

Run That You May Win It: Contingency and Emotional Connectedness in the Soteriological Language of Paul

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

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This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

March 4, 2011

Preface

The influence of the apostle Paul on the shape of Christianity in his own century was significant enough, but through the twentieth century he loomed so large that he was even proposed as the founder of Christianity. Paul, who was adamant that ‘it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives within me’ (Gal. 2.20) would be horrified, but perhaps even a first century pastor and evangelist not exposed to post-modernity might acknowledge that, once a papyrus leaves his or her desk, an author has little control over the fate of their words, and authorial intentions can only be one part of a transaction between author and reader.

Paul was only too human: even if the famous text ‘I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate’ (Rom. 7.15) was not strictly speaking intended as an autobiographical statement, it is not a bad description of the state we share in our vastly different centuries. Paul wrote topical, urgent letters, responding to the contingencies arising in faith communities he had left behind, or in the case of Romans was yet to visit: the process of canonization of these writings, and the as yet unquenchable spirit of the community of which both he and every Christian is a part, have combined to ensure that his writings survive and continue to be interpreted in a world vastly different to his own. But, as a later servant of the Risen Lord would observe, ‘no man is an island’. As Paul’s letters became canon his emotional responses to his audiences and their needs were turned into ‘the Word of the Lord’, shaping the mission of the Church. Pastoral care, evangelism, christology, soteriology: countless aspects of Christian faith were shaped by the converted Hebrew of Tarsus.

My own response to Paul's writings has been shaped by two millennia of history and by my own life-story. In particular my thoughts are shaped by my task as a presbyter and pastor within post-modern, first world faith communities. As a theological student at Trinity College in Melbourne I began to focus my attention on soteriological questions: inspired by the late Dr. Dick McKinney, to whom I will ever be grateful, I began to wonder how we are to speak meaningfully of salvation in Christ in a multi-faith world. As a priest and pastor, at least until recent years, I was often called to exercise pastoral ministry to those apparently outside the parameters of the Christian community, those who are not, in Paul's terms, 'in Christ'. Particularly in ministries of bereavement and palliative care, but in reality across the spectrum of Christian mission, I was called to speak words of hope. But did I have a word of hope to speak to those who were, in Paul's terms, outside Christ?

As priest and pastor I turned to the systematic theologians, especially those proposing universalist doctrines of salvation, to justify my pastoral praxis. I noted differences between various forms of universalist doctrine, and, having completed a Masters thesis on the search for resurrection in the writings of D.H. Lawrence, decided to address the nagging questions of soteriology in a post-modern world. I am grateful to the late Professor Eric Sharpe for offering me a chance to undertake doctoral studies under his direction at the University of Sydney's Department of Studies in Religion. Unfortunately his untimely death left me in the academic wilderness, and in that wilderness I was beginning to query why so many of the soteriological debates I was engaging carried on without reference to the seminal writings of Paul. Was it possible to find a basis for compassionate pastoral care and mission in these writings – seminal though Paul never

intended them to be so? Could the writer who said both ‘Their end is destruction’ (Phil. 3.19) *and* ‘God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all’ (Rom. 11.32) speak a soteriological word of hope in the contexts, often outside the faith community, in which I was ministering?

I am grateful, too, to Professor Sharpe’s colleagues at the University of Sydney: Dr Edward F. Crangle, who discovered a student without a supervisor, and Drs. Carole Cusack and Tony Swain who undertook to read my research and find me a new supervisor and, as it happened, a new institution.

Since that time Associate Professor David C. Sim has had the unenviable task of guiding the transformation of my sow’s ear into something that is, if not a silk purse, at least a far more coherent document than it could have been without his critical judgement and rhetorical style. I deeply appreciate his persistence but emphasize that the faults are categorically mine.

As a theological student my thinking was revolutionised by my first encounter with J.C. Beker’s *Paul the Apostle*. His recognition of contingencies shaping Paul’s writings transformed my understanding. But as I read Paul as a pastor it seemed to me that one great unnamed and unmeasured contingency was that of his feelings towards his audience, what I came later to call ‘emotional connectivity’. Under Professor Sim’s supervision I was able to discover ways by which I could calibrate this ‘emotional x-factor’ in Paul’s writings, utilizing this as a key to understanding anew Paul’s applicability to my pastoral and missiological roles. While I was researching and writing Reidar Aasgaard published his own findings on Paul’s emotional connection, referred to

throughout this thesis. Fortunately I found that Aasgaard, rather than destroying my findings, served to hone my thoughts, and for that I am grateful.

I am grateful too to the faith- and wider communities of Orange and Casino in New South Wales, Semaphore, Port Adelaide and Walkerville in South Australia, Charleville in remote Southwest Queensland, and Whangarei in New Zealand, who have survived the experience of a Pauline spin on every topic imaginable. I hope the great apostle hasn't been misrepresented, and that the Spirit he served has indeed been the Spirit that has informed my pastoral and liturgical ministries in these communities.

Beker speaks of a 'word on target' and three scholars in particular, who have in passing offered me words of encouragement at the right moment, have my gratitude. Professor Robert Jewett was kind enough to give up an afternoon in Auckland to listen to and critique my perspectives, while Dr. Peter Marshall offered wise words following my presentation to his seminar at the Society of Biblical Literature in July 2008. Tangentially I would like to thank Professor Margaret M. Mitchell, whose kind response to an eccentric email from the outback of Australia did more than she could realize to encourage my academic endeavours. Similarly, Brad Stetson, of AZUSA Pacific University and Vinoth Ramachandra of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, simply by taking time to respond to unsolicited correspondence from an outback stranger that I am sure they do not now recall, did more than they can imagine to encourage my slender efforts. My thanks are due, too, to Bishop Bruce Wilson, formerly Bishop of Bathurst in New South Wales, whose encouragement to continue in academic discipline has remained a benevolent monkey on my back for many years.

My thanks, too, to Leisa Lance, of Brisbane, and Sheila Swarbrick of Whangarei, church warden extraordinaire, for your kind works of proof-reading; my dear friend Dr Lisa Emerson, of Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand, has been a constant source of both critical comment and immeasurable encouragement. It's been a long time since we sat in undergrad classes together, but thanks for teaching me the skills of perseverance! to Tony Williams of Melbourne for his hospitality during my three months study leave in 2006; to Dr Andrew McGowan of my *alma mater*, Trinity College, Melbourne for permitting me the undeserved title of 'visiting scholar' during the same period; to Christine Brunton, formerly of the Roscoe Library at St Francis Theological College in Brisbane, and Judith Bright, Helen Greenwood, and Jenny Harper of the John Kinder Library at St. John's Theological College in Auckland, for patient assistance. My thanks also to my friend and colleague, the Rev'd Christopher Honoré, also of St John's, for his provision of hospitality and printing facilities.

My role as priest and pastor is secondary to my role as a father and a husband. For more years than I care to admit my eight children have tolerated – or not! – my obsession with some old bloke from Tarsus, far away and long ago. I hope one day Paul may speak to you as he long has to me, not with the dictatorial voice of pseudo-Paul, 'Children, obey your parents in everything' (Col. 3.20) but with the gloriously uplifting voice of the authentic Paul: 'the greatest of these is love'. To Vanessa McArdle, and to Natasha, Rosalind, Caitlin, Johanna, Phoebe, Julian and Jonty Godfrey my thanks for putting up with me, and my heartfelt apologies for the heavy cost you've borne.

Above all though my thanks go to my best mate and wife, the Rev'd Anne van Gend.

This thesis has been a part of our lives since we met in a Canberra car park. Thanks for more than I can say: now it's your turn. *Tena koe, whaiāipo! Kia ora!*

Michael J.H. Godfrey
Whangarei, New Zealand
Feast of Justin the Martyr
(Tuesday, June 1st), 2010

Abstract

Since the work of J.C. Beker in the 1970s, emphasis has been given to the importance of contingent circumstances, rather than any chronological development, as a hermeneutical key to Paul's letters. Given each of Paul's letters is topical, addressing specific pastoral circumstances, I explore in this study the possibility of a statistical analysis of Paul's use of key words and phrases as a means to calibrate the emotional distance between Paul and his various audiences.

After locating each epistle within a framework particularly of text-critical and sociological scholarship, I evaluate Paul's audiences in terms of their soteriological 'state'. For Paul, the optimum state is 'being in', that is being obedient to the kerygma he has proclaimed, and remaining within behavioural parameters that he has established. It is the responsibility of each audience to adhere to his teachings and remain in that state. Not all are doing so. This influences Paul's relationship to the audience, an influence revealed primarily through his changing language: when Paul is content with the state of his audience, including their behaviour, he experiences greater emotional connection with them. This 'connection' is a quantifiable contingency, measurable by the frequency with which Paul uses key terms of address and addresses essential topics. A favourable or unfavourable level of connection in turn affects the way in which Paul focuses on soteriological questions of being 'in' or 'out', or in transition from 'in' to 'out' of Christ.

By ascertaining the extent to which Paul feels comfortable with his audiences, his 'emotional connectedness', it is possible to 'weigh' the value of the soteriological statements that Paul makes throughout his letters.

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Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentary
CMMCS	Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series
CSR	<i>Christian Scholar's Review</i>
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
ECCiC	Early Christianity in Context
EPC	Epworth Preacher's Commentaries
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
FMFS	Faith Meets Faith Series
GNS	Good News Studies
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ITC	International Theological Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHD	Library of History and Doctrine
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>ModTheol</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary

NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTM	New Testament Message
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
<i>RelStud</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
RiD	Religions in Dialogue Series
RLA	Religion, Literature and the Arts
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SHT	Studies in Historical Theology
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
UJT	Understanding Jesus Today
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	<i>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

Canonization of Paul's writings has ensured that they are one of the best-utilized resources in the formation of Christian thought and praxis. They have also provided an arsenal of weapons in text wars of theological discourse, scholarly or otherwise. Paul's personal definitions of the boundaries that divide Christian believer from non-believer, or the boundaries that divide 'ortho-believer' from 'hetero-believer', have contributed to Christian boundary marking since his emissaries set out to carry the letters across the Roman Empire.

This was not Paul's intention. His letters were part of his mission to proclaim Christ. They were, with the possible exception of Romans, designed to maintain or to restore right beliefs and practices in the audience communities. They were sometimes corrective surgery, addressing issues when they had gone awry in places in which he had proclaimed the gospel, but had left behind. They were sometimes intended to be encouragement to a suffering audience. On one occasion, as he wrote to the seat of Imperial power, he foreshadowed plans to visit an established faith community, and from there start a further mission. Each letter had its own purpose: provision of weaponry in future theological discourse was not one of Paul's aims.

Each letter was circumstantial. In this thesis I accept the topicality or circumstantiality of the undisputed letters, whether or not the circumstances of writing are apparent to us. Romans, for example, has been seen as a 'last will and testament'¹ or as a 'compendium of Christian doctrine'.² Even these authorial intentions would be in themselves circumstances, giving the

¹ G. Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament", *ABR* 11 (1963): 2-14; reprinted in K.P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (Second edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 16-28.

² A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM, 1952), 8.

document shape and content. B. Childs is probably closest to the heart of the hermeneutical matter when he observes:

Regardless of Paul's intention, the letter to the Romans has been heard in a particular way in the subsequent development of the Pauline corpus. Moreover, this move was not an accidental construal, but one that found its warrant in the perspective of the prescript with its universal scope, the appeal to "all," the promise to the nations, and the new eschatological era of Christ's Lordship.³

These factors have, together with the size of the document, ensured the place of Romans at the head of the epistolary canon, and as such these elements are an inescapable element of all post-Pauline hermeneutics. These issues have even sometimes led post-Pauline readers to a degree of interpretive myopia, blinding them – us – to some of Paul's priorities. For, by the time he wrote Romans, Paul was aware of potential political ramifications of his kerygma. In the context of the Imperial seat of Rome it was particularly apparent that his kerygma of obedience and obeisance to a crucified criminal could generate a collision between the claims to supremacy by the Emperor and the gods of Rome on one hand and the exclusive claims of the God of the Cross on the other.

So Paul theologized the Roman authorities as servants of God (leitourgoi\ qeou=, Rom. 13.1-6), adopting a political and theological insight proposed by Isaiah centuries earlier (Isa. 44.28, 45.1, 45.13). Paul was, by the time he wrote Romans, conscious of potential for misinterpretation and misrepresentation. As he wrote to Rome he adjusted to the contingencies of that city before uncompromisingly narrating his law-free gospel, emphasising propriety and

³ B.S. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: the Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 67.

order. When he wrote to the Philippians, by contrast, he boasted of the subversion of Caesar's household, for this to him was what his proclamation of the gospel undoubtedly was (Phil. 1.12-13).

Paul spent many years reflecting on his Damascus Road experience⁴ in 'Arabia' and 'Damascus' (Gal. 1.17) and subsequently 'Syria and Cilicia' (Gal. 1.21) before his evangelisation of the Galatians. During this time it is almost certain that the central tenets of his faith and doctrine were firmly established. This is the key thesis that is Beker's primary gift to hermeneutics:⁵ shifting contingencies, rather than slow reflective revision, altered the emphases of Paul's gospel. Paul had no time, after his Arabian and Damascus sojourns, for leisurely reflection.⁶ The different contingencies of which Paul was aware in the regions of Galatia and Rome led to the variations in his treatment of the Abraham-saga that are apparent when the two epistles are compared.

The distinct circumstances that led to each of the letters being written had at least one common outcome: Paul established or re-established awareness of boundaries separating the Christ-community from surrounding communities. Establishment of those boundaries in turn created a distinct difference, at least in Paul's mind, between those inside and those outside the Christ-community. Paul's language choices when addressing these states of community-belonging, and when he was considering the possibility and process of transfer between those belonging and non-belonging, will be a primary concern of this thesis. From that primary

⁴ Though the phrase is borrowed from Acts 9.27, it is a part of the recognized language of stereotypical Christian conversion experience. See, e.g., L.R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 1; also A.J. Krailsheimer, *Conversion* (London, SCM, 1980), 12. It is an accepted term, forming part of the *lingua franca* of Pauline scholarship. See J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 177.

⁵ J.C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980).

⁶ However see reference, pages 73-74 below, to the debate between S. Kim and D.J.-S. Chae.

avenue of investigation may emerge insights into Paul's soteriology, and particularly his expectation of the salvation or damnation of the outsider, those untouched by the Christian kerygma.

The language Paul used made his audience aware that there were parameters of behaviour and belief that defined membership of, or exclusion from, the Christ-community. To some extent Paul provided broad brushstrokes depicting, in rhetorical caricature, the beliefs and practices of those who were not a part of what he saw as the community of right belief. But does Paul really engage in understanding outsiders, or reflecting on their eschatological fate? The language he uses is always affected by his relationship with those within the community of faith, the chosen audience. I will study the terms Paul used, while asking whether contingent circumstances influenced Paul's choice particularly of boundary-marking terminology.

