirit as being “topped up” or “increased” (rather: ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας – v. 15). Although Heliso states that in verse 16 “the referent of τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν should not be different from the referent of αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα”, one wonders why Paul uses these two different expressions (which are not equated with ἐστίν, as κύριος and πνεῦμα in 2 Cor 3:17) when he says αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμέν τέκνα θεοῦ (Rom 8:16; cf. v. 26). It is clear from the preceding verses that αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα refers to πνεῦμα θεοῦ / πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας (vv. 14–15). However, if τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν would refer to the same (divine) Spirit too, the meaning of “testifying *with/to*” of συμμαρτυρέω is lost. This becomes even more problematic if Deut 19:15 was in the background of Paul’s use of συμμαρτυρέω: “Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses [δύο / τριῶν μαρτύρων] shall a charge be sustained.” The distinction between human and divine S/spirit conveyed in these two verses should certain-

ment of the all-pervading world-*pneuma*, which can also be referred to as “divine” (e.g., Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.19). Paul, however, uses a different concept when he speaks about “the Spirit of his son” who is sent by God into the hearts of the believers (Gal 4:6). As the presence of God and presence of Christ, the Spirit bears personal traits and is “received”.<sup>27</sup> There is, then, no evidence in Paul that he would share the same interest in the ontology of the Spirit as the Stoics did. We do not find any of the kind of discussions about the nature of πνεῦμα as we do in Stoicism.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, even in Stoicism, the concept of transformation through the infusion with πνεῦμα is not readily available in the form in which it is presupposed by the proponents of the infusion-transformation approach regarding Paul and his context. Despite some claims to the contrary, one hardly finds a Stoic text in which the ethical effect of πνεῦμα is explicitly treated.<sup>29</sup> As there is a lack of more explicit data, we can agree with Büchsel, Keener, and Annas that for the Stoics, the physical concept of πνεῦμα did not play a central role in their *ethics* but in their *physics*.<sup>30</sup> The Stoics thus had a materialis-

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ly not be overdrawn, but it should preserve us from speaking about the identity of the two, or even a “fusion” – a view championed 140 years ago by Pfleiderer (PFLEIDERER, *Paulinism*, 213–216 [n. 22]).

<sup>27</sup> This is not to say that Paul had a fully developed concept of the Spirit as a “person”; cf. Excursus 2 below.

<sup>28</sup> My study is in agreement with the fundamental point of the volume *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (2001). With regard to our topic, this means that it is an oversimplification to try to connect Paul to either a “Hellenistic-materialistic” or to a “Jewish-immaterialistic” pneumatology. However, it is likewise a false dichotomy when one forces a division between either a Stoic or a Platonic reading of πνεῦμα in Paul, as Engberg-Pedersen appears to do (ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Cosmology*, 16–19 [n. 21]). Engberg-Pedersen does not reckon with a third option, which is that Paul did not follow the agendas of either of these philosophical schools. Paul does not inquire into the (im/material) nature of πνεῦμα. The closest Paul comes to this interest in ontology is when, upon the question of the *Corinthians*, he discusses the nature of the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:35–54). However, it is the *resurrection body* that is in focus, not the nature of πνεῦμα. It is therefore misleading to make this the starting point not only of one’s conception of Pauline pneumatology but also of Paul’s theology in general (pace ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Cosmology*, 14 [n. 21]).

<sup>29</sup> The closest one can get, seems to be the description of Stoic physics by Diogenes Laertius in which he mentions in passing that the Stoics “consider that the passions are caused by the variations of the vital breath” (αἰτίας δὲ τῶν παθῶν ἀπολείποθαι τὰς περὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τροπὰς, 7.158).

<sup>30</sup> F. BÜCHSEL, *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh, 1926), 47; C. S. KEENER, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, 1997), 7; J. ANNAS, “Ethics in Stoic Philosophy,” *Phronesis* 52 (2007), 58–87, esp. 67. Nonetheless, it is of course not possible to divorce ethics from physics in Stoic philosophy. Cf. the discussions in M. BOERI, “Does Cosmic Nature Matter? Some Remarks on the

tic pneumatology, but not an ethic of substantive transformation with ethical results that is built upon it. After birth, a supplementary increase or “compression” of one’s individual πνεῦμα through external intervention by the divine (as the reception of the Spirit, cf. Gal 3:1–5; 1 Thess 1:4–6; etc.) is not intended in Stoic philosophy. Rather, *cognitive* transformation through philosophy and active reasoning played a central role in Stoic ethics.<sup>31</sup>

Careful exegesis of Paul’s epistles shows, then, that one cannot determine an explicit inclusion, transformation, or even densification of (nor a demarcation from) Stoic pneumatology in Paul’s writings.<sup>32</sup>

### *Excursus 1: The Alleged Infusion with the Spirit at Baptism*

The so-called “sacramental passages” in Paul (of which we will here focus on 1 Cor 12:13) are the *locus classicus* for establishing an infusion-transformation approach to Paul’s view of the Spirit’s work in the believers. Particularly with regard to baptism, the infusion-transformation view draws upon what has almost become the *communis opinio* of critical scholarship – namely, that Paul understands the Spirit to be imparted to believers by means of water-baptism.<sup>33</sup> A number of scholars, like Strecker, believe that this connection of

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Cosmological Aspects of Stoic Ethics,” in *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (ed. R. Salles; Oxford, 2009), 173–200; RABENS, *Spirit*, 30–35 (n. 6).

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., Seneca, *Ep.* 6.1–2; 73.15–16; 110.1, 10; Marcus Aurelius 8.14 [LS 61P]. Cf. A. A. LONG and D. N. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic Philosophers. Vol. 1: Translation of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge, 2001), 346–54, 359–68, 381–86; M. FORSCHNER, *Die Stoische Ethik. Über den Zusammenhang von Natur-, Sprach- und Moralphilosophie im altstoischen System* (Stuttgart, 1981), 151; M. NUSSBAUM, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994), esp. 316–401; C. HORN, *Antike Lebenskunst. Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern* (BsR 1271; München, 1998), 11–60, 147–191; T. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh, 2000), 45–79; J. WARE, “Moral Progress and Divine Power in Seneca and Paul,” in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (RMCS; ed. J.T. Fitzgerald; London, 2008), 267–83; L. T. JOHNSON, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (AYBRL; Yale, 2009), 70–71. Philosophy’s ethical function is understood as that of *toning up* the soul – developing its muscles, assisting its use of its own capabilities more effectively (Seneca, *Ep.* 15; this is not a metaphor but a physical idea, as Nussbaum, *Therapy*, 317–18, points out). On Stoic physics of the mind, see further, LONG and SEDLEY, *Philosophers. I*, 313–23, 368, 385–86 (n. 31).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. RABENS, *Spirit*, 25–120 (n. 6).

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., H.-J. Klauck: The Spirit “is infused by means of the *pneuma*-containing sacramental signs, through baptism and through the gifts of the Eucharist” (H.-J. KLAUCK, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* [NTA NS 15; Münster, 2nd ed., 1986], 334). See further 289; U. SCHNELLE, *Gerechtigkeit und Christusgegenwart. Vorpaulinische und nachpaulinische Tauftheologie* (GTA 24; Göttingen, 1983), 125–26, 133, 164; G. HAUFÉ, “Taufe und Heiliger Geist im Urchristentum,” *ThLZ* 101 (1976), 169, 419; M.-A. CHEVALLIER, *Souffle de Dieu: Le Saint-Esprit dans le Nouveau Testament. Vol. 2: L’apôtre Paul etc.* (Le Point Théologique 26; Paris, 1990), 381; A. J. M. WEDDERBURN, “Pauline Pneumatology and

Spirit and water “most likely derives from the fact that the Spirit enters into a substantial union with the water”.<sup>34</sup> Berger explains that – due to the material concept of the Spirit that was predominant in antiquity and the Bible – the “problems of transmission [‘Transmissionsprobleme (Übergang, Vermittlung zwischen Geist und Körper)’], which were to become characteristic of western philosophy”, did not arise.<sup>35</sup> On the basis of this line of thinking, Horn draws the following conclusion in relation to human transformation in Paul: “The holiness of the church is settled by the gift of the Spirit (1 Thess 4:8; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19) because it is sacramentally transferred (1 Cor 6:11).”<sup>36</sup>

The verdict that the Spirit is transferred through baptism is opposed by a number of scholars,<sup>37</sup> and various authors propose a more differentiated view of the matter.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it seems helpful to conceptualize the entry into the community of Christ-believers in Paul by utilizing Dunn’s widely accepted notion of “conversion-initiation”.<sup>39</sup> Dunn argues that the event of becoming a Christian comprises both water-baptism and

the more inward, subjective (even mystical) aspects, like repentance, forgiveness, union with Christ. I shall therefore use “initiation” to describe the ritual, external acts as distinct from these latter, and “conversion” when we are thinking of that inner transfor-

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Pauline Theology,” in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn* (ed. G. Stanton, B. W. Longenecker, and S. C. Barton; Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2004), 151; D. ZELLER, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 5; Göttingen, 2010), 397; ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Cosmology*, 69 (n. 21); U. SCHNELLE, “Taufe als Teilhabe an Christus,” in *Paulus Handbuch* (ed. F. W. Horn; Tübingen, 2013), 334–335. For a list of further scholars who hold this view, see J. D. G. DUNN, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London, 2nd ed., 2010), 98, note 11), and, with specific reference to 1 Cor 12:13, A. R. CROSS, “Spirit- and Water-Baptism in 1 Corinthians 12.13,” in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies* (JSNTSup 234; ed. S.E. Porter and A.R. Cross; London, 2002), 121, note 2.

<sup>34</sup> G. STRECKER, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Bearbeitet, ergänzt und herausgegeben von Friedrich Wilhelm Horn) (Berlin/New York, 1996), 173, note 79.

<sup>35</sup> K. BERGER, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums. Theologie des Urchristentums* (UTBW; Tübingen/Basel, 2nd ed., 1995), 53. Cf. HORN, *Angeld*, 57 (n. 2). Levison even thinks that πνεῦμα is released through the penis during sexual intercourse (J. R. LEVISON, “The Spirit and the Temple in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians,” in *Paul and His Theology* [PS 3; ed. S. E. Porter; Leiden, 2006], 206).

<sup>36</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 387, 298 (n. 2).

