
**“LET US MAKE אָדָם”: AN EDENIC MODEL
OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY**

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Personal ontology studies human constitution and human nature, an increasingly debated topic in Christian theology. Historically, the most prominent models of personal ontology in Christian theology have been substance dualist models. More recently, physicalist models have offered prominent alternatives. This dissertation studies the conflict of interpretations between these two major model groupings: substance dualism and physicalism. By applying a canonical theology, it then presents an Edenic model of personal ontology that can address the current conflict of interpretations.

Towards this end, chapter one delineates this study's problem, background, purpose, and delimitations. It also introduces the methodology and procedure that will be employed, which includes the final-form canonical approach and phenomenological-exegetical analysis. Chapter two then identifies substance dualism and physicalism as two of the main model groupings of personal ontology prominent in Christian theology today, briefly analyzes them according to the rubrics of constitution and nature, and traces some of their historical development. Additionally, it offers a preliminary comparison between them, and asks whether a model based solely on the normative source of the biblical canon might prove beneficial to the current debate.

Chapter three explores this very question through a close reading of the Eden narrative, which is the biblical pericope that is most foundational to a study of personal ontology. In turn, this reading delivers answers to the questions of constitution and nature, and reveals an Edenic model of personal ontology. Chapter four then compares the Edenic model with substance dualism and physicalism using the same two rubrics, and seeks to determine which models may have the highest explanatory powers in dealing with current questions of personal ontology. Finally, chapter five summarizes the work of this dissertation, presents some implications of it, and offers suggestions for further study.