The work of R. Aasgaard, whose monograph *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul*⁷ was published during preparation of my study, raises the question of Paul's emotional connection to his audience, and the ways in which this effects Paul's epistolary style. Aasgaard's findings, which I address in my survey of scholarly literature below, and respond to throughout my study, provide a comparative assessment of the issues addressed here, and inform, but are not duplicated in my own research. Aasgaard has different focal questions, and, while, like him, I use Paul's language as a measure of emotional connection, I look more closely at the pastoral and theological factors shaping Paul's language, and the way in which these in turn influence his theological pronouncements.

⁷ R. Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

Aasgaard's investigation into siblingship is of considerable value. However, for my own investigations it is necessary to make some adjustments to his representations of Paul's relationship to his audience. I will fine-tune Aasgaard's findings by paying more detailed attention to possible pre-editorial divisions within the correspondence, although these remain open to scholarly conjecture. In the Corinthian correspondence in particular, where there is a reasonable degree of scholarly consensus on possible division of the letters into more than the canonical two, greater attention to development may provide further clues to processes by which Paul developed his theological and particularly soteriological language. I will provide my own statistical analysis based on the frequency of Paul's use of relational terms, including that of siblingship, to establish a 'fictive kinship indicator', similar to Aasgaard's ranking of the distribution of address,⁸ but I will subsequently combine this with other indicators to provide a stronger sense of 'connectivity' between Paul and his audience, and of Paul's satisfaction with his audience.

Since the 'magisterial'⁹ work of Beker, it has been recognized that contingencies shifted the emphases and even the form of Paul's theology, while a coherent centre remained untouched. Beker's argument,¹⁰ which I will address in more detail later in this Introduction, is that 'the triumph of God' is the unchanging and coherent centre of Paul's thought.¹¹ This viewpoint has had a remarkable influence on Pauline scholarship since Beker published *Paul*

⁸ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 268.

⁹ P. Achtemeier, "Finding the Way to Paul's Theology", in *Pauline Theology. Volume 1. Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (J.M. Bassler, ed., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 25-36 (26).

¹⁰ Note however the comments of C.H. Dodd, published in 1953: 'the modern tendency is to deny that the thought of Paul underwent any substantial development during the period covered by the extant epistles, and to explain the acknowledged differences as due merely to differences of aim, or to the different circumstances in which the epistles were written'. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 83.

¹¹ Achtemeier has pointed out that in subsequent thought it becomes clear that the 'coherent centre' alluded to by Beker becomes something of an elusive centre. Achtemeier does not posit chronological development. "Finding the Way", 26.

the Apostle in 1980. Beker himself suggested some modifications to his original publication in his contributions to the Pauline Theology Group of the Society of Biblical Literature, so that ‘Jewish apocalyptic is the substratum and master symbolism of Paul’s thought’, and this ‘formed the indispensable filter, context and grammar by which he appropriated and interpreted the Christ-event’.¹² This coherent centre of Paul’s thought as proposed by Beker becomes harder to pin down in Beker’s later revision, so that he concedes, ‘Coherence cannot be restricted to one particular “contingent” symbol – for instance, to the eschatological triumph of God, as I proposed in my book’.¹³ His revisions to the ‘Coherence-Contingency Scheme’¹⁴ do not, for the purposes of this study, altogether clarify matters, despite attempts to anchor the scheme in pneumatological co-ordinates: ‘the locus of the interaction between coherence and contingency is the Holy Spirit, which has the function of the *diakri/seij pneuma/twn* (1 Cor. 12:10)’.¹⁵ His attempts at clarification, made in the context of a theological symposium, fail to clarify matters;¹⁶ consequently in my consideration of Beker later in this Introduction I will focus on his earlier book rather than the awkward revisitations of it from the Paul Symposium.¹⁷

1. Survey of Scholarly Literature

To write of Paul at all is to engage with an immeasurable field of scholarly literature. This investigation will necessarily take into consideration a vast array of exegetical, biographical

¹² J.C. Beker, “Recasting Pauline Theology: The Coherence-Contingency Scheme as Interpretive Model”, in J. Bassler, *Pauline Theology*, volume 1, 15-24 (17).

¹³ Beker, “Recasting”, 18.

¹⁴ Beker, “Recasting”, 20.

¹⁵ Beker, “Recasting”, 19-20.

¹⁶ It may be argued that the contingent circumstances of the processes of clarification in Beker’s works bear some resemblance to alterations and clarifications in Paul’s, and that there is both a contingent and a chronological aspect to the process!

¹⁷ Further useful analysis of the Coherence-Contingency Scheme is to be found in C.C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (NovTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1992).

and historical research, though even such a wide net will catch only some of the scholarly fish circling in Pauline waters. Scholars whose output has been of the seismic influence of E.P. Sanders or of the sheer magnitude of J.D.G. Dunn will underscore each section of this study. Other scholars, notably M.M. Mitchell and her study of rhetorical form in 1 Corinthians,¹⁸ and P. Marshall and his exhaustive analysis of deteriorating relations between Paul and his Corinthian audience,¹⁹ generate watersheds in their respective areas, inevitably informing my findings. Commentaries, especially the watershed commentaries such as Jewett's on Romans²⁰ or Thrall's on 2 Corinthians,²¹ are inescapable sources of insight and information, and their authors' work permeates almost my every paragraph.

Sanders demolished what he considered to be popular misconceptions of the world of first century Judaism and therefore misconceptions of the relationships between that world and the faith-world Paul proclaimed. For a while it seemed Sanders had the final word on first century Judaism's 'covenantal nomism'²² and Paul's 'participationist eschatology',²³ but there has been some academic reaction to Sanders. In particular, J.H. Charlesworth²⁴ questioned whether Sanders had over-simplified first century Judaism, creating an amorphous unity out of disparate groups that were in fact distinctively different. Following Charlesworth, M. Elliott²⁵ and S.

¹⁸ M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

¹⁹ P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 23. Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1987).

²⁰ Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

²¹ M. Thrall, *II Corinthians* (ICC. Two volumes. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994 & 2000).

²² For initial definition see E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 75.

²³ See especially Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 463-474.

²⁴ J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Prolegomena for the Study of Christian Origins* (SNTSMS 54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²⁵ M.A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

Kim²⁶ have criticized Sanders' and Dunn's New Perspective. Elliott has followed Charlesworth in questioning Sanders' claims that participationist eschatology and Paul's form of Messianism provide the main difference between Paul's kerygma and Second Temple Judaism. Nevertheless, criticism of Sanders' perspective has largely been limited to scholars representing a relatively conservative evangelicalism,²⁷ and the Sanders-initiated New Perspective has dominated Pauline scholarship since the late 1970s. Since Sanders, the most prolific proponent of the New Perspective has been Dunn. His influence on exegesis and hermeneutics inevitably influence this study in every section; his commentaries²⁸ and monumental study of the theology of Paul,²⁹ together with several other monographs,³⁰ have informed my investigations at almost every stage.

Three scholars, with different New Testament interests and approaches, have in particular shaped my investigations, and warrant particular mention. My investigations are not designed to be direct responses to their works, but I could not have proceeded in the directions I have taken without their prior research and findings. I will consider Beker in a separate context.

²⁶ S. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

²⁷ See D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien and M. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism. Volume 1. The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001). Also M. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (NSBT 9. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000).

²⁸ J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38A. Dallas: Word Books, 1988); *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B. Dallas: Word Books, 1988); *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC. London: A&C Black, 1993); *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

²⁹ Dunn, *Theology*.

³⁰ J.D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1977); *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Second edition. London: SCM, 1989); *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (SBT Second Series 15. London: SCM, 1970).

a. **R. Aasgaard**

In recent years Reidar Aasgaard has explored the metaphorical world of ‘siblingship’ as a key to Pauline hermeneutics: as the most frequent metaphorical construction in Paul’s writings, siblingship³¹ is an invaluable hermeneutical key to his letters, informing his thought and revealing the state of his relationship to his audience.³² Aasgaard places Paul’s use of the sibling metaphor into the context of the ancient world’s understanding of siblingship as it is revealed in historical, legal and literary documents.

What is the significance of this metaphor? Given the realities of siblinghood in Paul’s society, what does Paul understand to be the implications of being a brother and a sister in a new familial community? Aasgaard’s primary criticism of previous research into Paul’s use of the metaphor is that it presupposes too great an emotional harmony in family groupings.³³ Aasgaard argues that low life expectancy ensured that three-generational family groups were rare;³⁴ while strict patriarchal hierarchy was the ideal, the death or debilitation of a father frequently upset hierarchical structures,³⁵ and family harmony was at best not universal, and at worst exceptional.

Aasgaard considers Paul’s letters in chronological order, mapping family relationships. Paul portrays relationships between God as Father and Jesus as Son, between Jesus and believers, and between Paul and his audience in various different ways. These ways differ

³¹ See also B. Byrne, *Reckoning with Romans: A Contemporary Reading of Paul’s Gospel* (GNS 18. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1986), 23 and *passim*.

³² See also K. Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (LNTS 325. London: T&T Clark International, 2007). Ehrensperger notes that ‘literary evidence of aspects of family life mirrors the life of the elite, that is between 3 to 7 per cent of the population’ (59).

³³ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 21.

³⁴ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 43-45.

³⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 49-51.

depending on the relationship existing between Paul and his audience and on the circumstances that the audience and Paul are in as Paul writes to them.³⁶

On occasions Paul adopts parent/child imagery to describe his relationship with those who have come to faith through his mission, and describes his relationship to them by means of other terms of endearment or authority.³⁷ The nearest Paul comes to associating believers with Christ in a horizontal relationship is as ‘co-heirs’ (Rom. 8.17) and as lesser siblings of a firstborn son (Rom. 8.29).

’Adelfoi/ is by far Paul’s most common form of address. While some textual variants marginally affect a tally of occurrences, Aasgaard notes that ‘out of the 122 occurrences of the root a)delf in Paul, 64 appear in direct address’.³⁸ He finds sibling address to be most frequent in 1 Thessalonians, ranging down to 2 Corinthians. He finds an ‘above average’³⁹ level of address in 1 Thessalonians, Philemon, Galatians, Philippians and 1 Corinthians, and ‘below average’ in Romans and 2 Corinthians. He notes that there is no chronological pattern to the

³⁶ 1 Thessalonians: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 120-122. Galatians: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 122-124. 1 Corinthians: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 124-125. Philippians: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 126-127. Philemon: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 127. Romans: Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 128-130.

³⁷ Other important metaphorical constructs by which the Christian community is linked include nurse/patient (1 Thess. 2.7), benefactor/heir (Gal. 3.29, 4.1, 4.7), nursing mother/child (1 Cor. 3.1-4), and master/slave (Rom. 6.17-19, 7.6, 25; 1 Cor. 7.22b). This last is a relationship that is paradoxically inverted so that those within the faith community engage in reciprocal slavery: 2 Cor. 4.5, Gal. 5.13. Paul, understanding himself to be a slave to the gospel, even sees himself as ‘slave to all’ (1 Cor. 9.19 – despite the more literal injunction of 1 Cor. 7.23). The master/slave relationship in Paul is used as a flexible and contextually contingent metaphor: ‘you are no longer a slave but a child’ (Gal. 4.7). For more complete exploration of these metaphors see D.B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

³⁸ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 262. I present my own findings, based on slightly different statistical analyses, later in this study. Aasgaard presents an analysis based on the times the address form a)delfoi/ is used in relation to the number of verses per epistle.

³⁹ Aasgaard is referring here to a simple statistical average of the findings for each letter, (number of verses per use of address form) divided by 7, the number of letters Aasgaard considers. Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 262.

differences, but rather a circumstantial alteration. This is consistent with Beker's emphasis on contingent influences on Paul.⁴⁰

Aasgaard notes that in 1 Thessalonians Paul's use of the sibling metaphor includes all the audience. In Galatians, while family metaphors are frequent, they rarely signify relations between Paul and his audience. He does, however, identify his audience as *te/kna mou*, and as those to whom he has 'given birth' (Gal. 4.19), generating a hierarchical relationship. In 1 Corinthians Paul's emphasis is similarly on his role as father⁴¹ (see 1 Cor. 4.15-17), leading to a threat of corporal punishment at 1 Cor. 4.21. The hierarchical emphasis on parent/child relations is heightened in 2 Corinthians. By contrast, the Philippians are never Paul's 'children' but frequently his brothers and sisters. In Philemon family metaphors abound, with central figures described as brothers and/or sisters, but Paul's role is primarily as a father and as an 'old man' (Philem. 9). In Romans, with the exception of Rom. 16.14, Paul refers to and addresses his audience as siblings throughout.

Aasgaard notes that Paul never refers to himself as a sibling, allowing his family metaphors to place him hierarchically 'above' the audiences he is instructing.⁴² In an axis of distance/closeness, 2 Corinthians and Romans place the audience – for different reasons – at a far greater emotional distance than do the other writings. On an axis of superiority/subordination, Paul places himself at his lowest degree of superiority in writing to the Romans, and his greatest degree of superiority in later writings to the Corinthians. Paul addresses different groups with differing degrees of 'sibling warmth'. These differences depend

⁴⁰ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269.

⁴¹ Beker speaks of Paul's claims to 'father rights'. *Paul*, 4.

⁴² Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 292-295.

on subject matter and on the degrees to which the target audience respond appropriately to the Pauline gospel.

False siblings receive Paul's greatest scorn. As Aasgaard observes, they are treated as non-persons; 'He does not only reject the attitudes and actions of the deviant, he also rejects them as persons: they are non-siblings'.⁴³ In his treatment of these masquerading apostles Paul makes one of his strongest soteriological observations (Gal. 1.8-9), provisionally cursing those who 'proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we have proclaimed'; it is, however, a curse reserved for those acting as part of the Christian community, not for those *beyond* its parameters.⁴⁴

Aasgaard's primary value to this study is in his recognition of the priority of sibling language as a key to understanding Paul's relations to his audience and to those referred to in his writings. In the Christian community the ties are not primarily biological, and Aasgaard has provided a useful study by which to understand Paul's relationship to his audience. His statistical analysis of sibling language provides a key by which to place Paul's emotional and theological 'attunedness' to the audience on each epistolary occasion. It should be noted, though, that Aasgaard's study is not primarily a soteriological one but socio-historical.

Aasgaard defines metaphor and its operation early in his work.⁴⁵ It is useful to turn to a famous maxim of I.A. Richards: 'the word is not the thing'.⁴⁶ The use of metaphor to make comparison presupposes *dissimilarity* between the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor. The *vehicle* of that which Aasgaard defines as a metaphor of household existence is the collection of

⁴³ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 302.

⁴⁴ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 303, refers to 'unacceptable Christians'.

⁴⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 23-31.