<sup>37</sup> E.g. BÜCHSEL, *Geist*, 426–427 (n. 30); K. STALDER, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus* (Zürich, 1962), 79, 201–202, 447; M. BARTH, *Die Taufe – Ein Sakrament? Ein exegetischer Beitrag zum Gespräch über die kirchliche Taufe* (Zollikon-Zürich, 1951), *passim*; W. F. ORR and J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City, 1976), 284; H.-C. MEIER, *Mystik bei Paulus. Zur Phänomenologie religiöser Erfahrung im Neuen Testament* (TANZ 26; Tübingen, 1998), 271; M. FATEHI, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul: An Examination of Its Christological Implications* (WUNT II.128; Tübingen, 2000), 169.

<sup>38</sup> E.g., J. D. G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh, 1998), 450–455; see also Horn’s developmental model of the connection of baptism and Spirit-transferal (HORN, *Angeld*, 142–143 [n. 2]).

<sup>39</sup> See CROSS, “Corinthians,” 126, note 18 (n. 33), for an extensive list of scholars who have adopted Dunn’s concept.

mation as distinct from, or rather without including, the ritual acts. The total event of becoming a Christian embraces both “conversion” and “initiation”, and so we shall call it “conversion-initiation.”<sup>40</sup>

Paul does not offer separate treatments of conversion on one side and initiation on the other. Rather, as Hofius and others have argued, the Spirit is received *in the process of* (or as part and parcel of) conversion-initiation.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, building on the presupposition that Paul teaches that the Spirit is received in baptism, Horn states that when Paul says “we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13), he tries to suggest that the Spirit has become “the substance of the new being”. This means that “Paul ... presupposes that the church is familiar with the fact that the Spirit is comparable to a substance or fluid which has been incorporated sacramentally into the believer; it has thus become the new substance of his existence.”<sup>42</sup> Horn explains further that “with the sacramental transfer of the Spirit an ontic basis of the new being is given, from which conduct in harmony with the Spirit is to be expected”.<sup>43</sup>

Troy W. Martin has attempted to provide new grounds for these claims by studying ancient medicine. Martin writes that

Paul’s association of the reception of the Spirit with water baptism in 1 Cor 12:13a implicates the pores of the moistened skin as the ports of the Spirit’s entry into the human body. The author of *Nutriments* writes that moisture is the vehicle of nutriment and without moisture the body cannot assimilate nutriment. Thus, water baptism is necessary for receiving the nutriment of Spirit.<sup>44</sup>

Martin thus attempts to explain 12:13a with parallels from ancient medical literature. He even believes to find support within the biblical tradition itself. He thinks that Mark’s account of Jesus’s baptism implicates the moistened pores as the entrance of the Spirit. Mark 1:10 narrates that as Jesus stepped out (ἀναβαίνων ἐκ) of the water, the Spirit stepped into (καταβαίνων εἰς αὐτόν) him. Martin concludes:

Since baptism does not involve drinking the holy water until later among the Gnostics and Mandaeanes but rather involves immersing the body in water, the baptismal reception of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12:13a does not reflect an understanding of the Spirit’s entry through the digestive system or through the oro-nasal passages but rather through the pores of the moistened skin.<sup>45</sup>

The foundations on which Martin rests his case are shaky. For one thing, in Mark 1:10 the Spirit comes *from above* (like the voice from heaven), not “from below” out of the water

<sup>40</sup> DUNN, *Baptism*, 7 (n. 33).

<sup>41</sup> O. HOFIUS, “Wort Gottes und Glaube bei Paulus,” in *Paulus und das antike Judentum. Tübingen-Durham-Symposium im Gedenken an den 50. Todestag Adolf Schlatters (19. Mai 1938)* (WUNT 1.58; ed. M. Hengel and U. Heckel; Tübingen, 1991), 400–401; M. HAUGER, “Die Deutung der Auferweckung Jesu Christi bei Paulus,” in *Die Wirklichkeit der Auferstehung* (ed. H.-J. Eckstein and M. Welker; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2002), 54, esp. note 109; CROSS, “Corinthians,” 132 (n. 33).

<sup>42</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 175 (n. 2).

<sup>43</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 388 (n. 2).

<sup>44</sup> T. W. MARTIN, “Paul’s Pneumatological Statements and Ancient Medical Texts,” in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune* (SNT 122; ed. J. Fotopoulos; Leiden, 2006), 116–117, referring to Hippocrates, *Alim.* 55.1.

<sup>45</sup> MARTIN, “Statements,” 117 (n. 44).

that Jesus is leaving behind.<sup>46</sup> More importantly, while Martin is right that the ancient medics understood πνεῦμα to be a physical element that is physically transferred, he has overlooked that all of these sources deal with πνεῦμα in the sense of *air* and thus need to be differentiated from texts concerned with the Spirit of God.<sup>47</sup> The following quotation of Erasistratus, who is frequently cited by Martin, gives ample evidence that there are no parallels between Paul's writings and those of the medics. Erasistratus maintains that "when an artery was severed, the *pneuma* it contained escaped unperceived and created a vacuum whose pull drew blood from the adjacent veins (*paremptōsis*) through fine capillaries (*sunanastomōses*) which were normally closed. This blood then spurted out of the artery after the escaping *pneuma* [VII.19 & 20]."<sup>48</sup> Paul's language and purpose differ considerably from this medical account. In 1 Cor 12:13, Paul is concerned with the basis of the Corinthians' unity and not with the mode of the reception of the S/spirit and of spiritual nutriment.

Martin has taken issue with Fatehi's and my criticism of Horn's position. He maintains that the ancient medical context of Paul's Spirit-texts permits them to be interpreted either literally or metaphorically, for even if the statements were completely metaphorical, the ancient physiology of πνεῦμα would have provided the perceived reality from which the metaphors arose.<sup>49</sup> However, Martin does not provide any evidence for his claim that Paul's Spirit-metaphors developed from ancient medical discourses. Nor does he discuss any alternative frameworks, particularly those from the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish literature of the Second Temple Period which reveal significant linguistic and conceptual parallels to that of Paul's pneumatology.<sup>50</sup> In the end, as the apostle does not discuss the (physical) nature of the Holy Spirit, Martin's exegesis of Paul's Spirit-texts is largely based on arguments from silence.

In any case, it seems obvious that Martin has overstated his case because his claim that "water baptism is necessary for receiving the nutriment of Spirit" is contradicted both by the ancient medics and by himself. All of them knew other entry points of the Spirit apart from the pores of the skin. More generally, one wonders why the Spirit would first need to move into the water and then into the believer. In the case of baptism in the running waters of a river, this would mean that for Paul the river would need to be indwelled or fused with πνεῦμα so that πνεῦμα could be received by the person to be baptized. It thus seems that it is the proponents of the infusion-transformation approach who have created "problems of

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<sup>46</sup> Had there been anything physical involved in the reception of the Spirit, it would have been transferred via the dove and not via the water. However, it is important to note that the author explicitly says "like a dove". Apart from that, in keeping with the image of the dove, εἰς is better rendered as "upon" (so all major translations, signaling empowering) than as "into" in Martin's sense of "entry."

<sup>47</sup> Sometimes the anthropological spirit is in view; cf. n. 26 above.

<sup>48</sup> Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 6.6 (548–50K = *CMG* V.4.1.2 p. 396 De Lacy = Erasistratus Fr. 201 Garofalo), quoted according to J. LONGRIGG, *Greek Medicine From the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age – A Source Book* (London, 1998), 95.

<sup>49</sup> MARTIN, "Statements," 117, note 57 (n. 44), referring to V. RABENS, "The Development of Pauline Pneumatology: A Response to F. W. Horn," *BZ* 43 (1999), 169–172, and FATEHI, *Relation*, 168–169 (n. 37).

<sup>50</sup> See RABENS, *Spirit*, 25–79, 146–170; on the interpretation of (Spirit-) metaphors, see my detailed discussion in *Idem.*, pp. 43–54 (n. 6).

transmission”<sup>51</sup> and not those who are skeptical that Paul had such a view of water and of the Spirit of God.

Returning to the claims regarding 1 Cor 12:13 mentioned above, we finally want to ask two questions: First, does this passage convey that Paul reckoned with the infusion with the material Spirit at baptism (cf. 6:11)? Second, is there an infusion with the material Spirit at the Lord’s Supper (cf. 10:3–4)? I have provided a detailed answer to these two questions elsewhere. Here I can only present a short summary.<sup>52</sup> In responding to the first question (which focuses on 12:13a: “for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”), we have already engaged with T. Martin’s arguments for a physical πνεῦμα-transferal based on the insights from ancient medical texts. A detailed comparison of both texts (and genres) shows that Paul’s language and purpose differ considerably from medical accounts. In 12:13, Paul is concerned with the basis of the Corinthians’ unity, and he does not evidently presuppose a particular mode of the reception of the S/spirit and of spiritual nutriment. This leads to the conclusion that 1 Corinthians 12:13a does not lend support to the infusion-transformation approach to Paul’s ethics. The Spirit is not portrayed as *Stoff* that is transferred through the water of baptism in order to re-organize the interior of believers in such a way that holy living would be a natural result. Nor is it likely that the half-line has the Synoptic tradition of “baptism in the Spirit” in view (*pace* Barth, Dunn, Fee, et al.), although it is possible that Paul uses βαπτίζεω as a metaphor for being “plunged” (i.e., incorporated) into the one body by the one Spirit. More likely, however, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their common experience of (the facilitating activity [ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is instrumental] of) the one Spirit at their baptism. This conclusion also holds true for 1 Corinthians 6:11. Again, Paul refers the Corinthians back to their conversion-initiation, and the Spirit, though not the single focus of the verse, is portrayed as an instrument of sanctification (cf. Ezek 36:25–27). However, this connection provides no clues that Paul would in this way introduce the concept of infusion-transformation as an answer to the ethical problems of the Corinthian Christians.

