

Chinese Interpretations of Galatians 3:28: Ambiguities, Insights, and Paths Forward

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Galatians 3:28 is one of the foundational verses that addresses how people of different genders should relate to each other in Christ. This article will examine interpretations of Gal 3:28 by nine Chinese pastors and biblical scholars, spanning from the 1970s to 2010, and will point out common ambiguities which may hinder their application in ministry. It will then review the work of two other Chinese scholars, namely Sam Tsang and K. K. Yeo, to show how a more nuanced reading of Galatians can be helpful for practical application in a real-world Chinese ministry context. I close by suggesting several areas in which care should be taken when future interpretation and ministry are done.

Chinese Interpreters Surveyed

The nine authors surveyed (not including Tsang and Yeo, as explained above) are listed below with the original publication date of their main interpretive work in parentheses:¹

1. Chow Lien-hwa (1979)
2. Ronald Y. K. Fung (1982 and 2008)
3. Stephen C. T. Chan (1983)
4. Witness Lee (1987)
5. Paul Li (1997)
6. Wang Guo-xian (2000)
7. Ezra Hon-seng Kok (2003)
8. Simon S. M. Wong (2003)
9. Huang Deng-huang (2010)

These authors represent preachers, pastors, and seminary professors working in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and among the Chinese diaspora. They represent how Galatians is often read in a real-world setting. Furthermore, because Bible commentaries written from a native Chinese standpoint are rare, these are likely to serve as teaching and preaching reference materials for pastors in the Chinese church. As such, these works can help us understand how a Chinese Christian would likely understand the passage at hand. Note that these authors are all male; to my knowledge, there have been no published books on Galatians in Chinese by female authors.

Main Interpretive Issues

The interpretative works surveyed in this study generally focus on three issues in Gal 3:28. First, the way the three pairs of declarations are stated, “neither . . . nor” (*ouk . . . oude*) twice and then “not . . . and” (*ouk . . . kai*). While most English translations retain the Greek grammatical structure (i.e., a negative particle [*ouk*, “no, neither”] followed by a conjunction [*oude*, “nor” or *kai*, “and”]), this verse in Chinese reads differently. Conjunctions can be omitted in Chinese, so the most popular Chinese translations used worldwide (the Chinese Union Version and Revised Chinese Union Version) in effect skip over the conjunctions that are

distinct in the Greek—*oude* and *kai*.² In addition, in an effort to clarify the meaning in Chinese, these translations add the verb “to distinguish” (Chinese *fēn*), thus rendering it “[implied subject] can no longer distinguish between [element A, element B]” instead of the clause based on “there is” (Greek *eni*), which occurs three times in the verse: “there is neither [element A] nor [element B].” This difference must be kept in mind as we delve into the discussion below.

The second interpretive issue focuses on the meaning and implications of people becoming “one” (Greek *heis*). The third issue regards the significance of the three sets of dualities: Jew/Greek (*ioudaios/hellēn*), slave/free (*doulos/eleutheros*), and male/female (*arsen/thēlu*), namely, how these dualities illustrate or are representative of differences in the world.

Common Ambiguities and Blind Spots

From a survey of the nine authors, we can summarize that current Chinese interpretations on Galatians tend to exhibit the following four ambiguities and blind spots:

An Abstract or Undefined “No Distinction”

As noted above, instead of “neither . . . nor,” the verse in a Chinese understanding is closer to “[implied subject] can no longer distinguish between [A and B].” Several interpreters home in on this message; for example, Fung (“The distinctions once prevalent that are based on ethnicity, social position, and gender *no longer exist* . . .”),³ Kok and Wong (“The categories that once were used to divide people . . . although we once thought them to be important labels, *are no longer existent*.”),⁴ and Chow (“In Jesus Christ, *all distinctions have been abolished*.”).⁵