⁴⁶ See C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (Tenth edition. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), *passim*.

words that Paul and others have used to define the faith community as ‘family’. The *tenor* is actual existence within the Christian community, the Jewish community, or the voluntary associations. Turning to formative texts, Aasgaard observes ‘In Deuteronomy it seems to be of particular importance; here, Israel is *depicted* as a people of brothers’.⁴⁷ In the cases cited, however,⁴⁸ the use of sibling language operates not as a metaphor, drawing a parallel between vehicle and tenor, but as metonymy. Metaphor and metonymy extend the normal use of a word, in this case ‘brother’, to include ways and experiences of being ‘brother/sister’.

Metonymy presupposes that the word *is* the thing. The Deuteronomy verses cited by Aasgaard refer to kinship within the Israelite community, within which blood kinship groups were not greatly differentiated from immediate blood-family. To impose ‘non-literal’ on the eastern Mediterranean world and its extended family network, as described in detail by Aasgaard,⁴⁹ may be to read ancient Palestinian and eastern Mediterranean networks through modern European eyes. Aasgaard notes the classical Greek origins of notions of ‘clan’,⁵⁰ and recognizes that ‘the relationship between the individual and the household in Hellenistic times may have been somewhat different than in classical times and in the Roman (and Jewish) traditions’,⁵¹ but the question remains how we might measure the dimensions of Paul’s understanding and that of Paul’s audiences when familial terms are used. Ehrensperger has observed ‘it is doubtful whether it is methodologically appropriate to subsume the entire Mediterranean basin under one particular pattern and to draw parallels from contemporary Mediterranean societies directly to societies of the first century’.⁵² So too, first century speech

⁴⁷ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 113. Italics added.

⁴⁸ Deut. 3.18; 15.3; 15.11-12; 23.19 and 24.17.

⁴⁹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 40-43.

⁵⁰ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 41.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Ehrensperger, *Dynamics*, 58.

about household and family refers to more than that which we indicate by the words today. This should not be minimalized by applying the term ‘metaphor’. By using the more specific term ‘metonymy’ sibling language can be understood to contain notions of ‘clan’ without any sense that an unequal parallelism exists between the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor. A contrast might be drawn between Paul’s use of familial metonymy and his use of the body metaphor. He does not see the faith community as a physical incarnation of Christ (the metaphor is *not* the thing). He does see it as a new and primary social entity (the metonymy *is* the thing).

The very term ‘metaphor’ implies a Greek worldview.⁵³ There is a difference between Hellenic thought in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle, and the Hebraic thought that to some immeasurable extent informed Paul the Jew.⁵⁴ The degree to which Paul was directly aware of Aristotle’s thought and method cannot be measured, though, as L. Thurén has noted.⁵⁵ On those occasions on which Paul permits himself to speak of his origins he opens by citing his Jewishness: ‘Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I’ (2 Cor. 11.2). Or, to the Galatians more vaguely, ‘You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism?’ (Gal. 1.13) or ‘We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners’ (Gal. 2.15). Paul’s Jewish identity may not reckon in the equation of salvation (Rom. 3.29) but his assumption of familiarity with Hebrew narratives makes it abundantly clear that these narratives provide an inescapable hermeneutical framework for Paul and his kerygma.

⁵³ Though this is true too, of course, of ‘metonymy’.

⁵⁴ S. Handelman, *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 1-10.

⁵⁵ ‘It is unlikely that New Testament authors, who hardly received any higher education in rhetoric or dialectic, were strongly influenced by Aristotle. L. Thurén, “Is There Biblical Argumentation?” in Eriksson, A., Olbricht, T.H., and Übelacker, W., eds., *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (ESEC. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 77-92), 81.

To the Hellene, as the word ‘meta-phor’ indicates, there exists a Platonic reality ‘behind’ or alongside that which is conveyed. There is a direct and fixed correspondence between vehicle and tenor, and use of a metaphor juxtaposes vehicle and tenor. The one is not the other. To the Hebrew there is no such differentiation: all is ‘indeterminate and contingent’.⁵⁶ Handelman observes: ‘The Hebrew word was not just an arbitrary designation, but an aspect of the continuous divine creative force itself’.⁵⁷ While the New Testament epistles, including those of Paul, were written in a world influenced by Greek thought, Paul remains ‘a Hebrew born of Hebrews’ (Phil. 3.5). The Hebrew relationship between an individual and their dyadic family network informs Paul’s thought, language and teaching, no matter who are the recipients of his letters. There is no quantifiable assessment to measure the degree to which Greek or Hebrew culture influenced his personal or private understanding of the process of fictive kinship, but his mission impacted on many who believed that there was no ‘is not the thing’ in the relationship between inclusion in Christ and inclusion in a new family.⁵⁸

I have mentioned above that my method differs to that of Aasgaard. The differences apply not only to his wider use of socio-historical skills, but also to the statistical method I have incorporated into my word usage analysis. My method is to take the frequency of Paul’s use of key conceptual word-families and to divide that by the total number of *koiné* words in each letter. This differs to Aasgaard’s approach. He divides familial or sibling terms by the total number of sentences per letter. These methodological differences do not indicate any error in Aasgaard’s analysis but a different set of investigative priorities, as suggested in my

⁵⁶ Handelman, *Slayers*, 29.

⁵⁷ Handelman, *Slayers*, 32.

⁵⁸ ‘The fiction that baptism had made the new converts into a new family is, after all, deeply embedded in their common language’. W. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 103.

consideration of his work above. My interest is in the *linguistic* choices Paul makes as he establishes or repairs soteriological boundaries, whereas Aasgaard is interested in analyzing the *sociological* form of Paul's communities: 'Why does the apostle Paul speak of Christians as brothers and sisters, as siblings? What does he mean by this? And what is the function of this language in his communication with his co-Christians?'⁵⁹ Or 'does the fact that he uses metaphor have any special implications?'⁶⁰ My questions of Paul's text are primarily missiological and soteriological: does Paul's relationship to his audience shape his sense of mission and the way in which he expresses his kerygma? Aasgaard's questions are primarily sociological and historical.

So my aims and methods differ to those of Aasgaard. Aasgaard asks questions specifically about the use of the sibling metaphor in Paul's writings,⁶¹ and draws conclusions about the theological and rhetorical purpose of the metaphor in Paul's mission.⁶² My inquiry is less detailed, but casts a wider net over Paul's language of connection to and relationship with his audiences, to see whether the contingency of connection affects the way he writes of soteriological issues. A comparison of Aasgaard's review of literature and my own reveals vastly different influences: his is a self-confessedly 'eclectic' network of 'cultural anthropology, sociology, socio-linguistics, rhetoric, and metaphor theory'⁶³ and mine, while inevitably revealing overlapping bibliographies, draws more specifically on biblical theologians. Nevertheless my debt to Aasgaard, whose work was published during the gestation of my own investigations, will be clear to any reader familiar with his work.

⁵⁹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 2.

⁶⁰ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 3.

⁶¹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 6-7.

⁶² Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 308-312.

⁶³ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 8.

b. J.M. Gundry Volf

A by-product of Sanders' explorations of the relationship between Paul's theology and his Palestinian heritage and contemporaries has been renewed interest in the soteriological questions of 'perseverance' and salvation. In a summary statement of comparison between Paul's world and that of his people of origin, Sanders observes '*salvation is by grace but judgment is according to works: works are the condition of remaining 'in', but they do not earn salvation*'.⁶⁴ Taking this observation as a starting point, Gundry Volf engages in an exploration of the themes of 'Staying in and Falling Away' in Pauline soteriology. She emphasizes that she did not set out to protect Paul's soteriology from the possibility of allowing 'falling away' from grace and salvation, but that because of her exegesis she finds the Reformed doctrine of perseverance to be a thoroughgoing reaffirmation of Paul's own view.⁶⁵

In the first part of her study, Gundry Volf analyses texts that present, in her words, 'the relation of various divine saving initiatives to each other and especially to final salvation'.⁶⁶ In a second section she analyses texts that speak of the endurance of believers in times of eschatological trial. She then explores some of Paul's autobiographical accounts or pedagogical dealings with audience members and their milieu, those who are experiencing crises of ethical behaviour, and those who are 'falling away through unbelief or abandonment of belief in the gospel'.⁶⁷ Her conclusion is that the action of God on believers' lives is such that the 'earnest' or down payment that believers experience in their encounter with God's intervention in their lives and in the receipt of the Spirit is certain and irreversible proof of the indelibility of their

⁶⁴ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 543. Italics in original. See J.M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (Westminster: John Knox, 1995), 1.

⁶⁵ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 2-3.

⁶⁶ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 4.

⁶⁷ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 5.

salvation. The in-dwelling of the Spirit is the pledge of final redemption,⁶⁸ that God will address failure with corrective punishment but not by exclusion from salvation,⁶⁹ and effectively that any who are not ‘eschatologically in’ were not ‘in’ in the first place.

Gundry Volf’s exegetical study opens with Rom. 8.29-30, which she sees as depicting an unbroken ‘golden chain’ of salvation, from predestination to glorification.⁷⁰ She finds this interpretation confirmed in her reading of similar passages in 2 Thess. 2.13-14 and 1 Thess. 5.9,⁷¹ ensuring that Paul’s phrase *peripoi/hsin swthri/aj* at 1 Thess. 5.9 is not taken to indicate in any way the contribution of human effort to attainment of salvation in and through Christ.⁷²

Gundry Volf’s emphasis on the passivity of believers in the attainment of salvation here at the head of her work flags an exegetical concern that undergirds the entire study. In fact interpretation of *peripoi/hsin swthri/aj* at 1 Thess. 5.9 is not without ambivalence, and a glance at commentaries makes it quite clear that hermeneutics and history are inseparable. E. Richard is adamant that *peripoi/hsij* incorporates human action: ‘Owing to Paul’s focus on exhortation and proper behaviour in view of salvation ... the emphasis in the passage is on “attainment” rather than “possession” of salvation’.⁷³ This stands in stark contrast to Gundry Volf’s observation ‘Word usage shows that *peripoi/hsij* [sic] *swthri/aj* need not entail the Thessalonians’ own action towards acquisition of salvation’.⁷⁴ Citing I.H. Marshall, Gundry Volf argues ‘The phrase simply means “to obtain possession” and allows

⁶⁸ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 283.

⁶⁹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 285.

⁷⁰ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 9-14.

⁷¹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 15-27.

⁷² Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 25-26.

⁷³ E. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonian* (SP 11. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1995), 256.

⁷⁴ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 23.

(but does not demand) human co-operation with God in obtaining that goal'.⁷⁵ This theological concern to protect the freedom of God strikes a dominant chord throughout Gundry Volf's study, and does not find confirmation even across the board of non-Catholic commentary: 'peripoi/hsin with the objective genitive swthri/aj has the active sense of acquiring or obtaining'.⁷⁶

The determination to do away with the significance of texts that undermine her thesis, that Christian lapse is impossible, sometimes traps Gundry Volf into failing to allow the text a contextual voice. Writing to the Thessalonians, fearing that under pressure of persecution they may waiver in their faith, Paul offers not 'blessed assurance' of salvation but motivation to stay faithful to their experience of being in Christ, practising his own dictum: 'encourage one another and build up each other' (1 Thess. 5.11). J.M.G. Barclay is critical: 'the weakest points in her argument are when her thesis forces her to emasculate or reinterpret the whole rhetorical force of Paul's message'.⁷⁷

This exegetical limitation informs Gundry Volf's whole study, so that when she addresses texts that apparently contain Paul's stern warnings against apostasy she avoids their apparent implications. When Paul writes 'You have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace' (Gal. 5.4), Gundry Volf correctly observes that those adopting partial *no/moj-*observance expose themselves to soteriological failure: 'They will be obligated to do the whole law, but they will not succeed in obeying it perfectly. Lacking perfect obedience they will not

⁷⁵ I.H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NCBC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 209. See Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 23, n. 100.

⁷⁶ C. Wanamaker, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 187.

⁷⁷ See J.M.G. Barclay, "Review of *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (Judith M. Gundry Volf)", *JTS* 42 (1991): 236-240.

be justified before God'.⁷⁸ Gundry Volf interprets Paul's use of the verb *katage/w*, cut off, as used in Gal. 5.4, through the lens of his use of the same verb at Rom. 7.2, 6.⁷⁹ She maintains that, because the Romans text envisions 'the complete end of the law for Christians and their total incorporation into the rule of Christ',⁸⁰ and that by this Paul indicates inactivity in relation to the law, the similar usage in Galatians indicates inactivity in relationship to Christ that 'results in an incongruous attempt to live the Christian life apart from Christ'.⁸¹ This misguided attempt by the Galatians begins to take on the mantle of foolishness, but not necessarily salvation-threatening foolishness.

Gundry Volf then addresses the second half of Paul's warning: 'you have fallen away from grace'. She acknowledges that this entails the Galatians' relinquishing 'the basis of their salvation',⁸² and notes that such relinquishment 'encompasses more than present loss', for 'those who become alienated presently from the gospel cannot hope for final salvation'.⁸³ However, Gundry Volf maintains that this possibility paradoxically remains impossible to realize, for, according to Gal. 5.10, Paul remains 'confident about you in the Lord', and Paul's confidence, expressed in the perfect tense (*pe/poiqua*), expresses the irrevocable reality that in fact the Galatians will not fall, and will be persuaded by Paul's entreaties.⁸⁴

The issues Gundry Volf raises are important ones, but this hermeneutical manoeuvre robs this and similar texts of their significance in Paul's struggles. Does Paul envisage the possibility

⁷⁸ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 210.

⁷⁹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 210. At Rom. 7.2-6, as Gundry Volf notes, Paul speaks of the faithful as 'discharged from the law' (*kathrgh/qhmen*: first person, plural, aorist, passive, indicative). Sumney's hermeneutical rules, discussed below, maintain that a text must not be interpreted through the prism of external texts.

⁸⁰ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 210-211.

⁸¹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 212.

⁸² Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 213.

⁸³ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 214.

⁸⁴ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 214.

of boundary crossing not only from ‘being out’ to ‘being in’ but also from ‘being in’ to ‘being out’? If so, do his concerns about this possibility of lapse affect the language that he uses as he engages in his epistolary pastoral ministry? It will be necessary to revisit Gundry Volf’s study on several occasions in this study, not least when addressing the questions of ‘Staying In’ the boundaries of belonging as Paul understands them. Nevertheless this study will take seriously the problem of lapsing from the belief and practice parameters of the faith community.

c. J.L. Sumney

Sumney’s efforts have been spent identifying opponents of Paul as addressed in the letters, and establishing whether there was a unified front of anti-Paulinism. In his earlier volume, *Identifying Paul’s Opponents*,⁸⁵ Sumney limits his attention to 2 Corinthians, establishing appropriate methods by which to identify Paul’s opponents. In a later volume, *‘Servants of Satan’*,⁸⁶ the catchment is extended to include other Pauline letters, including some of the contested Paulines outside the scope of this thesis.