In order to answer the second question (which regards 12:13c: “we were all made to drink of one Spirit”), one needs to engage with the two interpretative options of this sentence as a reference to either the Lord’s Supper or baptism. I suggest that it is preferable to read πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν as a metaphor for the Corinthians’ reception of the Spirit, functioning as a *pars pro toto* reference to the Spirit’s activity in conversion-initiation. A metaphorical reading means that the giving of πνεῦμα (tenor) is spoken of in terms which are suggestive of the *drinking* of a fluid (vehicle), thus resulting in a new meaning.<sup>53</sup> A literal interpretation of the locution, *per contra*, conveys that the Spirit itself is a fluid (or fuses with the wine in the Eucharist or the waters of baptism) and enters the person via the skin at baptism or via the mouth and digestive system at the Eucharist. However, 1 Corinthians 12 provides suggestive evidence for interpreting 12:13 as a reminder to the Corinthians of their common experience of the Spirit at conversion-initiation. Thus, in 13a πνεῦμα is the subject of divine action in that the Spirit is portrayed as the instrument of baptism into the body of Christ. In 13c πνεῦμα is the object of divine action in that the Spirit is granted to be taken in by the converts. However, we do not see any

<sup>51</sup> BERGER, *Theologiegeschichte*, 53 (n. 35), as quoted above.

<sup>52</sup> RABENS, *Spirit*, 98–119 (n. 6). Cf. the summary article: V. RABENS, “Ethics and the Spirit in Paul (1): Religious-Ethical Empowerment through Infusion-Transformation?,” *ExpTim* 125 (2014), 209–219.

<sup>53</sup> My argument works in the same way on the alternative rendering of ἐποτίσθημεν against an agricultural background as “we were watered.”

evidence that the Spirit was assumed by Paul to be a (physical) substance that would be incorporated into believers through the baptismal waters or the Eucharistic drink in order to become the new substance of their existence.

From the perspective of the *reception* of Paul's letters, however, we cannot (and need not) rule out that Paul's Spirit-language, as for instance the image of being made to drink of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13c), evoked associations of Stoic pneumatology in Paul's audience. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the philosophic language of Stoicism and of the ancient medics fundamentally differs from that of Paul. Furthermore, the proponents of the infusion-transformation view would need to provide evidence that Stoic pneumatology was part of the general education of the members of Paul's churches (and not just of the educated elite), and that they would, over and above that, be able to fill the logical gaps between the role of πνεῦμα in Stoic physics and the infusion-transformation concept of religious-ethical empowerment. As this potential interpretative framework is the main grounds for arguing, from the perspective of Paul's pneumatology, for an essential deification of the believer, we can conclude that this approach to the transforming work of the Spirit in Paul is at best speculative. In the next part, I will suggest that the activity of the Spirit in the context of deification in Paul is better understood from a relational perspective.

## 2. The Spirit's Work in Paul as Relational Transformation ("Attributive Deification")

Thus far I have discussed what I have called the "infusion-transformation" approach to the work of the Spirit in Paul's churches. According to this view, the Spirit brings about religious-ethical life predominantly by means of the ontologically transforming effect of its *physical nature*. It can be understood as essential-transformational deification as the Spirit is the divine material in which believers come to share and by which they are constituted. In the relational approach to the transforming work of the Spirit to which we turn now, however, I suggest that the Spirit effects religious-ethical life predominantly by means of *intimate relationships* created by the Spirit with God (Αββα), Jesus, and fellow believers. My central thesis is that *it is primarily through deeper knowledge of, and an intimate relationship with, God, Jesus Christ, and with the community of faith that people are transformed and empowered by the Spirit for religious-ethical life*. While I have developed this model on the basis of the exegesis of a number of key Pauline texts of which some shall be discussed in the present section, it is worth noting that modern psychological research is nevertheless in agreement with the results of my investiga-

tion.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, this new model is firmly rooted within Pauline theology. For one thing, relationships are central in the writings of Paul and in the tradition on which he draws. Moreover, Paul’s epistles amply evidence that the apostle comprehended intimate and loving relationships to be empowering.<sup>55</sup>

The difference between infusion-transformation and my relational approach to the work of the Spirit in Paul can be illustrated with the following two diagrams:

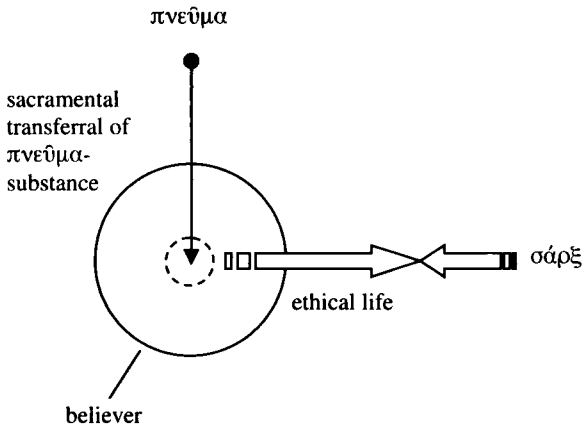


Diagram 1: The “infusion-transformation model”: “static” transformation

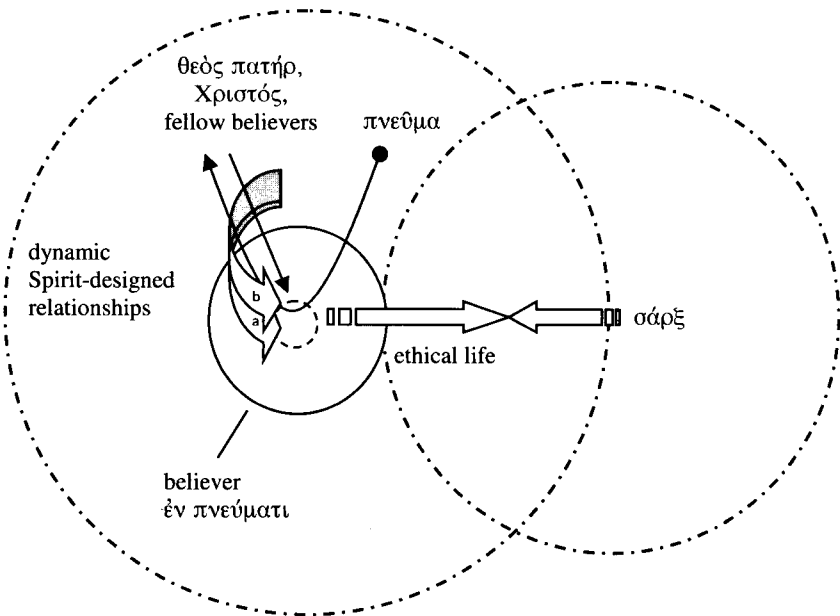
Diagram 1 is a sketch of the infusion-transformation approach (essential deification). The (material) πνεῦμα is infused into the person – namely, into her interior or “inner being” (ψυχή/καρδία/νοῦς/πνεῦμα/ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, etc.), symbolized by the inner circle (the line is broken because the person is here

<sup>54</sup> On the empowering nature of positive, intimate (human) relationships, see, e.g., R. A. HINDE, *Towards Understanding Relationships* (EMSP 18; London, 1979), 4, 14, 273, 326; J. BOWLBY, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York, 1988), 119–136; H. LAFOLLETTE, *Personal Relationships: Love, Identity, and Morality* (Oxford, 1996), 89–90, 197–99, 207–209; L. STECHER, *Die Wirkung sozialer Beziehungen. Empirische Ergebnisse zur Bedeutung sozialen Kapitals für die Entwicklung von Kindern und Jugendlichen* (München, 2001), 249–250; P. R. SHAVER and M. MIKULINER, “Attachment Theory, Individual Psychodynamics, and Relationship Functioning,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships* (ed. A.L. Vangelisti and D. Perlman; Cambridge, 2006), 251–271.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. RABENS, *Spirit*, 133–138 (Paul), 146–170 (early Judaism); V. RABENS, “The Faithfulness of God and its Effects on Faithful Living: A Critical Analysis of Tom Wright’s Faithfulness to Paul’s Ethics,” in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N.T. Wright* (WUNT II; ed. M. F. Bird, C. Heilig, and J. T. Hewitt; Tübingen, 2016), section 2, forthcoming.

conceptualized as a psychosomatic unity, symbolized by the outer circle, the somatic boundary). Ethical life is the outflow of this transformation (proving itself in the face of the opposing powers of σάρξ, etc.). The proponents of infusion-transformation are not very clear whether further change or empowering is to be expected after the person has been changed through the πνεῦμα-substance at baptism. The significance of further impartation of πνεῦμα-substance at the Eucharist is not explicitly spelled out. It therefore seems justified to call this model “static”.

The relational model that I have suggested is a dynamic one, and hence more complex:



*Diagram 2:* The “relational model”: dynamic transformation (a) and empowering (b)

Diagram 2 depicts the believer as influenced by relationships. At the outset, this is marked by the transfer of the believer into the sphere of influence of the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι, indicated by the large hatched circle). The consequence is a different, more remote relation to σάρξ and a new relationship to πνεῦμα.<sup>56</sup> The first part (‘a’) of the model covers the aspect of transformation. As we will see in more detail further below, in 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul describes transformation as the result of the Spirit’s relational work. In

<sup>56</sup> However, this view is not centered on a relationship to the Spirit as a person. See Excursus 2 below.

the diagram, this is symbolized by the big, round arrow ‘a’: the transforming power is drawn from the believer’s Spirit-created relationships to θεός (αββα ὁ πατήρ), Χριστός, and fellow believers. These intimate relationships are signified by the two converse arrows which are initiated by πνεῦμα. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks about *transformation*, round arrow ‘a’ is targeted at the inner being of the believer. However, the force of Paul’s phrase μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν is taken into account, so that this (ontological)<sup>57</sup> transformation and deification is comprehended as “gradual” or “dynamic”. The second big round arrow (‘b’) represents those passages in Paul (e.g., Rom 8:12–17; 1:11–12) that do not explicitly say that the Spirit’s relational work *transforms* believers but that imply *empowering* for religious-ethical life. Round arrow ‘b’ is hence not aimed at the core of the person. However, the core of the person does not remain unaffected in the process of empowering because the change of the believer’s relationship to God, Christ, and fellow believers has transforming effects on the person (identity, etc.). This is indicated by the fact that the arrow that leads from πνεῦμα to God *et alii* takes its route through the core of the believer. The result of these intimate relationships is that the believer is strengthened and empowered.