These interpretations all focus on the fact that distinctions no longer exist, yet how we are to live out this assertion remains unexplained. The distinctive characteristics of ethnicity, social status, and gender obviously still exist after baptism. It is imperative, then, that a more applicable interpretation beyond an ambiguous one is needed for Chinese-speaking believers to understand how they should navigate their apparent distinctions with other people. It will not be enough to claim that “Greeks, that is, non-Jews, when they believe in Christ, will be exactly the same as Jews,” that “slaves . . . when they become God’s children, are no longer distinguishable from the free,” and that “in Jesus Christ, all distinctions have been abolished, even that of the immense divide between the male and female in the ancient world.”⁶

A Spiritualized “No Distinction”

One way the interpreters have attempted to flesh out what “no distinction” means practically is to spiritualize it. For example, Chan writes that “those justified by faith . . . have become ‘one’ in their spiritual relationships with each other . . . because we

stand on the same basis and receive the same kind of life.”⁷ Li maintains that having “no distinction” does not mean there are no differences, but that all parties involved are indistinguishable in becoming heirs of God.⁸ Fung has the same perspective, namely, that it is regarding being true heirs of Abraham in which there is no distinction.⁹

In addition to the views above, which stem from the idea that the benefits of being in Christ are purely spiritual, the other side of this argument is that the former divisions have an unspiritual origin. Such writes Wang, “it is regarding the fact that ‘all are in Christ’ that there is no distinction . . . there are no longer the distinctions that have come as a result of being *in Adam*.”¹⁰ Similarly, in Lee’s “Local Church” theology, the “schismatic division (*fēnliè de qūbié*)” mentioned in Gal 3:28 is rooted in the “natural”; contrarily, being “in Christ” implies occupying a special spiritual state wherein “there is absolutely no place for our natural man (*tiānrán de rén*), natural nature (*tiānrán de xìngqíng*), and natural personality (*tiānrán de xìnggé*).”¹¹

These interpretations rightly point out how God’s generosity and mercy in Christ do not distinguish between ethnicity, social standing, or gender—God grants believers the right to become heirs and obtain life without partiality. Yet the readings above unfortunately limit the effects of God’s impartiality to only what individuals and groups—defined by their ethnicity, social standing, and gender—*receive* spiritually. Accordingly, there is no imperative for individuals or groups to reach beyond what delineates them from other individuals and groups in response to their new status in Christ.

However, it is not merely that the peoples who previously did not have access to the Lord’s table now are able to approach it, as if it were only a matter of forming a relationship with God; it is that they can now approach the table to fellowship *with each other* (recall that the dividing wall between people groups has now been broken down, Eph 2:14). In other words, becoming heirs of God not only implies a new way of relating to God, but also a new way of interacting with each other in community—a new relationship that is spiritual, but also practical.

An Abstract “One-ness”

Regarding the second interpretive issue, Fung observes that the “one” (Greek *heis*) that believers now embody is expressed as grammatically masculine, rather than as feminine or neuter. And, to add clarity to Fung’s statement, it is an inclusive masculine rather than one that refers only to male believers or to masculine traits. That is, all believers—regardless of ethnicity, class, and gender—have become “a corporate unity/personality” united by a shared faith.¹² Kok and Wong concur: “in the life of Christ Jesus, all have ‘become one body.’”¹³ Indeed, some interpreters, such as Chow, have pointed out how one-ness can be likened to a Chinese idiom, “ten thousand hearts as one (*wànzhòngyìxīn*),” thus having

the potential to bring about “true freedom and true equality in Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

Unfortunately, these authors do not give space for potentially radical socio-political implications to be played out, thus leaving one-ness as an abstract notion and allowing it to be de-radicalized, as we shall see below. (I should note that, in Kok’s other book on Galatians, he goes further to say that in the early church, though one-ness in Christ means unity along three dimensions—ethnicity, socio-cultural status, and gender—here Paul only wishes to discuss the implications of one-ness regarding ethnicity.¹⁵ In other words, for Kok, one-ness regarding gender is not in view here in Gal 3:28, thus circumventing the potential of this verse to speak to gender issues.)