Sumney’s importance to this study is not so much his primary focus of *identifying* Paul’s opponents,⁸⁷ but rather his extended application of rules to govern the hermeneutical tools of epistolary analysis. Sumney largely rules historical reconstructions and the use of secondary texts out of the hermeneutical process, because of the risks involved in introducing circulatory reasoning into the transaction of interpretation.⁸⁸ Analysis must be based on readings of the

⁸⁵ J.L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul’s Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians* (JSNTSup 40. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

⁸⁶ J.L. Sumney, *‘Servants of Satan’, ‘False Brothers’ and other Opponents of Paul* (JSNTSup 188. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

⁸⁷ Note the comment of Sanders that ‘the question of the identity of Paul’s opponents’ was deliberately excluded from *Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, xiii.

⁸⁸ Sumney, *Servants*, 21.

texts as situationally specific, and intrusions even from one Pauline text to another should not be permitted to enter the hermeneutical equation.

This is not to say that Paul *qua* author does not carry emotional ‘luggage’ from one life experience into another. The events of Antioch carry over, for example, into Paul’s correspondence with the Christian community in Galatia (Gal. 2.11),⁸⁹ and, Sumney argues, go some way to explain his volatility in dealing with opposition.⁹⁰ Sumney observes ‘His vehemence is the result of his previous painful experiences (e.g. the Antioch Incident) and his equating of what he opposed on those occasions with what he sees in Galatia’.⁹¹

Sumney establishes strict rules for use of hermeneutical tools, especially mirror reading. He differentiates between polemical, apologetic, hortatory and didactic contexts, and ranks explicit, allusional, and affirmational references to Paul’s opponents. Explicit statements in a polemical context, for example, are of no value in identifying opponents because ‘In the Hellenistic era polemical remarks were often tendentious and partisan and included exaggerations and unsupportable charges about one’s opponents’.⁹² Allusions to opponents in polemical contexts are also of little help in identification, for polemics will provide highly coloured representations. Application of mirror reading to allusions can be useful but *only* if the mirror-reading can be confirmed by other passages within the same letter.⁹³ Didactic contexts are, however, useful tools ‘because their immediate goal is to teach or inform rather than to

⁸⁹ Sumney, *Servants*, 158.

⁹⁰ ‘[T]he answer may lie in Paul’s own prior experiences’. Sumney, *Servants*, 159.

⁹¹ Sumney, *Servants*, 159.

⁹² Sumney, *Servants*, 25.

⁹³ See Sumney, *Servants*, 26.

defeat opponents’.⁹⁴ Explicit references in a didactic context provide the best possible tool by which to identify Paul’s opponents.

Sumney also applies rules to the ‘epistolary periods’, the stylized sections of the conventional Hellenistic letter of Paul’s period. The periods⁹⁵ considered are ‘thanksgivings, greetings, closings and hortatory sections’.⁹⁶ Data gleaned from these letter sections are generally unreliable, but explicit references to opponents in thanksgivings are highly reliable, and allusions to opponents in these sections may have some value if they can be corroborated by other material within the same letter.

Two major criticisms Sumney levels at scholarly reconstructions are the anachronistic reading of subsequent texts back into Paul’s letters in order to identify the opponents, and the superimposition of issues from one faith-community onto another. These two errors of hermeneutical judgement lead to misrepresentations of Paul’s struggles. The basis of these errors is frequently the use of mirror-reading to reconstruct events: ‘a reconstruction can, at most, only present a genuine *possibility*’.⁹⁷ Amongst possible misrepresentations is the assumption of a single and unified anti-Pauline front reaching across the areas in which he has ministered. This is not to dismiss altogether reconstruction as a hermeneutical tool. It is to set

⁹⁴ Sumney, *Servants*, 27.

⁹⁵ The expression derives from Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.49: ‘let us not spend more time on the second point, on discussing in what ways we can see to it that what we say will be understood ... by avoiding ... excessively long periodic sentences’. Cicero: *On the Ideal Orator*. Translated by J. M. May and J. Wisse (London: Oxford University press, 2001), 237.

⁹⁶ Sumney, *Servants*, 27.

⁹⁷ Sumney, *Identifying*, 80. Sumney’s italics. Sumney draws attention to Barclay’s seminal essay “Mirror Reading”, which was published in the same year in which Sumney submitted the doctoral dissertation of which *Identifying* is a revision. Sumney acknowledges the influence of Barclay on his work (*Identifying*, 213) while drawing attention to some limitations of Barclay’s essay. For criticism of mirror-reading see also G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Towards a New Understanding* (SBLDS 73. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 79-80, 96-105, 224. See also J.M.G. Barclay, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case”, *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73-93.

limitations on the applicability of reconstructions.⁹⁸ Assessing the identity of Paul's opponents and the nature of their teachings is an inexact science.

It is also misleading to import parallels from other Pauline or non-Pauline texts into the hermeneutical process as a determining factor in interpreting the text. Primarily the text should stand alone, and only if parallel documents can be demonstrated to share a conceptual and verbal framework can they be introduced to strengthen or confirm a hypothesis.⁹⁹ Properly read, the primary text itself can provide valuable information about the context addressed and about opponents Paul faced. Sumney establishes rules to guide application of mirror reading in polemical, apologetic, didactic, and 'conventional'¹⁰⁰ passages.

In his earlier publication Sumney applies his techniques to a reading of 2 Corinthians. 2 Cor. 1-9 is primarily concerned to correct opposition to Paul based on misrepresentations of his ministry and apostolic status.¹⁰¹ The trials Paul experiences are, to the opponents, proof of his inauthenticity, but beyond this it cannot yet be surmised that they represent any particular strain of early Christian thought. By the time of 2 Cor. 10-13, however, matters have worsened, with the opponents undermining Paul's credibility by accusing him of failure to live up to three proposed areas of apostolic authentication: lifestyle or demeanour ('boasting'), spiritual manifestation and financial sponsorship. Because matters are worse, identification of the opponents' viewpoint is made easier. Paul must oppose their teachings and re-establish his

⁹⁸ Sumney, *Identifying*, 81-86.

⁹⁹ Sumney, *Identifying*, 87-94.

¹⁰⁰ Sumney is referring to stylistic epistolary conventions. *Identifying*, 106-110.

¹⁰¹ This represents an escalation of the challenge put to Paul's credentials when 1 Corinthians was written. See Sumney, *Servants*, 76-78.

apostolic authority in the Corinthian context. Sumney believes these areas of conflict identify the opponents as ‘pneumatics’.¹⁰²

When Sumney applies his approach to the wider Pauline canon he does so with a warning of errant presuppositions that have undermined the credibility of research into Paul’s opponents: ‘One of the most common of these presuppositions is that there was an organized and active anti-Pauline movement that sought to undermine Paul’s authority or supplant his teachings or both’.¹⁰³ Sumney argues that the volatility of relationship between Paul and his opponents, especially in the Galatian context, indicates not that the opponents were vastly different to Paul in teaching or praxis, but that they were dangerously similar.¹⁰⁴ Because Pauline Christianity was an emerging group in the Roman Empire, issues of self-identity were fraught,¹⁰⁵ and Paul’s awareness of the need to establish boundaries led him to be particularly sensitive to doctrinal or praxis shifts.¹⁰⁶

In the Galatian context the opponents have differed from Paul primarily over the related questions of circumcision and holy days. Paul, in his rhetoric,¹⁰⁷ allows the impression that they have introduced a program of *no/moj*-observance in its entirety, but there is no credible evidence of this from the text of Galatians, and no other *no/moj*-related issues are addressed.¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that it is a fundamental technique of Paul’s rhetoric and sophistic practice, however untrained or instinctive he might be, to adapt a shared concept such

¹⁰² Sumney, *Identifying*, 179. The material is repeated in *Servants*, 128-130.

¹⁰³ Sumney, *Servants*, 14, cf. 59.

¹⁰⁴ Sumney, *Servants*, 16.

¹⁰⁵ ‘[T]he delicate task which Paul felt himself called to undertake’. W. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 54.

¹⁰⁶ Sumney, *Servants*, 18. Partly because of this, Sumney does not include a study of Romans in his second volume.

¹⁰⁷ ‘That quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his/her purposes’. G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3. See the section “Paul’s use of Rhetoric”, pages 55-60, below.

¹⁰⁸ Sumney, *Servants*, 156-158.

as *no/moj*, and utilize the signifier or key word in a sense unfamiliar to his opponents.¹⁰⁹ For this reason Paul has introduced phrases such as ‘works of law’ into the equation, adapting familiar terms to suit his rhetoric.¹¹⁰ Consistent with his view that Paul’s position is not greatly removed from that of his opponents,¹¹¹ Sumney notes that the heat Paul brings to the arguments is likely to be heat transferred from his bitter experiences at Antioch (Gal. 2.11). There is no evidence in the document itself that the opponents have challenged Paul’s teachings on, for example, pneumatology and Spirit-possession, eschatology, or dietary requirements; only circumcision and calendar observations appear to be at stake.¹¹²

Based on his findings, Sumney proposes a greater spectrum of opposition than has been envisaged by previous researchers.¹¹³ Previous proposals¹¹⁴ of a more or less unified anti-Pauline movement, perhaps stemming from Jerusalem, have arisen because predetermined opinions on the nature and source of opposition have dictated scholarly enquiry. 1 Thessalonians has no opponents in view at all, though the audience has sought Paul’s guidance. There is no reason to suppose *any* of the opponents are deliberately subverting Paul’s teachings, or that they should be demonized in hermeneutics. Nevertheless, they were a threat to Paul, and he responds accordingly.

The Corinthian correspondence, however, reveals a worsening relationship between the opponents and Paul. Whether the opponents in 1 Corinthians are the same as those in 2

¹⁰⁹ J.S. Vos, “‘To Make the Weaker Argument Defeat the Stronger’: Sophistical Argumentation in Paul’s Letter to the Romans”, in Eriksson, Olbricht and Überlacker, eds., *Rhetorical Argumentation* (217-231), 223.

¹¹⁰ Sumney, *Servants*, 157.

¹¹¹ “[T]hese Galatian teachers do not view themselves as opponents of Paul”. Sumney, *Servants*, 158.

¹¹² Sumney, *Servants*, 158.

¹¹³ See Sumney, *Servants*, 303-319.

¹¹⁴ Sumney mentions in particular F.C. Baur, *Paul: His Life and Works* (two volumes. London: Williams and Norgate, 1873, 1875); W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972); G. Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

Corinthians cannot be ascertained, according to Sumney's strict methodological protocols, as the later, 2 Corinthian opponents could technically have capitalized on the teachings of the earlier opponents. The Corinthian opponents generally emphasize their Jewishness, their visions, revelations and miraculous powers, and their powerful rhetorical qualities. They increase their emphasis on pneumatic gifts as their influence continues. They may have more deliberately subverted Paul's teachings than did the Galatian opponents.

Sumney believes that the Galatian opponents do not see themselves as being at odds with Paul's teachings, but as completing deficiencies in Paul's kerygma. Paul's definition of the issue at stake as a theological stumbling block, and his impassioned reaction to it may have led to the re-emergence of these opponents at Philippi. This explains his volatile response to the opponents as 'dogs' there (Phil. 3.2). A co-ordinated anti-Pauline body *is* by now at work, but this is a different body and movement to that at work in Corinth. The 'data of the Pauline letters' do not indicate a prolonged anti-Paul movement based in Jerusalem.¹¹⁵

The importance of Sumney's work for the present study is an indirect one. Sumney certainly provides guidelines and limitations on the use of mirror-reading in the service of hermeneutics. The present concern, however, is not primarily *identifying* Paul's opponents, but understanding the processes that guide his linguistic responses as he addresses their impact on his audience. By applying a strict methodology to identification processes Sumney dismantles the belief that there was one systematic tide of opposition to Paul, though Philippians may hint at the beginnings of a broadening tide. From the perspective of this study this means we can assess Paul's responses to opponents, and particularly any that have soteriological implications, on a case by case basis. In doing this I can be aware that Paul's language is driven by emotional

¹¹⁵ Sumney, *Servants*, 310. Italics removed.

and rhetorical responses to differing circumstances and opponents, and I am provided by Sumney with a method by which to place Paul's statements into a measurable epistolary and rhetorical scheme.

2. Thesis Plan

In Chapter One I will address the contingencies that gave the letters their shape as it is known to biblical readers today, especially the date and occasion of writing, though excluding the actual process of canonical formation. I will place each letter into the context in which Paul wrote it. This will inevitably entail engagement with scholarship that has sought to establish the writing and reading site of author and audience respectively. For reasons that I will address in my consideration of the work of Beker later in this Introduction, I will be arguing and accepting the arguments of others that contingent circumstances rather than chronological development are the primary element giving the letters the ideological form and content they took as Paul despatched them.

Form and content of Paul's letters will not always be the form and content that the letters have taken in our canon. As I address each letter in my introductory section on the letters, I will briefly consider questions of their date and occasion, and text critical considerations regarding such matters as editorial fusion of disparate letters, scribal insertions and other interpolations: the questions of literary unity and structure. In that section I will also address questions regarding the location and ethnicity of the audience, and of the nature of the issues that the audiences have presented to Paul. This will be the context in which I will establish the reason Paul wrote each letter: what was the catalyst for each act of correspondence? In this regard I will modify Beker's approach: emotional changes do take place, however they may be driven

by contingent circumstances, and I will argue that those changes alter Paul's perspective. These changes are the changes in Paul's emotional connection with the audience: is he comfortable with them, pleased with them, worried by them? Is he sensing their openness or their hostility to him and his message?

It is outside the scope of this study to present an in-depth analysis of sociological and historical factors that shaped Paul's mission except in so far as they impinge on his linguistic and theological choices. However, no letter is written in a vacuum, and some of these factors will be highlighted as background, primarily in footnotes. For example, it has in recent years been recognized that the presence of an Imperial Cult in loci such as Thessalonica and Philippi, as well as Rome, may have added to the trials faced by Paul's audiences. A full sociological or historical investigation of the Imperial Cult is beyond the scope of this study,¹¹⁶ but sociological factors must have shaped Paul's understanding of the fate of those inflicting persecution or of those seeking to alter the kerygma within a community. To that extent they will need to be considered here.

In particular mention should be made of Moxnes'¹¹⁷ and subsequently Jewett's recognition of honour/shame structures as a key to Romans hermeneutics.¹¹⁸ Powerful narratives of honour and shame were the glue that held Imperial structures together, 'a deep structure of the Graeco-Roman mind'.¹¹⁹ Paul's kerygma, and the kerygma of others where it was consistent with Paul's (the implication of Rom. 15.20!), were powerfully subversive as they set about opposing 'boasting'. 'Boasting' itself was Paul's shorthand for honour/shame

¹¹⁶ See, however, J.K. Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter* (WUNT 2/237. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008).

¹¹⁷ H. Moxnes, "Honour and Righteousness in Romans", *JSNT* 32 (1988): 61-77.

¹¹⁸ See, e.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 46-53.

¹¹⁹ J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 73. Quoted in Jewett, *Romans*, 49.

structures,¹²⁰ in contradistinction to which he proclaimed a theology of gracious inclusivity (Rom. 14.1, 15.7). ‘Boasting’, in an honour/shame society, relies on pyramidal structures of self aggrandizement, anathematic to Paul (Rom. 12.3).