*Excursus 2: The Nature of the Spirit in Pauline Literature:  
Person, (Immaterial) Substance, or What?*

The infusion-transformation approach to the transforming work of the Spirit in Paul builds on the concept of the Spirit as a material substance. I have indicated above (and demonstrated at length elsewhere) that this presupposition rests in many cases on a failure to recognize and interpret adequately (i.e., in line with the discourse topic, etc.) the figurative language used by the various early Jewish authors (including Paul).<sup>58</sup> This methodological

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<sup>57</sup> There is hence no opposition between the infusion-transformation approach and my relational approach from the perspective of “ontology”. I build on Dunn’s insight regarding the effects of justification-sanctification according to Paul, that “the basic idea assumed by Paul was of a relationship in which God acts on behalf of his human partner, first in calling Israel into and then in sustaining Israel in its covenant with him ... The covenant God counts the covenant partner as still in partnership, despite the latter’s continued failure. But the covenant partner could hardly fail to be transformed by a living relationship with the life-giving God” (DUNN, *Theology*, 344 [n. 38]). Applying this insight to the debated ontological frameworks of human transformation by the Spirit means to appreciate that the dominance of the (covenant) relationship of God with his people in Paul’s thinking rules out the “relational-as-opposed-to-ontological” approach to Paul’s theology and anthropology that is evidenced by Dockery and others (D. S. DOCKERY, “New Nature and Old Nature,” *DPL*, 628; followed by J. M. HOWARD, *Paul, the Community, and Progressive Sanctification: An Exploration into Community-Based Transformation within Pauline Theology* [SBL 90; New York, 2007], 81, [note 61]; cf. J. BUCHEGGER, *Erneuerung des Menschen. Exegetische Studien zu Paulus* [TANZ 40; Tübingen, 2003], 295).

<sup>58</sup> See the detailed discussion in RABENS, *Spirit*, 23–120; on the identification and interpretation of metaphors, see esp. pp. VI, 43–54 (n. 6).

sophistication also needs to be applied to potentially metaphorical language that is regularly interpreted as conveying a “personal” notion of the Spirit. Already the Hebrew Bible evidences such a huge variety of examples of Spirit-language that, when interpreting them literally, it would be difficult to assign a particular concept of the Spirit to each different phrase. For example, what ontology of the Spirit would be implied by the assertion that the Spirit “clothed himself with Gideon” (Judg 6:34), and how would such an ontology line up with the Spirit being “on” (Num 11:25–26; Isa 32:15; Joel 2:28–29; etc.), “rushing on” (Judg 14:6; etc.), “with” (Exod 31:3; Dan 4:9; Mic 3:8; etc.) or “in” (Gen 6:3; Num 27:18; Dan 5:14; etc.) people? As both individual writers as well as the Old Testament in general freely vary the kinds of (mutually inconsistent) usage of Spirit-locutions, it seems that they do not consider them literal forms of language, particularly as they often appear in literary genres where non-literal language abounds (prayers, prophecies, psalms, etc.).<sup>59</sup>

Also Paul evidences a variety of divergent Spirit-locutions. In his contribution to this volume, John Fotopoulos has listed the majority of the verbs relating Spirit-activities that may suggest a concept of πνεῦμα as a “person”. He seems to be happy to see both the concept of the Holy Spirit as a material substance as well as that of a (Trinitarian<sup>60</sup>) person to co-exist in Paul (i.e., he does not discuss their correlation). An alternative approach has been chosen by Friedrich W. Horn, who assigns different developmental stages to these differing clusters of Spirit-locutions.<sup>61</sup> However, Horn is faced with the question: On what grounds does Paul *now* attribute a particular new aspect to the Spirit if he had not done so

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. M. B. TURNER, “Spirit Endowment in Luke-Acts: Some Linguistic Considerations,” *VoxEv* 12 (1981), 56–58. G. B. CAIRD, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London, 1980), 190, notes that the juxtaposition of a number of different images in a text is a mark of the linguistic awareness writer that a is using metaphors.

<sup>60</sup> On the relation of the Spirit in Paul to the concept of “trinity,” see FATEHI, *Relation* (n. 37); M. B. TURNER, “‘Trinitarian’ Pneumatology in the New Testament? – Towards an Explanation of the Worship of Jesus,” *ATJ* 57/58 (2002/2003), 167–186; J. FREY, “How did the Spirit become a Person?,” in *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Ekstasis 5; ed. J. Frey and J. R. Levison; Berlin/New York, 2014), 343–371; W. HILL, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids, 2015); C. TILLING, “Paul, the Trinity and Contemporary Trinitarian Debates,” *PJBR* 11 (2016), forthcoming.

Tibbs and Williams seek to shift scholarly opinion on the nature of πνεῦμα into a different direction. They argue that πνεῦμα in Paul refers to a “spirit world” (C. TIBBS, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14* [WUNT II.230; Tübingen, 2007]; C. TIBBS, “The Spirit (World) and the (Holy) Spirits among the Earliest Christians: 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 as a Test Case,” *CBQ* 70 [2008], 321–30; G. WILLIAMS, *The Spirit World in the Letters of Paul the Apostle: A Critical Examination of the Role of Spiritual Beings in the Authentic Pauline Epistles* [FRLANT 231; Göttingen, 2009]). However, πνεῦμα is in Paul regularly qualified as πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ, τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ (Rom 8:9, 11; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; etc.), τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ (e.g., Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 2:11; 6:11; 7:40; 12:3; Phil 3:3; cf. 1 Thess 4:8), ἐν πνεύματι, τὸ ... αὐτὸ πνεῦμα (e.g., 1 Cor 12:4, 8–9, 11, 13), etc. These unambiguous passages, which contradict a plural rendering of πνεῦμα as “spirit world,” suggest that Paul may also refer to this *one* Spirit when he uses πνεῦμα without qualification (unless he employs πνεῦμα with an anthropological reference, etc., as, e.g., in Rom 8:16) or as πνεῦμα ἄγιον (e.g., 1 Cor 12:3).

<sup>61</sup> See the summary and critique in RABENS, “Development,” 161–179 (n. 49).

before? Why would Paul need the Corinthians to make him adopt a material concept of the Spirit that he should have been familiar with from his Jewish upbringing (since Horn thinks that texts like Sir 39:6; IQH<sup>a</sup> 15.7; *JosAs* 8.9; 15.5; 16.14–16; 19.11; etc., convey a material concept of the Spirit)?<sup>62</sup> The same question needs to be raised concerning Horn's last stage of Pauline pneumatology. Why should it be only at the time of writing Romans that Paul would ascribe activities to the Spirit that, according to Horn, assume the Spirit to be a hypostasis? The way in which Paul describes some activities of the Spirit at the time of 1 Corinthians, however, might suggest that he was attributing personal traits to the Spirit already then (2:10–13; 3:16; 6:11; 12:11; cf. 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 4:6; 5:17–18, 22–23). Fee even believes that these references, together with Rom 8 (e.g., v. 27: "God knows *the mind* of the Spirit"), disclose the Spirit to be a person – and not an impersonal influence or substance (i.e., he understand these concepts to be mutually exclusive).<sup>63</sup> While one may not want to go as far as Fee,<sup>64</sup> one will nevertheless need to acknowledge the possibility that the Hebrew Bible imagery mentioned above – which *might* originally have been developed against the background of a concept of the Spirit as substance – had become a dead metaphor at Paul's time, and a personal concept of the Spirit had come more to the foreground for Paul. In order not to commit the same mistake as Horn and build our view of Paul's conception of the Spirit on his use of metaphors (or personifications), however, it would be wise to go no further than to say that Paul understands the Spirit as having *personal traits*.<sup>65</sup> This view seems to suggest itself on the basis of the fact that the dominant cluster of metaphors tends to revolve around activities usually ascribed to persons. Moreover, the similarity of the nexus of activities that elsewhere is attributed to either the Father or the Son (cf. 1 Cor 12:6, 11; Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 3:6; Rom 8:26, 34) and yet the clear distinction of the three (1 Cor 2:10; 12:4–11; 2 Cor 13:13; Rom 8:27) explicitly locate the Spirit on the side of a "personal" Jesus" and God. This may or may not exclude the possibility of the Spirit being a material substance (Horn sees both "hypostasis" and *Stoff* clearly in Rom 5:5).<sup>66</sup> But at least it is evident that even from within Horn's own methodology Paul's development was not as drastic as Horn proposes because Paul would already have con-

<sup>62</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 40–48, 54–59 (n. 2).

<sup>63</sup> FEE, *Presence*, 830–831 (n. 2). Cf. H. BERTRAMS, *Das Wesen des Geistes nach der Anschauung des Apostels Paulus. Eine biblisch-theologische Untersuchung* (NTA 4.4; Münster, 1913), 144–166; V. WARNACH, "Das Wirken des Pneuma in den Gläubigen nach Paulus," in *Pro Veritate. Ein theologischer Dialog. FS L. Jaeger and W. Stählin* (ed. E. Schlink and H. Volk; Münster, 1963), 184–89; J. MALEPARAMPIL, *The 'Trinitarian' Formulae in St. Paul: An Exegetical Investigation into the Meaning and Function of those Pauline Sayings which Compositely Make Mention of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit* (EUS 23; Frankfurt, 1995).

<sup>64</sup> See the methodological caution of E. SCHWEIZER, "A Very Helpful Challenge: Gordon Fee's *God's Empowering Presence*," *JPT* 8 (1996), 7–21, 13–16. Cf. O. KUSS, *Der Römerbrief. Vol. 2 (Röm 6,11 bis 8,19)* (Regensburg, 2nd ed., 1963), 580–584.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. A. J. M. WEDDERBURN, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco-Roman Background* (WUNT 1.44; Tübingen, 1987), 266–267; H.-D. WENDLAND, "Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes in den Gläubigen nach Paulus," in *Pro Veritate. Ein theologischer Dialog. FS L. Jaeger and W. Stählin* (ed. E. Schlink and H. Volk; Münster, 1963), 136–137.

<sup>66</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 60 (n. 2). However, Horn has unfortunately overlooked that Rom 5:5 speaks of *love* (and not of the Spirit) as being poured into the believers' hearts.

ceived of the Spirit as a personal agent from the time of 1 Corinthians (or even 1 Thess [see 5:19]) onwards.