A Spiritualized, Internalized One-ness

As we have seen regarding the interpretive issue of “no distinction,” when there is abstractness, there is a tendency to spiritualize and avoid radical socio-political implications.¹⁶ The same happens with an abstract one-ness. For example, Huang writes that “the meaning of being ‘one in Christ’ is that we should no longer have in our hearts feelings of superiority or inferiority based on ethnicity, class, and gender.”¹⁷ Tellingly, in this interpretation, the abolishment of the distinctions is only described as having the right “feelings” “in our hearts,” without reference to bodily, external, and cultural practices, making it a wholly internal affair. Yet is Paul only referring to feelings? Is he not addressing real-world practices regarding how the Galatians ought to conduct themselves in community?

As another example, Chan, while rightly moving beyond the internal feelings of an individual, still applies one-ness to a limited number of interpersonal relationships within the Christian community, writing that

many factions and divisions in the church today stem from people emphasizing their relationships outside of Christ over that of “being in Christ,” for example factions based on people hailing from the same hometown, having gone to school together, belonging to the same workplace, etc. These are the true reasons for competition and factions [within the church].¹⁸

While this observation is certainly true in some cases, it unfortunately still frames the issue as a limited one that is internal to a small part of the Christian community. A better interpretation that recognizes the socio-political implications in Paul’s argument would prompt the church to live differently from what is expected by social norms and therefore have an impact on the outside world.

To be sure, the idea of socio-political change is not foreign to our interpreters. However, some of them—such as Fung—dismiss it outright, writing that “Paul is primarily *not* thinking about a change in social circumstances, but rather the new existence of being accepted into the body of Christ.”¹⁹ Fung backs up his

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argument by stating, “After all, Paul did not say, ‘You are all equal in Christ,’ but rather, ‘You are all one in Christ.’”²⁰

In the same section, Fung dialogues with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Richard Hays.²¹ He argues contrary to their proposition that women can be given the same commission as men regarding church leadership, just as Gentiles (called “Greeks” in Gal 3:28) can be like Jews and slaves can be like the free in taking up this commission, that instead there are essential differences between the three dualities (Jew/Greek, slave/free, and men/women), even if these dualities are presented in a parallel structure in the text.

For Fung, the essential difference is that, while slavery is a social practice instituted by sinful human beings and ethnic differences have been superseded by the cross, gender differences are rooted in creation and thus maintain significance after salvation. Thus, according to Fung, rather than focusing on the relationship between women and men within the body of Christ, this passage is instead merely pointing out that both women and men can become part of the body of Christ through faith and baptism.²²

This limitation is again a spiritualization of the text, one that overlooks its social, cultural, and political dimensions. While God has created men and women to have different types of bodies, and these bodies result in individuals experiencing differences in social roles, I suggest that many of these differences are the result of the cultural constructions of fallen human societies rather than rooted in creation.²³ As such, how humans live out certain gender differences may not be all that dissimilar to the other two (sinful) social institutions: slavery and ethnic superiority.

Insights and Helpful Approaches: Sam Tsang and K. K. Yeo

As we can see from the discussion above, Chinese interpretations of Gal 3:28 tend to make the interpretive issues at hand (namely, “no distinction” and one-ness) into abstract, spiritual, or internal notions without social, cultural, or political implications. At the same time, we should not overlook the insight that Fung gives when he suggests that the three kinds of dualities in Gal 3:28 are not merely distinctions regarding societal class but are rooted in different legal statuses under both Roman law and Jewish law.²⁴ In this view, then, being baptized into Christ implies that distinctions based on legal statuses (as well as social class) are no longer important; on the contrary, “slaves and the free have the same spiritual standing.”²⁵ While Fung’s implications still fall mostly within spiritual categories (as can be seen in the summary above), he leaves space for us to make a case that Paul does have in mind the overcoming of social (legal) and political limitations.