In Chapter One I concentrate on questions of the relationship between the audience, the issues the audience presents to Paul, and the stylistic and intellectual means by which Paul addresses those needs. In Chapters Two to Seven, having established the background that shaped Paul’s kerygma, and the circumstances that gave rise to his epistolary ministry, I will primarily consider his linguistic response to each of seven soteriological states, ranging from ‘Getting In’ to ‘Staying Out’. These ‘states’ will be defined by the idea of boundary marking, and will represent possible relationships between audience and those who are impacting on the audience, and the boundaries that Paul is drawing around the Christ community. The boundaries will be theological and behavioural, for Paul does not differentiate between theology and praxis. I will define those boundaries along the lines of ‘Getting In’ and ‘Staying In’, originally stamped on soteriological debate by Sanders, and utilized by many since, most notably Gundry Volf. Sanders summarises his perspective particularly well in one paragraph:

Thus one can see already in Paul how it is that Christianity is going to become a new form of covenantal nomism, a covenantal religion which one enters by baptism, membership in which provides salvation, which has a specific set of commandments, obedience to which (or repentance for the transgression of which) keeps one in the covenantal relationship, while repeated or heinous transgression removes one from membership.¹²¹

¹²⁰ See Jewett, *Romans*, 49.

¹²¹ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 513.

In this paragraph Sanders summarizes the processes of entry, membership, continued obedience, and removal, for which I have utilized these familiar terms ‘Getting In’, ‘Being In’, ‘Staying In’ and ‘Lapsing Out’, capitalized to emphasize their significance in Paul’s scheme. Underlying my study will be a belief that Paul sees salvation as a process: the human response to the Christ-event is a process, involving tenacity, the much considered doctrine of ‘perseverance’¹²² or ‘Staying In’.

The terms ‘Getting In’ and ‘Staying In’ in particular have been a part of soteriological debate at least since the time of Augustine.¹²³ A more recent debate forms part of a missiological conversation best outlined in the works of J. Hick and P. Knitter,¹²⁴ on the one hand, and G. D’Costa¹²⁵ on the other. Although my interests in this topic were sparked by that debate, the debate itself largely continued without reference to biblical scholarship. My own interest is in the Pauline antecedents to these conversations.

For the purposes of this study the categories of ‘Getting In’ and ‘Staying In’ that have given shape to the perseverance debate are inadequate. Even the addition of ‘Being In’ and ‘Lapsing Out’ do not complete the hermeneutical framework. These soteriological states are states that Paul knows to be critical, and we will address them, but there are other soteriological states, too, and Paul addresses them in his correspondence. Primarily these are the two states of being a part of the Jewish faith-community, for which no useful shorthand term is available,

¹²² See, in particular, I.H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away*. (London: Epworth, 1969), and Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*.

¹²³ See Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 1.

¹²⁴ J. Hick and P. Knitter, eds., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (FMFS. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987).

¹²⁵ G. D’Costa, ed., *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (FMFS. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990). See also, for missiological debate and its terminology, A. Race’s seminal study *Christians and Religious Pluralism* (Second edition. London: SCM, 1993). While Race’s definitive missiological and soteriological groupings of ‘exclusivist’, ‘inclusivist’ and ‘pluralist’ do not appear in this study, except on p. 40, below, they are clearly related to the questions of ‘Getting In’, ‘Staying Out’, a ‘Jewish Salvation’ and ‘All In’ that form parts of this thesis.

and the state of ‘Staying Out’ altogether, remaining utterly disconnected from and untouched by the Christian kerygma.

The primary question of ‘Getting In’ is a subject that will raise questions of Paul’s understanding of the state of humankind (anthropology), of boundary crossing and ritual (soteriology, or, to speak anachronistically, sacramental theology), and of his pneumatology, as he writes of his audience’s experience of ‘baptism in the Spirit’. Chapter Two is therefore an investigation of the question of boundary crossing *into* the community of faith. In it I will touch on Paul’s understanding of baptism, and investigate ways in which an individual or group might pass into the sphere that Paul calls ‘body of Christ’. I will also in this chapter ask questions of ‘individuality’ and ‘Getting In’: is boundary crossing an existential and individual journey from one faith-sphere to another or can it be a process undergone by a group within a community?

In Chapter Three I will ask epistemological questions about ‘Being In’. How does the believer who is a part of Paul’s intended audience know that he or she belongs to the group that Paul is addressing? The key signifier will be the language that Paul uses, language of inclusion and exclusion that generates connection between author and audience. This language can often by contrast reinforce a sense of disconnection between author and audience on the one hand and third parties (interferers, Jews, citizens of and other dwellers in the Roman Empire) on the other.¹²⁶ During the course of this epistemological exploration, I will introduce some indicators

¹²⁶ Note should be made here of M. Volf’s remarkable contemporary study of theological ‘otherness’, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) and M. Volf and J. Gundry Volf’s *A Spacious Heart: Essays on Identity and Belonging* (CMMCS. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), both of which have informed this study.

which will serve as tools by which to measure the relationship between Paul and his audience. I will outline this methodology below.

I will address questions of perseverance and apostasy in Chapter Four, 'Staying In'. These are questions of pastoral theology, and Paul was more than anything else a pastor. I will address these pastoral issues by considering the ways in which Paul expects his audience to be a conspicuous counterculture, distinct from surrounding religious and social paradigms. These ways will include patterns of worship, sexual mores, fiscal ethics, and behaviour towards God, towards civil authorities, behaviour towards internal ecclesiastical authorities, and other behavioural expectations that will generate and reinforce boundaries of contrast with those outside the faith community.

A constant pastoral concern of Paul, if his reader accepts that apostasy is possible, is that the audience remain faithful to the gospel as they received it from Paul (or, occasionally, from others whose kerygma was acceptable to Paul). In Chapter Five, 'Lapsing Out', I will look at occasions on which Paul draws his audience's attention to the possibility of lapsing out and withdrawing either from the faith community or from right belief and praxis. At this point in the study, I will engage with Gundry Volf and others who do not accept that apostasy is possible. I will consider the relationship between right behaviour and belief on the one hand and Paul's sense of satisfaction with and connection to his audience on the other. Does this affect the way he sees the states of 'Being In' and 'Being Out' in, as it were, the soteriological eyes of God? Does Paul draw different boundaries depending on his sense of connection with his audience, or different soteriological outcomes for his audience and those around them, depending on the connection?

One theological issue that may alter with the passage of time is Paul's soteriological approach to his people of origin, the question of the salvation of the Jews. The question of the possibility of the salvation of the Jews (according to Paul) lends itself to no easy matching summary title, and therefore Chapter Six of this study is simply called 'A Jewish Salvation'. In that brief chapter, I will argue that contingent differences between Galatia and Rome drive Paul's shift in perspective. As is the case in all soteriological questions, one contingency is Paul's sense of connection to his audience.

There is another sociological grouping addressed throughout Paul's correspondence: those outside the parameters or boundaries of the faith community. What sort of language does Paul use when he refers to those outside, and do the circumstances of each letter, in particular the circumstance of 'connectivity' between Paul and audience, alter the way in which he refers to them? I address these questions in Chapter Seven, 'Staying Out'.

Finally I raise the question of a universal salvation, generally referred to by the soteriological word *apokatastasis*.¹²⁷ Could such an idea be entertained by Paul? If not, why not, and if so, why? In what contexts of relationship between author and audience might Paul allow this necessarily speculative theological idea to enter his writing? These questions are addressed in a final chapter, 'All in', Chapter Eight below.

At the end of this process it will be possible to draw some tentative conclusions about Paul's understanding of the mission and place of the church – for ecclesiology, too, is an underlying issue in all the questions that Paul addresses. In drawing some conclusions about

¹²⁷ Ironically the only biblical use of this word, at Acts 3.21, is Lukan, or at best Luke-Petrine, rather than Pauline, and does not envisage the universal restoration that is envisaged in most soteriological uses of the word. See L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1992), 74.

these matters, the intention is to be primarily emphasizing Paul's own theology, a biblical theology.

For a reader who prefers a visual approach, these soteriological states can be further explored by use of a metaphor¹²⁸ conveniently provided by Paul, that of the athlete: 'Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it' (1 Cor. 9.24). The image appears again at Phil. 3.12-14, as Paul evaluates his own life struggles in order to encourage the Philippians in theirs. 'Getting In', then, is akin to arrival at the starting line of Paul's marathon. In 'Being In', I look at the indicators provided by Paul for his spiritual athletes, that they might use to assure themselves that their race is under way, and that progress is being made in the appropriate direction. Every long-distance athlete is aware of 'the Wall', the moment at which completion appears impossible and the temptation to stop or to 'lapse out' seems insurmountable. In 'Lapsing Out' the focus will be the warning signs of the Wall and temptation to lapse out (1 Cor. 1.18) or step aside from the race. Is this even a possibility in Pauline thought, or is a person who appears to lapse out in fact a person who was never in?

It is possible that the question of the salvation of Paul's ethnic Jewish people can fit into this metaphorical scheme. In 'A Jewish Salvation?' I consider the possibility of a parallel race, a walking endurance rather than a running endurance race, for example, in Olympic terminology.¹²⁹ In 'A Jewish Salvation?' I will step outside the world of Paul's athletic metaphor, but the idea of finding Paul considering an alternative athletic event will provide framework for my enquiry.

¹²⁸ Here, it should be noted, Paul *has* adopted metaphor and *not* metonymy.

¹²⁹ In other sports the parallelism of Formula One and Indianapolis 500 or of rugby union and rugby league might be considered.

In ‘Staying In’, the issues are different from those under consideration in ‘Being In’. In terms of the athletics metaphor, ‘Being In’ is an assessment of the signs of belonging, of asking the question ‘am I on the right track?’ ‘Staying In’, on the other hand, is an endurance tool: ‘how do I ensure that I keep on running to the end?’

Paul never writes a chapter on ‘being there’: eschatological hope permeates most of his writings, but author and audience alike are on the same side of the finish line, and the completion of the narrative is beyond even the apostle’s skills. Paul does not adopt John of Revelation’s apocalyptic imaging of a future state. I include, however, and again in terms of the metaphor, an exploration of the state and fate of those who choose not to enter the race, those ‘Staying Out’. And finally, pushing the metaphor beyond breaking point, I return to the idea that all humanity is undertaking a race, and therefore that Paul’s soteriology may be a question of ‘All In’.

The metaphor will not be overt, but just as it underlies Paul’s thought, so it will underscore my own in this analysis. At the end of the exploration it is to be hoped we may have a clearer understanding of Paul’s soteriological thoughts and practices, and of the way Paul and his audience attain the goal.

3. Methodology

I bring two main tools of analysis to bear on the questions I have outlined. The first is a linguistic analysis of Paul’s letters, borrowing from many strands of biblical scholarship. My

own background is in the thematic study of literature,¹³⁰ and I must be unapologetic in utilizing that skill as my primary means by which to break open Paul's words. That will incorporate reference to and use of the vast pool of biblical scholarship available in commentaries and monographs.

The first stage of this literary critical process is to analyse the occasions on which Paul addresses each of the soteriological states described in the chapter title, and the words and phrases Paul uses to describe those states. I will do this in order of the frequency in which Paul uses the words and phrases. What are, for example, Paul's most frequently addressed indicators of 'Being In'? What influences him to choose these indicators? What purposes do these indicators serve in the world that surrounds Paul, the world of Christianity and the wider world beyond the boundaries that Paul establishes and maintains? Having listed and commented on the usages, I provide some indication of the importance of these ideas in the overall scheme of Paul's kerygma, and, once more, the extent to which they betray Paul's sense of ease and connection with his target audiences.

My primary method towards evaluating the *importance* of chosen ideas to Paul is therefore a simple one of assessing frequency of occurrence. This is a basic literary critical tool, not unfamiliar in biblical scholarship! The issues addressed by Paul may be issues raised by his correspondents (1 Cor. 7.1, 1 Thess. 3.6), or matters brought to Paul's attention by emissaries (2 Cor. 7.6, Phil. 2.25) or simply matters on Paul's mind as he writes (Rom. 1.8-12, 1 Thess. 1.2-3), but these are the units of meaning with which the initial audience and subsequent

¹³⁰ See, for example, my "Defoe's *Ego Contra Mundum* or 'The Dark Side of Crusoe's Eucharist'", in C. Hartney and A. McGarrity, eds., *The Dark Side: Proceedings of the Seventh Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference, 2002* (Sydney: RLA Press, 2002), 71-88.

readers alike must work. And, clearly, the more Paul deals with a subject, the more heavily that matter is weighing on his mind.

In the same way, Paul's chosen idioms and phrases provide a key to his attitudes to and relationships with his audiences. Terms of address, references to prayer or praise, references to sorrow or worry, all indicate the health or otherwise of relationship between author and intended audience. So, to facilitate an avenue of enquiry based on the frequency with which themes are addressed, I will generate a statistical analysis of some of the more significant key indicators of subject matter and of author/audience relationship.

This analysis will be based primarily on forms of address, and attention to subject matter, that indicate the degree to which the audience is demonstrating obedience to the demands of 'Being In'. I have not chosen this soteriological state on the soteriological spectrum at random, but because 'Being In' is the optimum state as far as Paul is concerned, the state to which he constantly strives to lead his audience. The suggestion will be that, if the audience excels at 'Being In', and Paul is able to affirm them in this state, then he feels at his most comfortable with them. In this context of relative relational comfort with his audience his thoughts may be less guarded, and his rhetorical weaponry at rest. Any person is more able to relax in conversation, written or spoken, amongst friends than in a context of polemics. This suggestion will need investigation and confirmation or rejection: when Paul is relaxed with his audience does he address certain subjects and choose certain words and concepts more readily than when he is at loggerheads with an audience?

Paradoxically, I will also ask whether it is significant that, when Paul is at his most wary, he is nevertheless able to suggest that he is open to the possibility that those towards whom he

is not well disposed are in some way still caught up into the realms of salvation. Should these possibilities be given greater weight in his soteriological thought? I will particularly address this soteriological issue in the chapter ‘All In’.

4. Paul’s Use of Rhetoric

This study is a study of Paul’s linguistic method, and specifically of the relationship linking emotional connection (or mood) between author and audience as revealed in the author’s word selection, and the impact that selection has on the author Paul’s treatment of soteriological themes. As such it is not a study of rhetoric. Nevertheless, as Sumney makes clear,¹³¹ to make a rhetorical presentation is to adopt stylised protocols of word-use, and a rhetorician meets audience expectations of particular rhetorical ploys. A skilled rhetorician, whether instructed or instinctive in rhetorical arts, will use rhetorical techniques to achieve his or her ends as effectively as possible. Similarly, an audience will respond to those techniques, expecting them to be a part of the communication exchange, whether their expectations are instructed and learned or instinctive and intuitive. It is perhaps useful to compare this with the primary contemporary art of persuasion, the art of advertisement. An audience expects to receive certain persuasive information and technique in any form of advertisement. If that advertisement is to be effective it may need to stand out from the crowded melee of advertising material, to draw an audience’s attention, to draw individuals into the dialogue of persuasion. Different audiences require different forms of communication: the audience to which the car manufacturer Porsche pitches their message may overlap with a neighbourhood hardware store, but it is not, in context, the same audience, and the ‘pitch’ of advertising rhetoric will differ.