A common reaction to a critical engagement with the notion of a physical πνεῦμα in Paul is the assumption that surely the critic must be arguing from the perspective that Paul comprehended the Spirit as *immaterial* substance.<sup>67</sup> However, this is not what I suggest. Horn, *per contra*, in the context of his differentiation of what he thinks are various concepts of the Spirit in Paul, states that the Spirit is understood as an immaterial substance “when the Spirit takes up residence within the believer as ‘forma substantialis’ (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Rom 8:9; 1 Thess 4:8)”.<sup>68</sup> However, as Paul does not discuss or evidently presuppose a particular make-up of the Spirit, I maintain that it is best to refrain from such claims regarding the nature of πνεῦμα in Paul – whether material or immaterial. In respect to the somewhat elusive statements of indwelling, I suggest that for the apostle the Spirit was a new and dominant influence in a person’s life and that Paul seems to say that a new and intimate relationship to God/Christ/the Spirit has commenced through God/Christ/the Spirit’s (“living in”) the believer. I have placed the inverted commas within brackets in this phrase because I want to indicate that a binary interpretation of the indwelling statements in the sense of *either* literal *or* metaphorical will not suffice. By adopting this strategy of interpretation, I apply Aaron’s gradient model of meaning as a continuum, according to which the indwelling statement could be designated with the term “ascriptive”.<sup>69</sup> It is a “quasi-local” indwelling by the Spirit. I hence suggest that one can speak of Paul’s statements of mutual indwelling in Romans 8:9–10 as portraying the believer’s *intimate union with* the Spirit of Christ. The advantage of this formulation, which should not be confused with fusion, is its potential ambiguity that comes close to Paul’s usage of ἐν in the indwelling statements. The concept of intimate union allows for a more or less local indwelling (which would concur with the anthropologies of Paul’s time)<sup>70</sup> as well as for an interpretation that draws on the concept of being “strongly influenced by” and “belonging to” the subject that is said to indwell the person. It has to remain uncertain whether the apostle ever understood God’s Spirit as an immaterial or material substance, but it is certain that for Paul the new reality and new self-understanding as people who are indwelled by God’s Spirit has a strong impact on religious-ethical living.

We can conclude that a sensible way of conceptualizing the Holy Spirit in Paul is to speak of the Spirit as having “personal traits”. Due to the methodological complexities of establishing the nature of the Spirit in the Pauline corpus, this language is to be preferred to speaking of the Spirit explicitly as a person.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, as I have indicated, it is methodologically unwise to build one’s model of the Spirit’s enabling of religious-ethical life in Paul on a particular concept of the ontology of the Spirit. The relational model of

<sup>67</sup> Cf. the authors mentioned in RABENS, *Spirit*, VI, note 3 (n. 6).

<sup>68</sup> HORN, *Angeld*, 60, 429–430 (n. 2). See the detailed discussion in RABENS, *Spirit*, 82–86 (n. 6).

<sup>69</sup> D. H. AARON, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery* (BRLAJ 4; Leiden, 2001), 112.

<sup>70</sup> Cf., e.g., MEIER, *Mystik*, 257–258 (n. 37).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. K. BERGER, *Ist Gott Person? Ein Weg zum Verstehen des christlichen Gottesbildes* (Gütersloh, 2004), 86–87.

deification by the Spirit presented in this part of the paper is rather based on the actual effects that are attributed to the Spirit in Hellenism, Judaism, and in Paul.<sup>72</sup>

In the remainder of this paper we will look at one example of both the empowering (round arrow 'b') and the transforming work ('a') of the Spirit. We will start more briefly with the former and then devote more attention to the latter, since "transformation" is more obviously related to our investigation of the deifying work of the Spirit.

The *empowering* work of the Spirit through a filial relationship with God comes most clearly to the fore in Romans 8:12–17. Verse 13 of this "high point of Paul's theology of the Spirit",<sup>73</sup> relates the Spirit instrumentally to an implicit imperative of a protasis: "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live". A detailed analysis of the passage shows that it is the Spirit-shaped<sup>74</sup> experience of being adopted by God as a loving Father that empowers the Roman Christians to put to death the works of the body. This becomes particularly clear when we look at how religious-ethical life is established in verses 12–14 and how this part is syntactically linked to the rest of the passage. The syntactical structure of 8:12–17 indicates that the Spirit-shaped relationship with God as Father (vv. 14–16) empowers the ethical action described in verse 13. Verse 14 is linked to verse 13 via γάρ, which suggests that verse 14 provides a foundation or further explanation of verse 13. The putting to death of the works of the body by the Spirit (v. 13b) is a matter of being led, directed, impelled, and controlled by the Spirit (v. 14). While this argumentative structure at first sight appears to allow for the interpretation that it merely functions to stress the believers' *duty* to kill the works of the body because they are children of God,<sup>75</sup> a closer look favors the relational approach put forward in this paper. For one thing, the verse that most explicitly links sonship and ethics (i.e., v. 14) explains that the religious-ethical action (ἄγονται) that is the mark of sonship is *bestowed* upon believers *by the Spirit* (πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται). The fact that ἄγονται is in the passive voice indicates that it is primarily a gift rather than a duty. Further-

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<sup>72</sup> Saarinen calls such an approach "Wirkungsdenken" (as opposed to "Wesensdenken") (R. SAARINEN, "Gottes Sein – Gottes Wirken. Die Grunddifferenz von Substanzen und Wirkungsdenken in der evangelischen Lutherdeutung," in *Luther und Theosis. Vergöttlichung als Thema der abendländischen Theologie* [VLAR 15; SLAG 25; ed. S. Peura and A. Raunio; Erlangen/Helsinki, 1990], 118, note 52. Cf. B. J. HILBERATH, *Pneumatologie* (LTh 23; Düsseldorf, 1994), 78–79; A. K. GABRIEL, "Pauline Pneumatology and the Question of Trinitarian Presuppositions," in *Paul and His Theology* (PS 3; ed. S. E. Porter; Leiden, 2006), 361. See also n. 28 above.

<sup>73</sup> Thus DUNN, *Theology*, 423 (n. 38), on Rom 8.

<sup>74</sup> "Spirit-shaped" is here used with the meaning "modelled by the Spirit," not "modelled on the Spirit."

<sup>75</sup> Thus, e.g., T. J. BURKE, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (NSBT 22; Downers Grove, 2006), 147, 175.

more, the Spirit provides the empowering for the ethical action required in verse 13 *by means of* (γάρ) the Spirit-created intimate relationship to God expressed in verses 15–17. Moreover, this reading is also supported by the fact that Paul regularly associates the motif of human sonship of God with privileges (vv. 14–17, 29; Gal 4:5–7, etc.), not with duties.<sup>76</sup> A comprehensive analysis of Romans 8:12–17 (and the parallel passages like Gal 4:1–7; Eph 3:16–19) thus leads to the conclusion that Paul clearly indicates how the Spirit empowers people to put to death the works of the body: Paul grounds his implicit request in 8:13 to put to death through the Spirit the “deeds of the body” (πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε) in the experiential reality of the Spirit leading (8:14), freeing from fear, enabling to cry “Abba” (8:15), and bearing witness to one’s being a child of God. This line of reasoning is indicated through the employment of the causative conjunction “because” (γάρ) at the beginning of both verses 14 and 15. Paul can describe the Spirit in verse 13 as an instrument (πνεύματι) for fighting temptations, because the indicatives of the Spirit’s relational work in the following verses enable (and require) such ethical behavior. Believers draw strength and motivation from the new identity, the intimacy, and the corporate dimension of the Spirit-shaped filial relationship with God, epitomized in the Spirit-inspired prayer, “Abba, dearest Father” (v. 15).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> It is significant to see how in verses 15–16 Paul continues the thought from verses 12–14. He explains to the Romans that they have not received the spirit of slavery and consequent fear but they have received the Spirit of “adoption as sons”. In a similar manner as slavery is contrasted with sonship, “fear” has a counterpart in the loving relationship (cf. 8:35, 37, 39) expressed in the cry “Abba, Father” that is the consequence of the presence of the Spirit. The “Spirit of adoption” thus brings about adoption as sons (“you received the Spirit of adoption”) and provides further affirmation (in the continuous ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν ἀββα ὁ πατήρ [v. 15], and the Spirit’s “bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” [v. 16]). “Adoption as sons” is therefore not only a metaphor relating to the beginning (and end) of Christian life, but it characterizes the very essence of Christian existence. This new identity as children of God, and the loving relationship to ἀββα ὁ πατήρ determines the self-understanding, being, and acting of the community of believers in Rome.

<sup>77</sup> On the sanctifying work of the Spirit in Romans, see more fully RABENS, *Spirit*, 203–237 (n. 6). Cf. K.-W. NIEBUHR, “Heiligkeit und Heiligung im Rahmen der paulinischen Theologie,” in *Theologischer Dialog mit der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche. Die Apostolizität der Kirche. 12. Begegnung im bilateralen theologischen Dialog zwischen der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (Goslar XII). Heiligkeit und Heiligung. 13. Begegnung im bilateralen theologischen Dialog zwischen der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (Goslar XIII)* (ÖR.B 97; ed. M. Illert and M. Schindehütte; Leipzig, 2014), 164–182; V. RABENS, “‘By the Spirit You Put to Death the Works of the Body’ (Rom 8:13): Sanctification and the Work of the Spirit according to the Apostle Paul,” in *The Holy Spirit: History, Theology, Practice* (SPbCU Transaction 8; ed. V. Alikin; St. Petersburg, 2016), forthcoming in Russian.

Finally, we turn to the *transforming* work of the Spirit and return in more detail to the question of human deification by focusing on 2 Corinthians 3. We will start with a short summary paragraph on how the passage, particularly verse 18, can be read. (Due to limitations of space, this overview will pass over many of the exegetical riddles that interpreters of 2 Corinthians 3:18 and its context are faced with. I have tried to provide solutions to a number of these issues in a more detailed treatment elsewhere.<sup>78</sup>) We will then focus on teasing out some new insights from this text from the perspective of the two notions of “deification” presented in the introduction. In the context of this discussion, the concept of relational transformation will receive further differentiation in dialogue with the work of M. David Litwa, who argues in his 2012 monograph, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul’s Soteriology*, that Paul is speaking in 2 Corinthians 3:18 about the (essential)<sup>79</sup> deification of believers by the Spirit.