Developing this idea further, Sam Tsang remarks on Paul’s use of metaphoric language, arguing that the imagery of “being clothed with Christ” (Gal 3:27) has ties to both baptismal language (i.e., clothing has strong ties to religious status in Greco-Roman society and hints at the ritual clothes worn after one’s baptism)

and is also an adoption motif. Regarding the latter, Tsang points out that clothing is used in Greco-Roman society to signify one’s ethnicity, social class, gender, and even age, and is therefore determinant of whether one is eligible for inheritance.²⁶ As such, the three dualities represent the types of person who were formerly ineligible to inherit (i.e., Gentiles could not inherit the promises given to Abraham vis-à-vis Jews, slaves could not own property vis-à-vis the free, and women did not typically have the right to inherit property vis-à-vis men) but who now in Christ have been adopted as sons (via the clothing imagery) and have become heirs to God.²⁷

In Tsang’s view, then, Paul is not simply indiscriminately abolishing social distinctions, but rather turning divisive social markers on their heads, such that the imagery he used would be completely in line with the cultural customs of his time (i.e., inheritance rights) but result in a completely different end (i.e., inheritance rights for those who had none). In contrast to the other interpretations discussed above,

which tend to overlook the socio-political dimension in their ambiguous affirmation and spiritual interpretation of there being “no distinction,” we may say that Paul was engaging in a form of countercultural polemic wherein the socio-political dimension is acknowledged and then co-opted to criticize itself.

Because Tsang does so, the implications of adoption and becoming heirs for all members within the dualities call for socio-political reform starting within the church. For example, regarding the categories of male and female, Tsang argues that since they are equally eligible as heirs, the entire congregation—including women—should have equal status in Christ.²⁸ Tsang acknowledges that this passage refers primarily to an equality regarding salvation, yet he also suggests that this spiritual reality is one that believers should strive to turn into reality in all realms of life.²⁹

Similar to how Tsang points out Paul’s acknowledgment of socio-political realities, K. K. Yeo also acknowledges the socio-political distinctions among the three dualities. Rather than dismissing them as irrelevant in light of Christ, on the contrary, Yeo proposes a new one-ness in Christ that is precisely *the result of* these differences. Yeo does so by introducing the Confucian idea of “rectifying the name (*zhèngmíng*).” The *Analects of Confucius* records that, when asked about the foremost thing he would do to govern a nation, Confucius replied, “It is none other than to rectify names! . . . If names are not right then language is not in accordance with the truth of things; if language is not in accord with the truth of things, then affairs cannot be successful. . . .”³⁰ Yeo, therefore, suggests that Confucius’s insight into the function of a name and its correspondence to the reality of a thing can help us understand Paul’s use of language, namely, that only by naming reality for what it is (i.e., that there have been divisions along ethnic, class, and gender lines) can Paul then critique it.³¹

Thus, on the one hand, Paul “uses traditional language” to point to “the truth of things” that the reader would readily acknowledge

(i.e., that there are divisions); on the other hand, Paul develops a new reality “in Christ” and points the old name to this new “truth of things.”³² Accordingly, “Jew or Greek *in Christ*,” “slave or free *in Christ*,” and “male and female *in Christ*” do not refer to what divides them (e.g., differences between slave and master), but what unites them—being “one” in the body of Christ.³³

Note that there is a nuance Yeo makes clear: the “one” in Christ is not a sameness (*tóngyī*) nor a uniformity (*yízhì*), but an inclusive, unifying, harmonious relationship that encompasses everyone who is in Christ.³⁴ Yeo uses two terms that sound the same in Mandarin (both are transliterated *héyī*) and both have the character for “one,” unity (合一) and harmony (和一), to translate *heis* (Greek “one”). Thus, Yeo points out a fact that many interpreters have missed, that one-ness in Christ is not based on having no distinctions (contrary to the common Chinese translation of the verse), but rather is based on *being distinct from each other*.