¹³¹ See pages 37-43, above.

Paul faced the same demand. Desperate to overcome ‘arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God’ (2 Cor. 10.4-5) he used every weapon available in his rhetorical arsenal. Is he a rhetorician? Not if by ‘rhetorician’ we imply some form of abstract art engaged in for self-aggrandizement! M. Cosby has noted the extent to which Paul uses aggressive and impolite polemics in the service of the gospel entrusted to him: ‘Paul’s object was to win, to defeat his opponents and reclaim his honorable position. His language, while colorful, would be quite acceptable in the verbally rough and tumble societies in which he ministered’.¹³² His language is not that of a rarified public broadcaster, but at best (though that is a value judgement) that of the bear pit of antipodean parliamentary outburst. Augustine would later note of the Christian scriptures generally ‘to me they seemed quite unworthy of comparison with the stately prose of Cicero’.¹³³ Before Augustine Origen attacked Celsus’ elitist expectations of oratory, noting that Plato’s *Crito* is ‘so far from being intelligible to ordinary persons, that even those have a difficulty in understanding him, who have been brought up in the schools of learning, and have been initiated into the famous philosophy of Greece, whereas by contrast Jesus adopted plain and simple language’.¹³⁴ In this respect Paul stood firmly in the tradition of Jesus, even if his was the robust language of missiological debate, largely urban, rather than the poetic rural Palestinian language of Jesus.¹³⁵

Paul himself is adamant that he is seeking to impress no-one. He describes himself as ‘untrained in speech’ (2 Cor. 11.6), and if he goes on in the same sentence to describe himself

¹³² M. Cosby, “Galatians: Red-Hot Rhetoric”, in Eriksson, Olbricht, and Übelacker, (eds), *Rhetorical Argumentation*, 296-309 (305).

¹³³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 3:5.

¹³⁴ Origen. *Contra Celsus*, 7:61. Incorrectly cited as 7:62 by P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul’s Epistle* (SNTSMS 101. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 171. Also (incorrectly), Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 300.

¹³⁵ K.E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant: a Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 27.

as trained ‘in knowledge’ he is speaking of the intimate knowledge of the Risen Lord encountered in service and worship. He eschews ‘eloquent wisdom’ (1 Cor. 1.17), so that he draws attention only to ‘the power’ of ‘the cross of Christ’ (1 Cor. 1.17), or of ‘Christ crucified’ (1 Cor. 1.23), rather than to himself. Cosby then is correct when he stresses, ‘We should hesitate to impose order and sophistication where there is a superabundance of emotional heat’.¹³⁶ Paul is not interested in winning competitions in rhetoric, but in winning wavering faith-communities for his version of the gospel (and to Paul there is no other! See Gal. 1.17). Paul’s form of rhetoric is generally driven by passion, often including anger,¹³⁷ in his defence of the traditions he has handed on to his audience, and to which he strives to redirect them.

The discussion of rhetorical method, then, may be a useful tool by which to aid interpretation of Paul’s letters, but it must never be the sole lens through which they are interpreted. Cosby is right to warn that the sheer emotional intensity of Paul’s writing is too easily lost when contained within the literary and rhetorical straightjackets of ‘*exordium, narratio, propositio, probatio, and exhortatio*’.¹³⁸ Specifically referring to Galatians, Cosby observes ‘If Galatians were a forensic, deliberative, or epideictic speech, surely early Christian writers who were trained in rhetoric would have recognized this’.¹³⁹ Yet Betz introduces his analysis of Galatians by emphasizing that it ‘can be analyzed according to Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography’¹⁴⁰ and is ‘an example of the “apologetic letter” genre’.¹⁴¹ Witherington emphasizes from the outset of his commentary on the same letter that ‘It is hard to over-estimate the degree to which the world Paul and his converts lived in was saturated with

¹³⁶ Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 298.

¹³⁷ ‘[B]oils with emotion’, Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 306. ‘[S]pewing red-hot rhetoric’, *ibid.*, 308.

¹³⁸ Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 298.

¹³⁹ Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 300.

¹⁴⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 14.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

rhetoric', adding 'listening to and evaluating rhetors was one of the great spectator sports of the first century A.D.'. ¹⁴² In analysing the Corinthian correspondence Witherington is emphatic (as his subtitle suggests) that the rhetor's skill was 'the primary discipline in Roman higher education'. ¹⁴³

In a similar vein Mitchell addresses deliberative rhetoric in the Corinthian correspondence, noting that this rhetorical form is future-focussed, urging 'an audience, either public or private, to pursue a particular course of action in the future'. ¹⁴⁴ This applies to much of Paul's writing, even the more reflective Romans. This aim of eliciting a response, in a future as immediate as the moment of the audience's hearing the letter read aloud, does not diminish the significance of Cosby's concern to recognize the 'red-hot' volcanism of Paul's prose, but, at the risk of conjuring up imagined scholarly harmony, Cosby's position is not necessarily contrary to that of the self-defined rhetorical interpreters. Paul used every means available to him to elicit right response, and the fact that his audience were accustomed to rhetorical arts was as useful to Paul in his writing as a Palestinian rural audience's being accustomed to poetics was in shaping Jesus' use of poetic construction in his oral delivery of parabolic teachings. In fact it should be noted that Paul used oral effects, even though his letters were a substitute for his own presence, and an agent, perhaps his amanuensis, made the vocal delivery of the writings: 'It does appear that Paul gave attention to various aural devices, such as alliteration, assonance and rhythm, meant to affect the ear and aid persuasion'. ¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² B. Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 25.

¹⁴³ B. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 40.

¹⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Rhetoric*, 24. See also Witherington, *Conflict*, 43.

¹⁴⁵ Witherington, *Conflict*, 45.

I will note more examples of Paul's aural nuances later in this study, but for the time being it is useful to note that these rhetorical tools indicate that Witherington and others are right in valuing rhetorical form as a hermeneutical key. In fact Witherington has provided a more subtle differentiation by which to address Cosby's concern, perhaps providing a harmony between Cosby's apparent suspicion of rhetorical hermeneutics and the rhetorical interpreters' advocacy of the discipline. In a footnote Witherington notes G.A. Kennedy's differentiation between 'primary rhetoric, which deals with real subjects, and secondary rhetoric or declamation',¹⁴⁶ the latter form 'including trivial subjects such as the praiseworthiness of a flea or the shameful baldness of a man's head' which 'became a form of public entertainment'.¹⁴⁷ Clearly, as Witherington notes, the latter was 'just the opposite of Paul's sort of rhetoric'.¹⁴⁸

Honing the skills of rhetorical hermeneutics has become a New Testament discipline in its own right. Pauline hermeneutics alone are responsible for an enormous range of views. One key player to emerge in the debates has been Stanley Porter, who wryly acknowledges 'a certain amount of tension between scholars, because no model has allowed a completely smooth harmonizing of ancient epistolary techniques'.¹⁴⁹ He too, though, like Cosby, tends to lean to a less direct relationship between rhetorical schemes and the finished product of Paul's letters:

It is possible – though difficult to defend – that some rhetorical practices of the orators may have influenced ancient letter writers. That formal rhetorical categories were systematically applied to

¹⁴⁶ Witherington, *Conflict*, 42, n. 129. Reference is to G.A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1980). Note should also be made of Kennedy's *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

¹⁴⁷ Witherington, *Conflict*, 41.

¹⁴⁸ Witherington, *Conflict*, 42, n. 126.

¹⁴⁹ S. E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature", in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbrecht, eds, *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTSup 90. Sheffield: JSOTPress, 1993), 100.

analysis of epistles, and that there was precedent for this in the literary analyses of the ancient world, are open to serious question ... There is, therefore, little if any theoretical justification in the ancient handbooks for application of the formal categories of the species and organization of rhetoric to analysis of the Pauline epistles.¹⁵⁰

Porter's observation suggests that Paul was an instinctive writer, selecting appropriate rhetorical techniques available to him as he sought to address a rhetorical problem: 'analyzing the speaker's rhetorical construction of the text (the invention, arrangement and style) provides the clues for reconstructing the rhetorical situation'.¹⁵¹ If his rhetoric was red hot, as Cosby puts it, this was because the situation was, to him, red hot. Such a context as that of Galatia or the deteriorating context of Corinth – or even the memory of conflict that suddenly interrupts his thoughts as he writes eirenically to Philippi (Phil. 3.2) – demands urgent and confrontational action, and it is this demand, not any rhetorical theory, that shapes Paul's writing and his choice of language.

5. J.C. Beker: a Note on Contingency

As indicated above, my reading of Paul is unavoidably influenced by Beker's seminal work *Paul the Apostle*. Beker argues that the triumph of God is proleptically¹⁵² revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 8.21), and that this event represents the defeat of all forces hostile to God, and that this belief is the 'coherent centre' of Paul's kerygma. Other matters presented by Paul are secondary to this core belief, and are influenced by contingent circumstances.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Porter, "Theoretical Justification", 115-116.

¹⁵¹ D.L. Stamps, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles", in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbrecht, eds, *Rhetoric*, (193-210), 198.

¹⁵² See, e.g., Beker, *Paul*, 278.

¹⁵³ Beker, *Paul*, *passim*, e.g. 155.

Beker wrote *Paul the Apostle* shortly after publication of Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders 'destroyed ... anti-Jewish bias in [Pauline] scholarship once and for all',¹⁵⁴ but erred in his failure to acknowledge the place of apocalyptic in Paul's thought.¹⁵⁵ Beker reclaims the Cross as an apocalyptic symbol. All Paul has experienced and all that he writes is understood in this apocalyptic shadow of 'the imminent cosmic triumph of God'.¹⁵⁶ Further searching for a doctrinal heart of Paul's gospel is misguided and doomed to inefficacy, in Beker's view.

Paul's letters are substitutes for his pastoral and prophetic presence, and address particular circumstances.¹⁵⁷ As subsequent canonization of Paul's writings has divorced his thought from its contingent circumstances, scholars have sought to find chronological development in his writings. In particular scholars have explored the supposed impact of the delayed Parousia. By searching for this impact, scholars have lost sight of the contingencies that determine Paul's content. Beker considers it doubtful that chronological development could ever be established,¹⁵⁸ 'especially when we realize that the total Pauline correspondence took place within the span of no more than six years (50-56 CE) and that the letter period was preceded by almost fifteen years of non-literary, apostolic activity (Gal. 2:1)'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 340, un-numbered footnote. See, e.g., Rom. 13.11-14, 1 Cor. 7.26-31.

¹⁵⁵ '[B]y and large, Paul's christological reinterpretation of apocalyptic is usually considered to be such a radical modification of it that apocalyptic no longer functions as the crucial carrier or abiding center of his thought'. Beker, *Paul*, 17.

¹⁵⁶ Beker, *Paul*, 19.

¹⁵⁷ Beker is citing Funk, "The Apostolic Parousia", in W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R.R. Niebuhr, eds., *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 249-268.

¹⁵⁸ J.C. Hurd, 'the study of development in Paul's theology, once a favourite topic, is now largely abandoned'. *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (Second edition. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1983), 8.

¹⁵⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 32-33.

Romans is no less occasional than Galatians, to which it is often compared on the basis of its similar vocabulary and themes.¹⁶⁰ Galatians addresses a hostile context, in which opponents have supplanted Paul's kerygma and undermined his claim to apostolicity.¹⁶¹ By attacking Paul's apostolate,¹⁶² opponents are attacking Paul's entire kerygma, for everything he proclaimed has been anchored on his Damascus Road experience. In that encounter he was given a message 'not of human origin' (Gal. 1.11b). Paul's 'call' is the 'primordial' experience through which we must interpret all that he writes.¹⁶³ Beker compares Romans and Galatians to establish bases of coherency and contingency. He compares, for example, different approaches to *pi/stij*, based in Galatians and Romans on the Abraham presentation of Gen. 15.6. In Galatians 3, where the didactic focus is *Christocentric*, the key to the *pi/stij* theme is *e0paggeli/an*, while in Romans 4, where the emphasis is *theocentric*, Paul chooses *logi/zomai* as the key. In order to provide a 'word on target'¹⁶⁴ to the different audience contingencies Paul alters his treatment of the Abraham-saga.

Similarly *spe/rma* is treated in different ways in the two epistles. In Gal. 3.16 and 3.20 *spe/rma* is Christ, whereas in Rom. 4.13-18 *spe/rma* is the Jews and Gentiles, nations 'seeded' by Abraham. The emphasis in writing to the Romans is on communal *unity*, and it is expedient to emphasize shared ancestry. This is not at issue in the Galatian context; there the Christocentricity of those faithful to Paul's kerygma is the sole yardstick of inclusion.

¹⁶⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 37-38.

¹⁶¹ Beker, *Paul*, 43.

¹⁶² Paul's claim to apostolic status varies markedly from the standards applied by Luke, who only once allows Paul the title 'apostle', and prefers to reserve the title to the eyewitnesses of Jesus. Acts 14.14; see also Acts 14.4. Codex D omits the designation, suggesting that it was seen by some in the early church to be contentious. See Johnson, *Acts*, 248.

¹⁶³ Beker, *Paul*, 15-16.

¹⁶⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 62.

There is more emphasis on the *discontinuity* of salvation history in Galatians than there is in Romans. In Galatians, *no/moj* (law) is ‘a later interloper into salvation-history’.¹⁶⁵ The curse of *no/moj* necessitates Christ’s self-sacrifice, by which the blessing of Abraham is restored to believing humanity (Gal. 3.10-14). The opponents in Galatia have used *no/moj*-observance as a means to highlight perceived shortcomings in Paul’s kerygma. However, in Romans 4 the *continuity* of salvation history, linking *no/moj* with Christ, is pivotal to the argument.¹⁶⁶ In Romans 4 Paul engages in dialogue with Jewish soteriology in a manner rhetorically unwise in the Galatian context. In Rom. 4.1-12 Paul weaves past and present together to produce soteriological continuity and to present Abraham as a *tu/poj* or archetype of the Christian. In the discontinuity narrative of Galatians 3, *pi/stij* is visible only in Christ, while in Rom. 4.17-21 *pi/stij* is synonymous with unconditional trust, and is revealed and typified in the life of Abraham.