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul compares his ministry with that of Moses and reaches the heights of his exposition (mainly of the Exod 33–34 narrative; cf. Num 12:5–8) in verse 18. Including all believers (ἡμεῖς ... πάντες) as the recipients of the effects of the new covenant ministry, Paul proclaims,

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

In this climactic statement, Paul praises the relational work of the Spirit in human transformation. Through the cognitive and the immediacy-creating character of “unveiling”, the Spirit enables people to be transformed through “beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror”. This activity is best comprehended through the concept of “transformation through contemplation”, which entails both deeper knowledge of as well as a personal encounter with

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<sup>78</sup> RABENS, *Spirit*, 174–203 (n. 6); cf. RABENS, “*Pneuma* and the Beholding of God,” 312–329 (n. 6).

<sup>79</sup> I have placed “essential” in parentheses because Litwa rejects the categorizations of Russell and Blackwell. He says that “it is clear that both Russell and Blackwell are thinking in terms of later patristic theology. But later patristic theology is not determinative for Paul” (LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 9, note 18 [n. 5]). Also, Blackwell does not suggest that this was a conscious differentiation made by the ancient authors (BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 105 [n. 5]). We should hence resist the temptation to force the ancient evidence into one of these categories. Nonetheless, we may still compare these (patristic) categories with what we find in Paul, in the same way as Litwa does with other (though mainly earlier) sources. Litwa (*Being Transformed*, 291 [n. 5]) describes his method as “... essentially etc. Viewing Paul from the outside, I have pinpointed some analogies between his eschatological ideas and other (chiefly Graeco-Roman) ideas which involve deification. Based on similarities, I have then categorized an aspect of Paul’s soteriology (that involving the reception of immortal corporeality, cosmic rule, and Christic virtues) as a form of deification ... Paul ... might resist my classification of aspects of his thought as a form of ‘deification.’”

the divine. On the basis of this Spirit-created intimate relationship to God in Christ, believers are transformed “into the same image”.

What is the meaning and significance of Paul’s locution that through the Spirit-worked beholding of the glory of the Lord with an unveiled face, *we are transformed into the same image* (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα)? Understanding this phrase will be key to comprehending Paul’s idea of transformation and deification by the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:18. As most scholars agree, “the same image” here refers to Christ,<sup>80</sup> as is suggested by the context: in 4:4 Paul designates Christ as the image of God (“... seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God [ὃς ἔστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ]”); cf. 4:6; Col 1:15). Litwa concludes from this phrase that believers are “transformed into Christ” – that is, they are deified.<sup>81</sup> In order to understand the import of this claim, we need to look at how Litwa defines deification. He argues:

The basis of deification ... is sharing in *a* or *the* divine identity – that is, sharing in those distinctive qualities which make (a) God (a) God. It is not enough, in other words, to define deification in terms of ‘likeness’ to God. For likeness is too vague in terms of content (*how* are two beings alike?) and degree (*to what extent* are two beings alike?). ... For ‘like’ language to work, the likeness has to be defined with reference to specifically divine qualities. ... The[se] qualities must be constitutive of the divine identity. ... In this way, participation in divine qualities results in a participation in the divine identity. Likeness language, in contrast, tends to distinguish the identities of God and the deified. This is because likeness never means identity. Participation means more than likeness. ... Participation language, ... allows us to speak about sharing identity. ... In short, then, deification is the participation in the divine identity of (a particular) God ...<sup>82</sup>

Litwa’s definition of deification is helpful. By applying this defined concept of deification to 2 Corinthians 3:18, we are provided with a potential heuristic tool for gaining a new perspective on the nature of the transformation that Paul ascribes to the work of the Spirit in this passage. However, does the concept fit the evidence? In the light of 2 Corinthians 3:18, it seems unfortunate that Litwa so strongly differentiates his definition of deification from the language of likeness. Not only is “likeness” a more open term (as is “participation”) than the theologically charged and in his definition more specific term “deification”, but more significantly, “likeness” (to Christ) is a key concept that Paul tends to employ when he speaks about human transformation. For example, in Romans 8:29, Paul says that believers are “conformed to the image [or: likeness] of his Son” (συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ

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<sup>80</sup> Thus, e.g., K. PRÜMM, *Diakonia Pneumatos. Theologische Auslegung des zweiten Korintherbriefes. Vol. I* (Freiburg, 1967), 192, et al.

<sup>81</sup> LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 219–220 (n. 5).

<sup>82</sup> LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 32 (n. 5). See further LITWA, *Becoming Divine*, 63, 68 (n. 21).

αὐτοῦ). As in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul here employs the term εἰκόν, which is usually rendered as “likeness”, “image”, or “form” (BDAG, LSJ, etc.).

However, in 2 Cor 3:18, εἰκόν refers to Christ (without mentioning him explicitly<sup>83</sup>), whereas Rom 8:29 speaks about the εἰκόν of Christ. The reason for this formulation in 2 Cor 3:18 may be simply linguistic (rather than “theological” in the sense of Paul employing a different concept of transformation in 2 Cor 3:18): having mentioned Christ once already as τὴν δόξαν κυρίου,<sup>84</sup> it appears to be stylistically more natural to again use a circumlocution (rather than the name Ἰησοῦς Χριστός) in a second mentioning (i.e., τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα). Applying his more typical formulation of being transformed τῆς εικόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (Rom 8:29; cf. Col 3:10: κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος) to 3:18 would have meant an awkward doubling of εἰκόν (being transformed “into the image of the same image”).

In Paul, “likeness” does not appear to be differentiated from “participation” as strongly as Litwa suggests (“participation means more than likeness”<sup>85</sup>). Litwa seems to overdraw his differentiation when he says that only participation involves ontological change, whereas becoming like someone else does not.<sup>86</sup> It is hard to imagine how in 2 Corinthians 3:18, becoming like Christ would not involve ontological change, particularly as Paul says that we are *transformed* (μεταμορφούμεθα) into the image (of God), that is, Christ. When we look at Paul, it seems rather that participation is, *inter alia*, a means to greater likeness. As believers participate “in Christ”, they are in the realm of Christ’s influence and become more like Christ. In one of his most crucial passages on the participation in Christ of believers – that is, Romans 6 – Paul draws out two major consequences of participation: 1) As believers participate in Christ’s death, they have died to sin and can walk in newness of life

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<sup>83</sup> Litwa nonetheless prefers speaking about transformation *into Christ*. He rightly observes that Christians are not “being transformed into a lesser image than the true image” (*Being Transformed*, 219, note 58 [n. 5]). In an earlier publication, Litwa explains that there will remain a difference between Christ and believers since Christ is the head of his body whereas believers are the members (1 Cor 11:7). The “church’s divinity, for Paul, is not an ontological state – let alone a mystical one – but consists (at least in this life) in a mode of being that is manifested in concrete ethical acts” (M. D. LITWA, “2 Corinthians 3:18 and Its Implications for *Theosis*,” *JTI* 2 [2008], 125). Likewise, with regard to 2 Cor 3:18, he says that “even though the image of Christ and believers become ‘the same,’ still Christ’s image remains superior to the image of believers as its exemplar. The eschatological image is always an *Abbild* of the Christological *Vorbild*, and thereby always inferior” (LITWA, “2 Corinthians 3:18,” 129).

<sup>84</sup> Thrall notes with regard to δόξα κυρίου in 3:18 that “since for Paul δόξα and εἰκόν are similar concepts, and in 4:4 the εἰκόν of God is Christ, we should expect that τὴν δόξαν here likewise refers to Christ, who is thus the glory of the Lord as he is the image of God” (THRALL, *Corinthians*, Vol. 1, 283).

<sup>85</sup> LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 32 (n. 5).

<sup>86</sup> LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 9 (n. 5): in the case of likeness, two fundamentally dissimilar beings merely have secondary similarities.

(Rom 6:2–11). The result thus seems to be ethical transformation in the broader sense.<sup>87</sup> It is a likeness to Christ's character. 2) Participating in Christ not only means sharing in his death but also in his resurrection. However, this aspect of life is mainly in the future: "we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα, 6:5; 6:8: πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ). Participation in Christ can hence at best be described as a *gradual* deification (cf. 2 Cor 3:18: μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν).

Litwa's central argument for conceptualizing the transformation described in 2 Corinthians 3:18 as deification is his assertion that it is impossible to separate Christ's humanity from his divinity. If believers are transformed into Christ, they are transformed both into his humanity *and* his divinity.<sup>88</sup> This conclusion should be appreciated because Paul does not provide any evidence for distinguishing the human from the resurrected Christ in this passage.<sup>89</sup> However, neither do Paul's lines provide evidence that the *divine* aspect of Christ is his focus when he says ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ... τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα – although this is the emphasis of Litwa's discussion (which presupposes an early high Christology).<sup>90</sup> Remarkably, Paul does not use Litwa's terminology of "transformation into Christ" but of "transformation into the same image". In order to understand the meaning of this cryptic formulation, one needs to look at the way in which Paul uses εἰκῶν elsewhere. This shows that Paul tends to employ εἰκῶν in order to indicate the likeness of two entities, not their total qualitative identity.<sup>91</sup> For example, in

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Phil 2:1–2; Col 1:28; Eph 2:10. 2 Cor 5:17 leaves the details of the transformation/newness open: γέγονεν καινά.

<sup>88</sup> LITWA, "2 Corinthians 3:18," 121 (n. 83). See the recent overview and discussion of scholars who emphasize either the human or the divine "aspect" of Christ in Paul, in N. A. MEYER, *Adam's Dust and Adam's Glory: Rethinking Anthropogony and Theology in the Hodayot and the Letters of Paul* (Paper 8292; DigitalCommons@McMaster, 2013), 164–71.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 194–195 (n. 5); C. TILLING, *Paul's Divine Christology* (WUNT II.323; Tübingen, 2012), 119–123; J. M. F. HEATH, *Paul's Visual Piety: The Metamorphosis of the Beholder* (Oxford, 2013), 222.

<sup>90</sup> Paul only focuses on the divine aspect of Christ in the first reference to Christ as δόξα κυρίου (3:18b). Cf. LITWA, "2 Corinthians 3:18," 119 (n. 83).

<sup>91</sup> Regarding "identity" in this context, cf. Aristotle's distinction between numerical and qualitative identity in *Top.* 103a.8–10; *Metaph.* 1016b.32–33; and the analysis in E. TUGENDHAT and U. WOLF, *Logisch-semantische Propädeutik* (Stuttgart, 1983), 168–69: "Wenn a und b der Zahl nach ein einziges Ding sind, wenn sie, wie Aristoteles es erläuterte, ein und dieselbe materielle Einheit sind, so haben wir es mit der Identität im engeren Sinn zu tun, die man als numerische Identität bezeichnet. In einem schwächeren Sinn kann man auch dann sagen, daß a dasselbe ist wie b (bzw. ... besser 'das gleiche' ...), wenn a und b zwei verschiedene Gegenstände sind, die in einer bestimmten Eigenschaft (oder mehreren) gleich sind. Dieses Verhältnis zwischen a und b bezeichnet man als qualitative Identität."