Writes Yeo, “Individual identities are clarified and formed [when we face someone different from us]; through differences, we come to know who we are.”³⁵ In fact, according to Yeo, if there were no differences between each of the dualities, Paul’s argument would not make sense! However, “in Christ there are still Jews and Greeks . . . when two people from different ethnicities, cultures, or nations love each other, their differences and uniqueness do not disappear . . . neither will their differences and uniqueness disappear when they are ‘in Christ.’”³⁶

Applying the same logic to the duality of male/female, Yeo maintains that gender differences and a one-ness (“harmony”) in Christ can coexist.³⁷ Yeo sees Paul’s “there is no longer ‘male and female’” as commenting on Gen 1:27 (“male and female he created them”), specifically, that Paul is refuting the idea of an undifferentiated human, and by extension and contrary to many of our interpreters, the idea that there are no distinctions between genders in Christ.³⁸ In addition, Yeo suggests that Paul has in mind Gen 2:21–23 and is saying that it is on the basis of differences and uniqueness among individuals that when a man meets a woman—someone different but equal to him—he becomes self-aware, and vice versa a woman.

In summary, contrary to the interpretations that read “no distinction” as a “spiritualized sameness,” Yeo instead maintains that “one-ness means a harmonious equality” between male and female based on their uniqueness and differences.³⁹ For Yeo, “the new truth of reality in Christ does not eliminate differences and distinctions between ethnicities, social classes, or genders, but it does overcome the prejudices, obstacles, and oppressions in these kinds of differences and distinctions.”⁴⁰

Conclusion and Suggestions

As we can see from this survey of Chinese interpretations of Gal 3:28, there is a tendency to veer toward ambiguity and abstractness and see Paul as referring only to internal or spiritual realities, thus missing the socio-political implications of this

passage. However, we have also shown that a more nuanced reading can acknowledge the countercultural force of Paul’s argument (Tsang) and one that retains the distinctions among dualities while arguing for equality (Yeo). These interpretations rightly ask the reader to strive toward making a spiritual reality (equality in Christ) reality in all realms of life.

To close, I suggest several areas for further interpretive work:

1. To flesh out the implications of one-ness regarding differences in society and culture, i.e., outside of the individual and outside of the church, in addition to acknowledging the spiritual effects of Christ’s work.
2. To be careful not to uncritically assume cultural expressions and expectations of gender roles as inherent in creation.
3. To see the countercultural force in Paul’s declaration, so that one’s life may reflect Christ’s reconciliatory work that eliminates human divisions (i.e., two ethnicities are both unconditionally heirs of Abraham), power differences (i.e., those who did not have a right to inheritance now do because of Christ), and prejudices (i.e., those who had and did not have the Torah were once enemies but now are able to fellowship at the Lord’s table as family).

If we can keep in mind these points, churches should be able to stay true to the perspective of being “in Christ” and from this vantage point identify how power differences and prejudices denigrate women, avoiding the uncritical repetition in the church of such erroneous cultural norms, as well as the use of God’s word as a

prooftext for such practices. Only then will the vision of the genders being one in Christ become a reality in the lives of our brothers and sisters, and only as such can the church community portray gender roles that are biblical and

different from the world’s, thus witnessing to the new creation that Christ has wrought.

There is great power in this passage that goes beyond simply changing the believer’s subjective understanding of the gospel and their relation to God; it also has the potential to transform one’s ethics and affect how we relate to other people in society, including those of a different gender. As Tsang writes, “Paul’s teaching has graced the church, but there is still unfinished business ahead. Long live the revolution that started with Paul!”⁴¹

Notes

1. For purposes of illustrating the *Chinese* perspective on Galatians and Pauline studies, I have only chosen books written in Chinese, thus omitting translated works, such as the Chinese version of the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. These represent what is available in Fuller Theological Seminary library’s Chinese collection; a seminary or mid-sized or larger Chinese church would likely carry the same books in their own library. Where the naming follows Western conventions, the surname is the last word; where it is transliterated, the surname is