These and other differences between the Abramic *midrashim* allow Beker to draw conclusions about contingencies and the coherent centre of Paul’s kerygma: ‘Romans exhibits a polemic of persuasion, Galatians a polemic of confrontation’.¹⁶⁷ For Paul ‘The gospel is not a written text about the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; rather it is oral proclamation that dictates its own hermeneutical method’.¹⁶⁸ Paul is standing in the prophetic tradition, a prophetic apostle, with ‘immediate access’¹⁶⁹ to the truth encountered in his Damascus Road experience (1 Cor. 9.1, Gal. 1.12). He is not an innovator, but is faithful to the tradition handed

¹⁶⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 97, citing Gal. 3.17.

¹⁶⁶ Paul however ‘never wavers’ in the belief ‘that faith is “emptied” when it is based on the law’ (Rom. 4.14). Beker, *Paul*, 99.

¹⁶⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 104.

¹⁶⁸ Beker, *Paul*, 121. See also P. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 17-18.

¹⁶⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 114.

on to him (1 Cor. 11.23). Gospel is to Paul not a written but a proclaimed word, dialogical and situational.

What is the ‘coherent centre’ of Paul’s kerygma? ¹⁷⁰ Paul’s world-view is apocalyptic, ¹⁷¹ and to Paul’s apocalyptic view new birth in Christ is an event in which the believer and the community of believers are made radically visible as prolepsis of the fullness of the glory of God. ¹⁷² The resurrection language of the Jesus tradition ‘is end-time language and unintelligible apart from the apocalyptic thought world to which resurrection language belongs’. ¹⁷³ The resurrection of Christ is not the mere reconstitution of ideas held by Christ (‘ideational significance’), but foreshadows the general resurrection and the ‘transformation of the created order’. ¹⁷⁴ Resurrection language expresses the new age whilst still spoken in the midst of the ‘old’ age. Resurrection marks the beginning of a new creation, yet contains a ‘not yet’ dimension.

To Beker’s understanding, Paul’s view is that moral propriety is not an optional extra, but the essence and proof of subjection to the gospel message. This is why Paul is aggressive in his response to the Corinthians’ misappropriation of the gospel message, which is utilization of the gospel message of freedom as a freedom-*to*. Beker maintains that Paul ‘does not so much “misunderstand” the Corinthians but rather understands precisely the reason for their perversion

¹⁷⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 135.

¹⁷¹ Beker adopts definitions of apocalyptic proposed by K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (SBT Second Series 22. London, SCM, 1972), 18-35.

¹⁷² Beker, *Paul*, 152.

¹⁷³ Beker, *Paul*, 152.

¹⁷⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 152.

of the gospel, that is, their rejection of its apocalyptic coordinates'.¹⁷⁵ The immoral life is a life lived with resurrection co-ordinates removed.

The death of Christ does not inaugurate the New Age: there is for Paul no Johannine Cross as the 'hour of glory' (John 17.1). Paul associates the cross with resurrection (Rom. 6.8), the in-breaking of hope: 'the cross becomes shorthand for all the blessings of God in Christ' and 'the apocalyptic turning point of history'.¹⁷⁶ The Christ-event breaks the power of sin (Rom. 6.1-14). Romans 7 is not to be interpreted as Pauline autobiography – though the passage is not devoid of autobiographical reference.¹⁷⁷ Paul understands his pre-Damascus Road self to have been 'blameless'¹⁷⁸ but understands that to have been an 'active' state, a self-achieved 'setting apart' from the sin of others. As something self-achieved it contrasts with his apostolic obligation¹⁷⁹ to be set apart by God. In his first life of self-motivated blamelessness there is room for boasting because he is able to believe that it is he who achieves the setting apart. In the second, post-Damascus Road life-experience there is no room to boast because the initiative and the continuing consecration to God's service¹⁸⁰ is the work of God.

Even treatment of so central a theme as salvation is contingent. When Paul is discussing themes of righteousness and faith with Judaizers¹⁸¹ he stresses what Beker calls "the indicative" of the eschatological "now" of God's intervention in Christ'.¹⁸² He stresses the

¹⁷⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 173.

¹⁷⁶ Beker, *Paul*, 205; see Gal. 6.14, 6.15.

¹⁷⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 241.

¹⁷⁸ a) /memptoj: Phil. 3.6; c.f. Phil. 2.15, 1 Thess. 3.13.

¹⁷⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 221.

¹⁸⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 221.

¹⁸¹ The term is fraught with potential for misunderstanding. Perhaps the closest parallel to my use is that of L. Gaston, who follows M. Barth, and sees it as applicable only to Gentiles 'who want "to live according to the Jewish way of life" at least in part'. L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 25. Unfortunately Gaston does not cite the Barth reference, but may be referring to M. Barth's "The Kerygma of Galatians". *Interpretation* 21 (1967): 131-146.

¹⁸² Beker, *Paul*, 255.

experience of being in Christ, which does away with ‘works of the law’ as an imperative, or with any ‘fearful striving for acceptance’¹⁸³ in the soteriological scheme of God. However, when he is discussing these themes in the context of an audience leaning towards libertinism, Paul stresses the moral imperatives of the encounter with Christ. This does not mean that Paul is proclaiming a soteriological ‘different strokes for different folks’,¹⁸⁴ but a coherent yet contingent hermeneutic.

Beker argues that grace is a more flexible and less important Pauline symbol than many scholars indicate. Grace is for Paul always a given ‘event’ rather than a quality.¹⁸⁵ Faith is the response to the grace-event, always as faith-in-Christ. Freedom is the result of faith-in-Christ (Gal. 5.1), and is both a freedom from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8.2) and a freedom to approach God in joy (χαρά/– Rom. 14.17) and confidence.¹⁸⁶ Being ‘in Christ’ is for Paul primarily a term of incorporation¹⁸⁷ into the new age initiated by the Christ-event, what Beker calls a ‘participatory-instrumental meaning’.¹⁸⁸ Paul’s opponents altered his terminology into a form of the realized eschatology that it was Paul’s intention to avoid. Paul’s intention was that the indicative values of the phrase ‘in Christ’ should entail an imperative of obedience to Christ as known in and by the Spirit, inseparable from the eschatological dimensions of judgement and cosmic redemption.¹⁸⁹ This eschatological dimension, however, was easily lost on an individualistically-focussed audience: ‘The imperative does not primarily answer the question

¹⁸³ Beker, *Paul*, 255.

¹⁸⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 256.

¹⁸⁵ To be differentiated from the state akin to ‘charm’, for example, that appears in the Greek translations of Ps. 44.3.

¹⁸⁶ Beker, *Paul*, 270.

¹⁸⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 273.

¹⁸⁸ Beker, *Paul*, 272.

¹⁸⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 277.

“How will *I* be saved?” but rather “How are the anti-divine powers of the world to be met in my redemptive activity in Christ for the sake of the world?”¹⁹⁰

The Spirit in Paul, says Beker, has an ‘apocalyptic mooring’.¹⁹¹ The experience of the Spirit is not final glory, as in a realized eschatology, but is present experience of a new spatial reality invaded by Christ, maintaining a ‘not yet’ dimension. The Spirit is anchored in the event of the cross, although Paul generally speaks of the Spirit in the context of resurrection and glory. At 1 Cor. 2.1-5 he makes clear that disassociation of the Spirit and the cross is not theologically possible, and is utterly alien to his kerygma.¹⁹² To Beker Paul’s pneumatological language will always speak of the experience of the risen Christ, and pneumatological language will always be victorious language: there is no cruciform Spirit.¹⁹³ Beker notes that Christian existence will always be cruciform, lived in the shadow of the cross (2 Cor. 13.4), for a ‘cruciform life-style ... is the inevitable consequence of the confession “I have been crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20)’.¹⁹⁴

Paul’s believer is never existentially alone, but exists as a member of an interconnected body. Paul refers only to one *sw~ma*, but does not restrict himself to the language of one *e) kklhsi/a*. The plural of *e) kklhsi/a* is theologically possible to Paul, but the plural of *sw~ma* is not. The body of Christ is the risen Lord’s active involvement in and for the world,

¹⁹⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 278.

¹⁹¹ Beker, *Paul*, 281.

¹⁹² Beker is unwilling to accept Moltmann’s emphatic unity of the risen Christ as the crucified Christ at the right hand of God, drawing in Moltmann’s terms, the experience of Godforsakenness into the experience of the God-head. Beker, *Paul*, 294. For Godforsakenness in Paul, however, see on Deut. 21.23, (page 393, below).

¹⁹³ Beker, *Paul*, 294. Again, Beker uses ‘cruciform’ as shorthand for ‘suffering’.

¹⁹⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 301.

made present in and by the Spirit. The church is an administrative unit,¹⁹⁵ and the Body of Christ is ‘the reality of communal participation’ in him.¹⁹⁶

Beker is searching for a coherent inner core of Paul’s kerygma, beyond which all else may be flexible. Soteriology does not form that central and coherent core. It is not altogether a straightforward process to extract this coherent centre from Beker’s version of the Pauline kerygma and its myriad contingent variations: ‘In Paul, the coherent centre is not a frozen text or a credal sacred formula but a symbolic structure that is transparent to the primordial experience of his call’,¹⁹⁷ or ‘The coherent centre of the gospel is only coherent in its particularity’.¹⁹⁸ However apocalyptic, to Beker, provides the hermeneutical key: ‘Paul is an apocalyptic theologian with a theocentric outlook’.¹⁹⁹ Beker presents Paul’s Christology as fundamentally subordinate to his theology; ‘the final hour of the glory of Christ and his Parousia will coincide with the glory of God, that is, with the actualization of the redemption of God’s created order in his kingdom’.²⁰⁰

At this point Beker’s analysis breaks into a universalist soteriology. When Beker uses the words ‘universalist’ and ‘universalizing’ he is primarily referring to a ‘de-particularizing’ or ‘de-Judaizing’ of the kerygma.²⁰¹ Nevertheless, the completion or consummation of the Christ-event, the ‘defeat of the powers’ (Rom. 8.38-39) is the beginning of the participation of *all*

¹⁹⁵ The *ekklesia* ‘is primarily the cultic assembly of those who are engaged in praise and prophetic speech and who exercise judicial functions in accordance with the political usage of the term in the Hellenistic-Roman world’. Beker, *Paul*, 317.

¹⁹⁶ Beker, *Paul*, 307.

¹⁹⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 351.

¹⁹⁸ Beker, *Paul*, 352.

¹⁹⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 362.

²⁰⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 363.

²⁰¹ This however is not always the case: [The emphasis on ‘all things’] ‘expresses the idea that the theme of the glory of God in Rom. 8.17-30 is consonant with Paul’s “universalist motif,” because all things work together for good (v. 28) and because “all things” will be ours in God’s final glory’. Beker, *Paul*, 366.

God's world in the blessings of communion with God.²⁰² Beker finally links Incarnation with Creation, affirming that 'only at the end will the purpose of God in the beginning be realized' and that that end is 'the salvation of the created order'.²⁰³ This imminent triumph of God is the one coherent centre of Pauline proclamation, and language of exclusion is utilized only when contingencies conspire to mar proclamation of that kerygmatic truth.

Beker's importance to this study lies primarily in his shift of hermeneutical focus from chronological development to the contingencies that affect each letter. While his proposal that the apocalyptic triumph of God in the Christ-event provides the unchanging and coherent centre of Paul's thought may be open to some debate,²⁰⁴ it serves as a useful reminder that Paul is not producing a systematic soteriology, but a situational application of the language of boundaries and boundary crossing, of inclusion and exclusion in the Christ-community.

6. Key Contribution to Pauline Debate

The contribution I want to make to Pauline debate in this study is primarily in the complex relationship between the soteriological states that provide my chapter titles on the one hand, and the relationship between author and audience as indicated by Paul's language choices on the other. If he feels emotionally connected and secure in his relationship with his audience, can Paul speak of these soteriological states in a way that differs to the language used where he feels ill at ease in any way with his audience? Is there a means by which to measure these contingencies? By studying Paul's use of key terms that indicate 'Being In', 'Staying In' and

²⁰² Beker, *Paul*, 363.

²⁰³ Beker, *Paul*, 367.

²⁰⁴ Some shortfalls in Beker's model have been proposed by T.L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 33-38. Donaldson constructively attempts to find a key by which to negotiate the relationship between contingency and coherence, allowing for a coherent centre, contingent circumstances *and* theological development (291-299).

other states on the soteriological spectrum I hope to establish indicators by which the contingencies can be flagged. While I do not apply Sumney's method in full, he highlights the issues: can a soteriologically exclusivist statement from an impassioned rhetorical diatribe be used as a systematic theological or soteriological 'last word'? The answers to modern missiological questions are not directly given in this study, for it is a New Testament theological study rather than a contemporary missiological one.

In my final chapter, 'All In', my approach to the question of *apokatastasis* will be slightly different. Words and phrases used by Paul that may indicate some authorial awareness of the questions of universal restoration will be given extra weight and consideration, for it was remarkable that Paul could even consider such a matter when trapped in epistolary battles that he had no doubt were battles for the integrity of the Christ-gospel. While authorial intention cannot be the sole hermeneutical criterion in addressing an ancient letter, it cannot be ruled completely out of the hermeneutical equation. As philosopher of literature Martha Nussbaum cautions:

[S]eeing something in a literary text (or, for that matter, a painting) is unlike seeing shapes in the clouds, or in the fire. There the reader is free to say whatever his or her fancy dictates, and there are no limits on what she may see. In the reading of a literary text, there is a standard of correctness set by the author's sense of life, as it finds its way into the work.²⁰⁵

If this is the case, and I believe it is, then Paul's intentions are a part of the equation. His rhetorical skills, at any rate, are such that his intentions are hard to ignore. For a contemporary

²⁰⁵ M.C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 9. On 'authorial intent' as a hermeneutical restriction see also G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 12: 'the ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis ... is the discovery of the author's intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience'. Cited in Stamps, "Rethinking", 196.

reader Paul's message is heard or read in a context in which his words have been transmitted, canonized, recited and studied for centuries.²⁰⁶ When it comes to a soteriological response to him the accruals of centuries are inescapable, and we must acknowledge that we are reading Paul in a very different context to his. It will be necessary to pay respects to his context, and to those of his audiences, but also to pay him the respect of acknowledging that his words are now reverberating in a vastly different world to his.

7. Chronology

While a scholar could once write that a student of Paul 'should study the epistles of Paul, in their chronological order to understand ... how his thought developed as he grew older',²⁰⁷ it has, at least since Beker's input to debate, been *de rigueur* to remove the equation of chronological development from the hermeneutical process. Nevertheless, some chronological investigation must still be a part of Pauline studies.

It is not easy to establish this chronology for the Pauline correspondence. As if to illustrate this difficulty in Pauline studies two major monographs on Pauline chronology reach significantly different conclusions. Jewett offers tentative conclusions that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 50 CE, to the Galatians between 53 and 54 CE, that Philippians and the Corinthian correspondence were written in 55-56 CE, and Romans early in 57.²⁰⁸ Lüdemann argues that 1 Thessalonians was written as early as 41 CE, 1 Corinthians in either 49 or 52 CE, Galatians and the two letters of 2 Corinthians in 50 or 53 CE, and Romans in the winter of either

²⁰⁶ This reminder at the very least is the importance of Childs' last work, *Canonical Shaping*.