Romans 1:23, Paul speaks about people exchanging “the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds”. The images are not the human beings or birds themselves, but they *resemble* these, as Paul explicitly says (ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοϛ). And in 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul calls the man “the image and reflection of God (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ)”. Again, εἰκὼν indicates likeness but not qualitative identity.<sup>92</sup> This conclusion can be easily applied to 2 Corinthians 3:18: believers are changed into the same image (likeness), that is Christ (δόξα θεοῦ, 3:18; εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:4), but they are not changed “into God”, becoming qualitatively identical with God.

Another piece of the puzzle of Paul’s notion of “transformation into the same image” falls into place when we look at how he continues in chapter 4. There he elucidates the significance of having Christ manifested in the apostles’ bodies. Bearing Christ, the image of God (4:4), and the glory of God (3:18, which is seen in the face of Jesus Christ: 4:6), is spelled out as bearing both his *death* and his *life* (4:10) which can be understood as resembling the *human* and the *resurrected* Christ.<sup>93</sup> Believers, hence, are not transformed into some abstract divine image. Rather, since the “exalted Christ ... remains forever the crucified one, their ongoing metamorphosis into the image of God, or the image of the Son (2 Cor 3:18), is a participation in his cruciform narrative identity and the transformation into his cruciform image”.<sup>94</sup> Deification in Paul thus has a physical aspect – carrying around the death and life of Jesus in one’s body (4:10) – though this is not to say that religious-ethical change is based on physical transformation in the sense of an infusion-transformation.<sup>95</sup> However, the type of physical deification that Litwa as-

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<sup>92</sup> For further occurrences of εἰκὼν in Paul, see Rom 1:23; 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7; 15:49; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10. Outside Paul, see Gen 1:26; Philo, *Leg.* 1.43; et al. Wis 7:26 is of particular interest in this context, for Wisdom is both “a spotless mirror of the working of God” (thus providing an intertext of Paul’s mirror-metaphor, κατοπτριζόμενοι) and “an image of his goodness” (εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ). The latter attributes a clearly ethical character to the notion of εἰκὼν, which seems to be in the background of Paul’s employment of the term here.

<sup>93</sup> “Life” designates the resurrection power which brought Jesus back to life; cf. 4:7, 12, 14.

<sup>94</sup> GORMAN, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 92 (n. 5). Cf. BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 193, 195 (n. 5); WRIGHT, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1023; MEYER, *Adam’s Dust*, 169 (n. 88).

<sup>95</sup> Thus, however, T. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, “Complete and Incomplete Transformation in Paul – A Philosophic Reading of Paul on Body and Spirit,” in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (Ekstasis 1; ed. T.K. Seim and J. Økland; Berlin/New York, 2009), 137: “It is ... rather likely, that the idea in 2 Cor 3:18 is that the transformation of ‘us’ that is being operated by the pneuma is a transformation of ‘our’ bodies as wholes *from* being infused with a certain amount of

sumes to take place in the present is what Paul projects into the future (4:14; 1 Cor 15:44, 49 [again using the idea of being transformed into the image of Christ]; Rom 8:11).<sup>96</sup> The physical aspect of the inhabitation of Christ in the present is rather an embodiment of the narrative identity of Christ as one of death and life. Significantly, the “outer” (physical) nature (ὁ ἕξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) is wasting away while the inner nature (ὁ ἕσω ἡμῶν) is being renewed day by day (4:16).<sup>97</sup>

As indicated above, we can bring still further clarity into the discussion of the notion of transformation “into the same image”, by studying how Paul uses this idea elsewhere. One of the clearest parallels to 2 Corinthians 3:18, though not from the undisputed Pauline epistles, is Colossians 3:10.<sup>98</sup> The concept of “being transformed”, or as Colossians puts it, of “being renewed in knowledge”<sup>99</sup> after the image of its [i.e., that of the νέον ἄνθρωπον] creator [ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν]” is here overtly related to ethics. This is indicated by the fact that the renewal after God’s image is closely intertwined with “putting on the new self”, which is brought into ethical focus in the preceding verses (the practices of the old self are lying, etc.; see esp. 3:9).<sup>100</sup> As Dunn puts it,

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pneuma – and the glory that corresponds with that – into a more extensive infusion with more pneuma and more glory.”

<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 119–171, 220–221 (n. 5).

<sup>97</sup> Were we to follow Steenburg, we could argue that if Paul had wanted to emphasize the physical aspect of the transformation, he could have used μορφή rather than the less specific εἰκών (D. STEENBURG, “The Case against the Synonymity of *Morphē* and *Eikōn*,” *JSNT* 34 [1988], 85: “*morphē theou* expresses a more visual element, such that it is used to convey the visible/physical appearance/representation of God, in contrast to the less specific *eikōn theou*”). However, as George van Kooten rightly observes, the two terms can also be used interchangeably, e.g., in *Sib. Or.* 3.8 (G. 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 I.232; Tübingen, 2008], 89).

<sup>98</sup> It seems justified to refer to an epistle that is part of the Pauline tradition but not necessarily written by Paul himself as long as one does not rest an argument on its evidence alone. The disputed Paulines should not be wholly disregarded when the attempt is made to describe the theology of the apostle whose name they bear (cf. DUNN, *Theology*, 13 [n. 38]).

<sup>99</sup> As in 2 Cor 3:18, knowledge is a relational concept in Col 3:10 as it concerns God (cf. Col 1:10; see also the instrumental role of the mind in Rom 12:2).

<sup>100</sup> Back seems to think that Col 3:10–11 is not important for the discussion of 2 Cor 3:18 because the former speaks about transformation into the image of God whereas the latter is about transformation into the image of the Lord – i.e., Christ (F. BACK, *Verwandlung durch Offenbarung bei Paulus. Eine religionsgeschichtlich-exegetische Untersuchung zu 2 Kor 2,14–4,6* [WUNT II.153; Tübingen, 2002], 150). However, she does not unfold in what way this difference is significant to the discussion. In any case, Dunn highlights that the concept of renewal into the divine image in Col 3:10 “merges into Adam christology, where Christ as the divine image ... is the middle term between the

the thought is equivalent to 'putting on Christ' in Rom 13:14, as Col 3:3–4 also implies. At its simplest, this means that the manner of Christ's living, as attested in the Jesus tradition, provided the pattern for this new self life (2:6–7).<sup>101</sup>

Such an interlocking of being "created according to the likeness of God", putting on the new self, and paraenesis can also be observed in the parallel text, Ephesians 4:24. Here the transformation is described as happening in the ethical qualities of righteousness and holiness.<sup>102</sup>

The undisputed Pauline epistles likewise provide strong evidence that transformation into the image of the divine predominantly refers to the ethical characteristics of conforming to Christ (cf. the concept of imitating Christ in 1 Thess 1:6; Phil 2:5; 1 Cor 11:1; etc.<sup>103</sup>). In Romans 8:29, Paul says that believers are "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son [προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ]".<sup>104</sup> This passage is particularly interesting because it draws together the thought of Romans 8:12–17 and of 2 Corinthians 3:18: to experience the Spirit's working is not only to experience sonship but also to become more like the Son and to take

creator and his first creation and his re-creation (cf. Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4; cf. Ign. *Eph.* 20:1 ...). In this way Paul and Timothy in true Pauline style manage to hold together creation and salvation in the thought of Christ as both the creative power of God (1:15) and as the archetype for both creation and redeemed, renewed humanity" (J. D. G. DUNN, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Carlisle/Grand Rapids, 1996], 222).

<sup>101</sup> DUNN, *Colossians*, 221 (n. 100). Cf. G. KITTEL, "εἰκών," *TDNT* 2: 397; M. M. THOMPSON, *A Commentary on Colossians and Philemon* (THNTC; Grand Rapids, 2005), 78. On the ethical aspect, see esp. M. B. THOMPSON, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13* (JSNTSup 53; Sheffield, 1991), 149–160; J. H. KIM, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus* (JSNTSup 268; London, 2004), 174–175.

<sup>102</sup> On the similarities and differences between Col 3:9–11 and Eph 4:22–24, see BUCHEGGER, *Erneuerung*, 233–34 (n. 57). Righteousness and holiness are specified as characteristics of God in LXX Ps 144:17 and Deut 32:4. Cf. KIM, *Clothing Imagery*, 187–191 (n. 101).

<sup>103</sup> The difference between the texts in which Paul calls for *imitatio Christi* and 2 Cor. 3:18 is that in the former Paul uses explicit imperatives, asking the church to conform to Christ, whereas in 3:18 the agency of the transformation is explicitly attributed to the Spirit. On the relation of divine and human agency in Paul, see RABENS, "Indicative and Imperative," 285–305 (n. 1).

<sup>104</sup> Lambrecht notes that Paul uses the concept of *transformation* in 3:18 (and Rom 12:2), whereas he uses that of *conformation* in Rom 8:29 and Phil 3:10, 21. Both terms refer to the same reality. Nonetheless, Lambrecht concludes that "a deeper unity, i.e., identity (be it without consequent loss of distinct being), is indicated more by transformation than by conformation" (J. LAMBRECHT, "Transformation in 2 Cor 3,18," *Bib* 64 [1983], 253–254, 251). See the detailed analysis of the semantic overlap of the verbs central to the parallel passages discussed in the present section, in BUCHEGGER, *Erneuerung*, 156–162 (n. 57).

on increasingly the family likeness. The ethical significance of becoming more like the Son in Romans 8:29 is more specifically drawn out by Cranfield. He explains that

the believers' final glorification is their full conformity to the εἰκὼν of Christ glorified; but it is probable ... that Paul is here thinking not only of their final glorification but also of their growing conformity to Christ here and now in suffering and in obedience – that is, that συμμόρφους, κ.τ.λ. is meant to embrace sanctification as well as final glory, the former being thought of as a progressive conformity to Christ, who is the εἰκὼν of God, and so as a progressive renewal of the believer into that likeness of God which is God's original purpose for man (cf. Col. 3.9f).<sup>105</sup>

This idea of religious-ethical transformation is also expressed in Galatians 4:19, where Paul is concerned that “Christ is formed” in the Galatians (μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν). In the situation of the Galatians' developing enmity towards Paul through turning away from him (and from the truth, 4:16) and returning into bondage to the beggarly elemental spirits (4:9) and the law (4:21), Paul is in pain that Christ within them will shape the character of the community to such an extent that they will be able to “share in the fullness and freedom of life ... (2:20) which Christ himself had enjoyed”.<sup>106</sup> Our analysis of the way in which Paul uses the idea of being transformed into the image of the divine in Galatians 4:19 and elsewhere in his letters thus supports the same interpretation that is also suggested by the immediate literary context of 2 Corinthians 3:18:<sup>107</sup> transformation τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα focuses on the religious-ethical dimension of taking on the character of Christ.<sup>108</sup> This conclusion agrees with Litwa's general point, that – based on the parallel with Romans 12:1–2 (μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς) – 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks about moral (and physical) assimilation to God.<sup>109</sup>

We will summarize the results of section 2 in the context of the conclusion to this paper, to which we now turn.