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the first word. Chow (周聯華, 1920–2016) was a Baptist pastor and theologian born in Shanghai, China. He spent most of his professional life ministering in Taiwan. Fung (馮蔭坤, 1937–) is a retired professor at Hong Kong's China Graduate School of Theology. Chan (陳終道, 1924–2010) was born in Hong Kong and mostly ministered in the Chinese diaspora. Lee (李常受, 1905–1997) was the leader of the “Local Church” movement in Taiwan and the United States and is seen as the successor to Chinese theologian and pastor Watchman Nee (1903–1972). His commentary is included in the Recovery Version, a Chinese translation used exclusively in the “Local Church” movement. Li (李保羅) was the president of Hong Kong's United Wesleyan Graduate Institute. Wang (王國顯, 1927–2020) ministered in China, Hong Kong, and among Chinese Americans. Kok (郭漢成) was the president of Malaysia's Seminari Theoloji Malaysia and is a research fellow in NT studies. Wong (黃錫木) is an honorary researcher at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a translation consultant for the Asia Pacific region of United Bible Societies. Huang (黃登煌) is a NT professor at the Taiwan Graduate School of Pastoral Psychology.

2. Chinese Union Version (1906): *Bing bǐfēn yóutàirén, xī líní rén, zìzhǔ de, wèi nǚ de, huò nán huò nǚ, yīnwèi nǐmen zài jīdū yēsū lǐ dōu chéngwéi yì le.* 並不分猶太人、希利尼人、自主的、為奴的、或男或女，因為你們在基督耶穌裡都成為一了。 Revised Chinese Union Version (2006): *Bú zàifēn yóutàirén huò xīlà rén, búzài fēnwéi nǚ de zìzhǔ de, bú zàifēn nán de nǚ de, yīnwèi nǐmen zài jīdū yēsū lǐ dōu chéngwéi yì le.* 不再分猶太人或希臘人，不再分為奴的自主的，不再分男的女的，因為你們在基督耶穌裡都成為一了。

3. Ronald Y. K. Fung, *Zhēnlǐ yǔ zìyóu: Jiā lā tài shū zhùshì* [Truth and Freedom: Commentary on Galatians] (Hong Kong: Christian Communications, 1982) 236, italics added. I have translated from Chinese all quotations from this text.

4. Alex T. Cheung, Simon S. M. Wong, and Ezra Hon-seng Kok, *Qínglǐ zhījiān chí xīndào: Jiā lā tài shū, tiē sà luó ní jiā qiánhòu shū xīdú* [Rediscovering the Bible: The Book of Galatians and 1–2 Thessalonians] (Hong Kong: Logos Book House, 2003) 99, italics added. Kok and Wong are the authors of this book's Galatians section. I will refer to this work in the body henceforth as Kok and Wong.

5. Chow Lien-hwa, *Jiā lā tài shū, yǐ fú suǒ shū* [Galatians, Ephesians], 3rd ed., Chinese Bible Commentary 36 (Zhonghe, Taiwan: Christian Literature Council, 2006) 121, italics added.

6. These three consecutive quotations are from Chow, *Galatians, Ephesians*, 121.

7. Stephen C. T. Chan, *Jiā lā tài shū, yǐ fú suǒ shū* [Galatians, Ephesians], 5th ed., Commentaries of the Epistles of the New Testament 4 (Taipei, Taiwan: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 1983) 110.

8. Paul Li, *Jiā lā tài shū jiégòu shì yán jīng zhùshì* [A Commentary on a Structural Study of Galatians], 1st ed. (Kowloon, Hong Kong: Tien Dao Books, 1997) 116–17.

9. Fung, *Truth and Freedom*, 237.

10. Wang Guo-xian, *Dézhào ěrzi de míng fèn: Jiā lā tài shū dújīng jìlù* [Receiving Sonship: A Record of the Reading of Galatians] (Hong Kong: Manna Book Store, 2000) 124, italics added.

11. “Galatians 3,” Online Bible Recovery Version, Taiwan Gospel Book Room, http://recoveryversion.com.tw/Style0A/026/bible_menu.php (see note 5 for Gal 3:28–29).

12. Fung, *Truth and Freedom*, 237.

13. Cheung, Wong, and Kok, *Rediscovering the Bible*, 99.

14. Chow, *Galatians, Ephesians*, 122–23.

15. Ezra Hon-Seng Kok, *Jiā lā tài shū dǎolùn* [Introduction to Galatians], Introduction to the Bible (Hong Kong: Logos Book House, 2003) 112–13.