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<sup>105</sup> C. E. B. CRANFIELD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I–VIII* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1975), 432. Cf. KITTEL, “εἰκὼν,” 396–397 (n. 101).

<sup>106</sup> J. D. G. DUNN, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; London, 1993), 241. Cf. B. W. LONGENECKER, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Edinburgh, 1998), 72, 158; J. L. MARTYN, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York, 1997), 429–30. Cf. the ethical notion of “having the mind of Christ” in 1 Cor 2:16, which is linked to discernment in 2:15. See further Rom 15:5 (κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν).

<sup>107</sup> On the ethical aspects in 2 Cor 4, see above; on those in 2 Cor 3, see further RABENS, *Spirit*, 198–199 (n. 6).

<sup>108</sup> Pace BACK, *Verwandlung*, 151–55 (n. 100).

<sup>109</sup> LITWA, *Being Transformed*, 220–221 (n. 5). Cf. RABENS, *Spirit*, 201–202 (n. 6).

### 3. Conclusion

In this paper we have looked at the transforming work of the Spirit in Paul's churches as it is presented in the letters of the apostle Paul. In particular, I have raised the question whether it is appropriate and illuminating to use the concept of deification when trying to fathom Paul's notion of human transformation by the Spirit. I am not aware of any "Eastern" (nor, for that matter, any "Western") study that has addressed Pauline pneumatology from this particular perspective. For this reason, it is not easy to (self-) assess whether the results of this investigation have a distinctly "Western" stance. I assume that Eastern (as well as many Western) scholars will probably not share my hesitation, expressed in the two excursus, to wholeheartedly support the positions that Paul explicitly said that the Spirit is imparted by means of (the water of) baptism and that Paul had a (fully developed) concept of the Spirit as a (Trinitarian) person. I rather prefer to speak more broadly about the Spirit being received and being active in the process of conversion-initiation, and about the Spirit having "personal traits" in Paul's presentation. However, these two issues are not essential to the answer that I have given to our central question. My answer has been positive: yes, it is appropriate and illuminating to approach the transforming work of the Spirit in Paul from the perspective of deification. I hope that the arguments that I have submitted in support for this thesis function as an invitation for further dialogue between Eastern and Western students of Paul from all corners of the world.

Deification or theosis, which can be generally understood as Spirit-enabled transformative participation in the life and character of God revealed in the crucified and resurrected Messiah Jesus, is a process of ontological change. For heuristic reasons, we have followed the two subcategories provided by Blackwell – namely, those of essential and of attributive deification. In the first part of this paper, we have looked at one potential avenue of essential deification, which I have called infusion-transformation. According to this view, the individual is transformed (and deified) on the basis of a physical infusion with material *πνεῦμα-Staff*. I have argued that Paul's epistles do not provide any conclusive evidence to support this approach to the work of the Spirit. In the second part, I have proposed a relational model of theosis by the Spirit, which maintains that it is primarily through deeper knowledge of, and an intimate relationship with, God, Jesus Christ, and with the community of faith that people are transformed and empowered by the Spirit for religious-ethical life.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> For a "Western" (Protestant) systematic-theological perspective developed on the basis of this thesis, see M. SAUCY, "How Does the Holy Spirit Change Us? – A Review Essay," *JBPR* 4 (2012), 109–122.

The results of the discussion in part 2 can be summarized by five points: 1) Human deification by the Spirit can be understood as a process that encompasses both empowering (thus our exegesis of Rom 8) and transformation (thus our exegesis of 2 Cor 3–4). When discussing theosis in Paul, both aspects need to be taken into account (together with other aspects like the narrative identification with and corporate participation in Christ).<sup>111</sup> We have given here more weight to the latter because Paul's explicit language of transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18 relates more obviously to that of theosis. 2) The "mechanics" of deification in 2 Corinthians 3:18 support the relational model of the transforming work of the Spirit put forward at the outset of part 2: the Spirit creates relational immediacy (or intimacy) with the divine by "unveiling" the faces of believers, enabling them to behold the "glory of the Lord". This process is well captured by the ancient concept of "transformation through contemplation". 3) The language that Paul uses in the context of transformation is that of "likeness" or "image" (εἰκῶν). This terminology is more open than Litwa's specific definition of deification as participating in the divine identity. Although the latter designation may also work as an explanation of τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα, the more ambiguous language of likeness should not be rejected. 4) Transformation "into the same image" should not be reduced to transformation into the *divine* Christ. Rather, bearing Christ in one's body is spelled out in 2 Corinthians 4:10 as bearing both his *death* and his *life* (i.e., his human and his resurrected identity). We can thus speak of participation in this context, but it needs to be spelled out as participation in Christ's cruciform and anastiform narrative identity<sup>112</sup> and transformation into his image as expounded in chapters 4–5. Further physical transformation is reserved for the future. It is not the basis of moral transformation in 3:18. 5) Pauline usage elsewhere of the motif of transformation into "the same image" or the image of Christ supports the observations made on the basis of 2 Corinthians 3–4; namely, that Paul's primary focus in 3:18 rests on the religious-ethical dimensions of taking on the character of Christ.

Paul does not use the language of deification. Nonetheless, it is illuminating to apply this concept to Paul's letters as an etic category. We have seen that the category of attributive deification fits the evidence of the Pauline corpus better than that of essential deification. The "concept" of Spirit-worked transformation into the image of Christ that we have encountered in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (and similar passages) appears to focus on the aspect of moral transformation. While Paul's language is open and does not exclude other aspects, one would need to show more clearly that further shades of "divinity" are appealed to in 2 Corinthians 3:18 and other Spirit-passages in Paul. However, as divine characteristics like omnipotence and immortality do

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<sup>111</sup> See the works cited in n. 5 for a more comprehensive picture.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. n. 114 below.

not seem to be implied in these texts, it is precarious to comprehend human deification by the Spirit in Paul in the sense of (total) qualitative identity with God or in the sense of essential deification. It seems more appropriate to speak of deification in the sense of an attributive or *partial* qualitative identity: believers become more like God as they are transformed by the Spirit in God's intimate presence in the context of the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12–14).

Assimilation to God (ὁμοίωσις θεῶ) is in 2 Corinthians 3:18 and elsewhere in Paul specified as assimilation to Christ. For this reason, the designation *Christosis* (“Christification”) seems to be particularly fitting.<sup>113</sup> Christosis means assimilation to Christ's narrative identity with the characteristic elements of the past, present, and future of Christ's story, which is reflected in the very life and existence of the church. As Blackwell points out,

based upon a close divine-human encounter, Paul's soteriology consists, in the present, of a moral enablement and noetic enlightenment in a somatic context of suffering (2 Cor 3.13–4.18; Rom 7.4–6; 8.1–13). ... The consummation of this soteriology will occur in the future through a bodily resurrection (Rom 8.9–30; 2 Cor 3.6, 18; 4.16–5.5, 21; Col 3.4; 1 Cor 15.12–58; Phil 3.10, 20–21). During both temporal stages, believers are empowered by the Spirit to grow into conformity with the death and life of Christ.<sup>114</sup>

The aspect of (moral) transformation into Christ's character, which features in both Romans 8 and 2 Corinthians 3:18, is hence embedded in a broader, eschatological process which affects believers holistically. Second Corinthians 3:18 focuses on the transforming work of the Spirit in the present. However, as it portrays deification as a *gradual* transformation, indicated by the present tense μεταμορφούμεθα and by the phrase ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν,<sup>115</sup> the future element of transformation is implied even in this text (cf. 4:17–18;

<sup>113</sup> Cf. BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 264–267 (n. 5).

<sup>114</sup> BLACKWELL, *Christosis*, 242–43 (n. 5). Cf. Blackwell's chart of the various aspects of assimilation to Christ in Paul (p. 242), which displays the characteristic structure of the “now and not yet” of Paul's eschatology (on which, see more fully, e.g., V. RABENS, “‘Schon jetzt’ und ‘noch mehr’. Gegenwart und Zukunft des Heils bei Paulus und in seinen Gemeinden,” *JBTh* 28 [2013], 103–128). This aspect of “time” is often ignored in Litwa's delineation of deification in Paul (cf. V. RABENS, “Review of David M. Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*,” *ThLZ* 138 [2013], 446–48); however, it is also recognized by FINLAN, “Theosis,” 73 (n. 5), who singles out three potential stages of deification according to Paul: 1) dying to sin, 2) reflecting righteousness and light, and 3) receiving a glorious body. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 6–7 (n. 5), rephrases these as (1) dying to sin, (2) moral transformation, and (3) eschatological transformation.

<sup>115</sup> With regard to the interpretation of “from glory to glory,” Gorman explains that “the primary meaning is the transition from a present, paradoxical, cruciform glory to a future, eschatological, fully anastiform (resurrection-shaped) glory. The process of becoming more Christlike and Godlike is a process of glorification, and it is glorification with both present and future aspects” (GORMAN, “Missional Theosis,” 190 [n. 5]).

Rom 8:17). This final aspect of deification is again the result of the transforming work of the Spirit (see 1 Cor 15:44–45; Rom 8:11).<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> For the work of the Spirit in animating and enlivening the resurrection body, see RABENS, *Spirit*, 86–96 (n. 6).