16. The reason for this spiritualizing tendency is outside the scope of this article, but I suggest it relates to the inclination toward theological fundamentalism that evolved in response to post-World War II politics, anti-communism, and anti-World Council of Churches events in Taiwan under the rule of the Chinese Nationalist Party. For a treatise on this part of history, see Chin Ken-pa, *Yuēsè hé tā de xiōngdì mén: hùjiào fāngòng, dǎngguó jīdūtú yǎ táiwān jìyàopài de xíngchéng* [Joseph and His Brothers: “Protecting the Faith Against Communism,” State-party Christians, and the Formation of Taiwanese Fundamentalism] (Tainan, Taiwan: Taiwan Church Press, 2017).

17. Huang, Deng-huang, *Jiā lā tài shū: Jīdū de fúyīn shì běn hū ēn yīnzhe xīn de fúyīn* [Galatians: The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel by Grace Through Faith] (Taipei, Taiwan: Yeong Wang Cultural Enterprise, 2010) 134.

18. Chan, *Galatians, Ephesians*, 110.

19. Ronald Y. K. Fung, *Jiā lā tài shū zhùshì* [A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians] (Taipei, Taiwan: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 2008) 896, italics added.

20. Fung, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 896. Huang makes a similar argument: “the point is not that all are equal in Christ (although this is true), but that every person is a member of the body of Christ.” Huang, *Galatians*, 134.

21. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” in *Women: New Dimensions*, ed. Walter J. Burghardt (Paulist, 1977) 41; Fiorenza, “You Are Not to Be Called Father: Early Christian History in a Feminist Perspective,” in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley (Orbis, 1983) 410–11. Richard B. Hays's work on Galatians includes “Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ,” *CBQ* 49 (1987) 268–90 and “Crucified with Christ: A Synthesis of the Theology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, and Galatians,” ch. 15 in *Pauline Theology*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler (Fortress, 1991) 1:227–46.

22. Fung, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 899.

23. As a side note, many interpreters surveyed in this study approach Eph 5:21–33 through a complementarian lens, which may explain their insistence that one-ness in Christ does not entail equality but rather different gender roles. For example, Chan writes that women should be subservient to men in both family and church, and that this is not inequality but God's arrangement. Lee also emphasizes that “the position of a woman is to be quiet and submissive; this protects them from overstepping their boundaries.” Li maintains that however we understand the idea of “headship” in Ephesians, the “undeniable conclusion” is that the NT “teaches wives to submit to their husbands.” Wang in a similar vein insists that the “one-ness/unity” between husbands and wives should be expressed through God-ordained gender roles. Stephen C. T. Chan, *Tǐ mó tài qiánhòu shū, tí duō shū* [1 and 2 Timothy, Titus], 4th ed., Commentaries of the Epistles of the New Testament 7 (Taipei, Taiwan: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press, 1982) 180–82; Lee, *Commentary on the Recovery Version Bible*, Eph 2:11 fn 1; Paul Li, *Yǐ fú suǒ shū* [Ephesians], Structural Analysis and Commentary (Hong Kong: Chinese Bible International, 2005) 172; Wang Guo-xian, *Jiànli jīdū de shēntǐ: Yǐ fú suǒ shū dújīng zhàjì* [Building the Body of Christ: Notes on a Reading of Ephesians] (Hong Kong: Christian Alliance Press, 1977) 123.

24. Fung, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 889, 892–93. For example, Fung points out that Jewish law was male-centric, affording

religious rights and responsibilities only to males in many instances (e.g., requiring them to observe the thrice-a-year religious festivals).

25. Fung, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, 889.

26. Sam Tsang, *Tuōtāihuàngǔ dé zìyóu: Cóng jiā lā tài shū tàntǎo jīdū tú zuòwéi shén er zǐ de shēnfèn* [From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetorical Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians], trans. Tong Sun, *Literary Studies of the Bible* (Hong Kong: Tien Dao Books, 2009) 199–201.

27. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 199–201.

28. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 229. Also, in a frank and powerful remark, Tsang points out that even though 1 Tim 2 teaches about a leadership position for men, in the current church, the role of the servant—which was what leadership originally entailed—is often ironically relegated to women such that they are tasked with the majority of difficult tasks, whereas the male leaders reap what the women have sown.

29. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 238–39.

30. Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Kǒngzǐ yǔ bǎoluó: Tiāndào yǔ shèng yán de xiāngyù* [Musing with Confucius and Paul: Toward a Chinese Christian Theology], *The Biblical Library* (Shanghai, China: East China Normal University Press, 2010) 322.

31. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 323.

32. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 323–24.

33. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 323–24.

34. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 319.

35. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 319.

36. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 319.

37. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 325.

38. Yeo, following Claus Westermann and others, takes Gen 1:27 as stating that God originally created a “male and female” group of beings. In other words, Adam was created androgynous, and male was only differentiated from female in Gen 2:21–23. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 325.

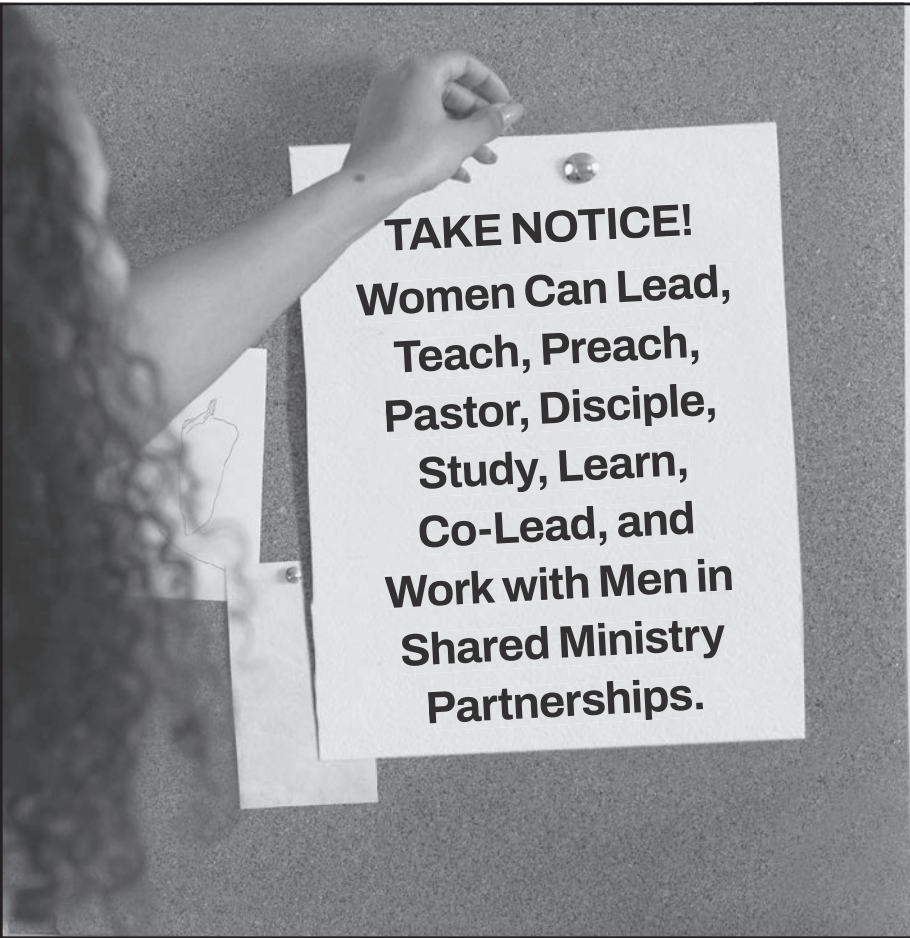
39. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 326.

40. Yeo, *Musing with Confucius and Paul*, 326.

41. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 239.

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