²⁰⁷ R. Heard, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1950), 162; cited in Hurd, *Origin*, 9, n. 3.

²⁰⁸ R. Jewett, *Dating Paul's Life* (London: SCM, 1979), final chart (Jewett provides no pagination for the charts).

51/2 or 54/55 CE.²⁰⁹ It is likely, though, that Paul's conversion²¹⁰ took place around 33 CE, and I am convinced that the correspondence was written during a period from approximately 50 CE (1 Thessalonians preceding Galatians by some years) to as late as the late 50s (Philippians).²¹¹

Despite Beker, we should acknowledge that during such a prolonged period there is some potential for a degree of shift in theological perspective. However Beker is right to warn that it is easy to over-emphasize 'shift' as an aspect of Paul's epistolary ministry. Following his conversion he spent three years in 'Arabia' and Damascus (Gal. 1.17). During this period he had time to refine the world-view of Saul the Pharisee in the light of his Damascus Road experience. There then followed 'fourteen years' presumably of ministry and reflection (Gal. 2.1) *before* he attended the Jerusalem council, and arguably before he began the epistolary ministry of Paul the Christian Apostle.²¹²

Prior to his conversion Paul was not a theological lightweight (Gal. 1.14). Much that was central to the zealous Hebrew student Saul is carried over into the faith of Paul the Christian. As Dunn puts it, 'Paul's faith remained in large measure the faith and religion of his fathers'.²¹³ His theology, in pure terms, his understanding of God *per se*, remained similar to that he had held before Damascus Road. The God of Israel was now revealed as 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ', but no radical caesura had broken God's dealing with humankind (see Rom. 1.16, 3.29). The Spirit of God experienced by Paul and by those who become a part of the

²⁰⁹ G. Lüdemann, *Paul - Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* (London: SCM, 1984), 262-263.

Lüdemann offers two possible dates for the crucifixion of Christ, and dates Paul's life from that event, therefore producing two possible chronologies three years apart.

²¹⁰ Donaldson notes 'For the past twenty years ... the word "conversion" has either disappeared from scholarly discussion of Paul entirely, its place being taken by the word "call," or it is used only after a labored defense of its continuing appropriateness'. Donaldson, *Gentiles*, 16. However Donaldson goes on to note a reversion back to the original language of 'conversion'. *Ibid.*, 17.

²¹¹ I will briefly return to the question of the date of the letters in the next chapter.

²¹² Dunn speaks of the chronological developments from Saul the Pharisee, through Paul the Christian to Paul the Apostle. See Dunn, *Theology*, e.g. 713-716.

²¹³ Dunn, *Theology*, 716.

community of faith-in-Christ is the vivifying Spirit of the Hebrews' understanding and pneumatology.²¹⁴ This Spirit was now named as 'Spirit of Christ' (Rom. 8.9), but was the same Spirit that Moses had experienced (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

But there is a seismic *christological* shift in Paul's thought. Jesus, whose followers Paul the Pharisee (Phil. 3.5) had persecuted, is the Son of God whom Paul encountered on the Damascus Road (Gal. 1.15-23). In the years of reflection following the Damascus Road experience, years that were unlikely to have been spent idly, it was the 'christologizing' of revelation that dominated Paul's thought. During those years of re-reading of the Hebrew scriptures a christology was born and nurtured.

This issue is close to the heart of an astringent debate between S. Kim and D.J.-S. Chae.²¹⁵ Their debate centres on the question of Paul's Damascus Road Christophany. Kim's primary argument is with the Sanders-influenced New Perspective school of Pauline hermeneutics, and especially with Dunn. He argues 'Dunn's thesis that at the Damascus Christophany Paul received only God's call to the Gentile mission and that Paul developed his doctrine of justification only in the wake of the Antioch incident in order to defend the gentile believers' right to be included in God's people is untenable'.²¹⁶

Chae has muddled the debate by arguing that earlier statements of a similar nature made by Kim indicate that Kim believes that 'Paul's soteriology and Christology were formed at the time of his Christophany experience'.²¹⁷ Chae is referring to Kim's earlier work *The Origin of*

²¹⁴ Neh. 9.6, Ps. 71.20, Rom. 8.11, 1 Cor. 15.45, 2 Cor. 3.6.

²¹⁵ See D.J.-S. Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997) and the response from Kim, *New Perspective*, 4, n. 18.

²¹⁶ Kim, *New Perspective*, 81.

²¹⁷ Chae, *Paul as Apostle*, 302.

Paul's Gospel,²¹⁸ to which *New Perspective* is a sequel.²¹⁹ Kim denies Chae's charges, claiming that the latter has 'distorted' his thesis to an 'absurd extent',²²⁰ and later suggesting that Chae has taken 'the New Perspective somewhat to the extreme',²²¹ but, related to this debate, once more, is the whole question of chronological development in Paul's thought. Did he change his mind following what might be called the 'contingency' of the Antioch conference? While Chae is misrepresenting Kim by parody, Kim nevertheless is adamant that Paul's Torah-free gospel 'was revealed to him at the Damascus Christophany'.²²² By contrast, Dunn and the New Perspective, following Sanders, argue for a post-Damascus development as a result of theological reflection on Paul's part: 'What Paul was convinced of on the Damascus road ... was not simply this central confessional claim [Christ died for us and was raised from the dead] but also that this Jesus was now to be preached to the Gentiles'.²²³ To this extent differences between Chae and Dunn seem minimal, but Dunn sees the Antioch incident as further sharpening this new understanding of Paul, so that 'the Antioch incident provided one of the great defining moments in Paul's theology and indeed in Christian theology'.²²⁴

Without being a self-conscious New Perspectivist, I believe it is likely that the bulk of Paul's christological review of the Hebrew scriptures was complete by the time he revisited Jerusalem 'after three years' (Gal. 1.18). From the time of Paul's Jerusalem visit onwards, contingent circumstances shaped his hermeneutic and his proclamation. The coherent, christological focus of Paul's kerygma remained unchanged: the apocalyptic victory won in the Christ-event and the prolepsis of the coming Reign of God thus foreshadowed.

²¹⁸ S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (WUNT 2/4. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983).

²¹⁹ Kim, *New Perspective*, xiv.

²²⁰ Kim, *New Perspective*, 4, n. 18.

²²¹ Kim, *New Perspective*, 55, n. 185.

²²² Kim, *New Perspective*, 11, n. 46.

²²³ Dunn, *Theology*, 177.

²²⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 359-360.

8. Chronology and Contingency

Contingencies shape the words and concepts Paul conveys. Paul writes a word on target with all the skills and passion of a rhetorician, a pastor and an evangelist. There is no room for ivory tower systematic reflection in Paul's world. This is not to say that he does not reflect, and even revise, some key outlooks. R.W. Wall has noted

on the basis of a chronology of his ministry and letters, the development of the most important theological themes of Pauline preaching (e.g., the promise and fulfillment of God's salvation, the results of Christ's death and resurrection, the life and witness of the church) and of the central theological controversies of his Gentile mission (e.g., election, law, theodicy, Israel) can be traced through the sequence of letters. Paul's theology was a work in progress.²²⁵

Wall does not develop this theory, as his primary concern is the influence of canonization on Pauline hermeneutics. The main proponents of theological development in Paul's thought tended to address the question in the context of the so-called delay of the parousia. C.H. Dodd's early work, especially *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development*,²²⁶ explored the implication of a changing attitude to the parousia. For Paul, according to Dodd,

as his interest in the speedy advent of Christ declines, as it demonstrably does after the time when he wrote I Corinthians, the "futurist eschatology" of his earlier phase is replaced by this "Christ-mysticism." The hope of glory yet to come remains as a background of thought, but the foreground is more and more occupied by the contemplation of all the riches of divine grace enjoyed here and now by those who are in Christ Jesus.²²⁷

²²⁵ R.W. Wall, "Introduction to Epistolary Literature", *NIB*, volume 10 (2002): 372.

²²⁶ C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936).

²²⁷ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 149.

There has been a shift in Paul's thought, Dodd argued:

This was the true solution of the problem presented to the Church by the disappointment of its naïve expectation that the Lord would immediately appear; not the restless and impatient straining after signs of His coming which turned faith into fantasy and enthusiasm into fanaticism; but a fuller realization of all the depths and heights of the supernatural life here and now.²²⁸

Dodd developed this idea further in his essay 'The Mind of Paul', written in the mid 1930s,²²⁹ where in particular he saw development in the areas of eschatology and universalism.²³⁰ C.L. Mearns further explored this idea in a more recent essay 'Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thessalonians'.²³¹ Mearns' argument has, however, gained little support in more recent analysis, and is dismissed by Wanamaker as 'ingenious but hardly convincing'.²³² J. Hurd²³³ provides a full listing of proponents of chronological development theorists, divided into three schools of thought, but has a cut-off date early in the 1960s.

I will maintain in this study that Paul is writing in the crisis of the moment, and that the needs of the moment rather than erudite expressions of systematic theology drive his words. I will argue that the single most important contingency influencing Paul's writings is the degree of emotional connection or connectivity that he feels with his audience as he writes. The behaviour of the audience and their adherence to Paul's instructions, the consistency of their

²²⁸ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 149-150.

²²⁹ Published as "The Mind of Paul: II", Chapter Five of Dodd, *Studies*.

²³⁰ For the delayed parousia (Dodd prefers 'Advent'), see Dodd, *Studies*, 109-113. For universalism see *ibid.*, 113-115, 118-128.

²³¹ C.L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thessalonians", *NTS* 27 (1981): 137-157.

²³² C.A. Wanamaker, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 95.

²³³ Hurd, *Origin* 8-9, nn. 2 and 3.

belief and praxis with the kerygma they received from Paul: these will shape this contingency, and these matters will receive the greatest attention as I seek a method to calibrate the connection between author and audience. Other elements will also influence the letters: where is Paul as he writes, what are his circumstances? Is he surrounded by supporters, is he at peace with his life and his journey? Perhaps these indicators can be calibrated too, but it is the contingency of emotional connection between author and audience itself that is my primary concern.

I have mentioned in passing the question of ‘canon’. This issue and my approach to it also needs some introduction. I may speak blithely of ‘the Pauline Canon’ or the ‘extant Pauline letters’, but different scholars mean differing things by these terms.²³⁴ Frequently I will turn to the phrase ‘the undisputed Paulines’ as I address the issues that arise. Perhaps this phrase says all that can be said: regardless of my personal assumptions about the authorship of the letters that bear Paul’s name, the authorship remains disputed. Personally I do have opinions about the disputed letters, though I don’t consider myself to be as well qualified as the great Pauline scholars to make definitive statements. No less a scholar than Dunn acknowledges that he can bring ‘little or no fresh insight’ to the question of authorship of Colossians,²³⁵ though he leans tentatively to a collaborative effort between Paul and Timothy.²³⁶ Wanamaker argues convincingly that 2 Thessalonians is Pauline, but that it predates 1 Thessalonians.²³⁷ Ephesians is generally accepted to be post-Pauline, but Markus Barth argues for Pauline authorship.²³⁸

²³⁴ For a complete discussion see Childs, *Canonical Shaping*, *passim*.

²³⁵ Dunn, *Colossians and Philemon*, 35.

²³⁶ Dunn, *Colossians and Philemon*, 38-39.

²³⁷ Wanamaker, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 37-45.

²³⁸ M. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3* (AB 34. New York: Doubleday, 1974), 36-50.

The permutations of pseudonymity and authenticity are almost endless, and precisely for that reason, I will address myself only to the undisputed Pauline texts.

9. Philemon

I will not give a great deal of consideration to Philemon. This brief and most personal of Paul's extant letters is too short to have a place in a method that is in a large part based on statistical analyses of word-use frequencies. However, while Philemon is statistically too small a document on which to calibrate the emotional distance exposed in the Pauline canon, it may prove a useful test case by which to measure my findings. At only 334 words²³⁹ Philemon is less than a quarter the size of the next shortest letter, in the re-construction I have followed here, 2 Corinthians 10-13. Philemon is smaller than Romans by a ratio of 1:21. Barth and Blanke observe 'The Philemon letter is so short that, written with a fine pen, it might fit on a postcard'.²⁴⁰ Yet its significance is not to be dismissed altogether, and it will be of some interest to return to this small and private²⁴¹ letter and ask the question whether, in general terms, the tools I use in linguistic analysis of Paul's longer formal or public letters to the churches can be corroborated by this most personal letter of all. In writing to 'Philemon, dear friend', to 'Apphia our sister', and 'Archippus our fellow soldier' (Philem 1-2), and in presenting the case for 'my child, Onesimus'(Philem 10) who Paul describes somewhat hyperbolically, as 'my own heart', it is likely that there is to be a high degree of connection between author and audience.

²³⁹ With some variation as a result of textual variants.

²⁴⁰ M. Barth and H. Blanke, *The Letter to Philemon* (ECC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1.

²⁴¹ Barth and Blanke, *Philemon*, 112-113.

Chapter 1: The Date and Occasion of Paul's Letters

In this first sequential look at Paul's letters I will look at the major contingencies that shaped the Pauline canon. I will look at the letters in a purported chronological order, but in each case it will be the contingency that Paul addressed, and the context out of which he wrote, that will be my guiding interest. How did the life sites of author and audience affect Paul's kerygma, and particularly affect his understanding of the outsider and the insider?

1. 1 Thessalonians

a. Introduction

1 Thessalonians is a passionate document, written with a sense of apocalyptic urgency. It is a contextual document, and any attempt at a hermeneutic must place it into the context, in so far as it can be ascertained, in which Paul first wrote it and to which he first addressed it. I will treat 1 Thessalonians as Paul's earliest extant writing.

Despite the on-going influence of varied theories of a disunited text, I will treat 1 Thessalonians as a single text. There are notable arguments against the complete literary integrity of 1 Thessalonians, the majority of which argue for the subsequent interpolation of units, particularly 1 Thess. 2.14-16, into an orthodox Pauline text. Foremost amongst interpolation theorists are Eckart,¹ Pearson,² Schmidt³ and, more recently, Walker.⁴ A complex composite theory posited by Schmithals gained little support amongst Pauline scholars.⁵

¹ K.G. Eckart, "Der zweite Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Thessalonicher", *ZTK* 58 (1961): 30-44.

² B.A. Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation", *HTR* 64 (1971): 79-94.

³ D. Schmidt, "1 Thess 1:13-16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation", *JBL* 103 (1983): 269-279.

⁴ W.O. Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 210-218.

⁵ W. Schmithals noted that 2.15-16 'have always aroused the greatest suspicion' with regards to literary integrity. Schmithals, *Gnostics*, 126. He outlines and dismisses the arguments of Eckart against literary unity, but proposes a

Amongst longer commentaries that of E. Richard is unusual in arguing for a composite letter,⁶ while Best,⁷ Bruce,⁸ Malherbe,⁹ Marshall,¹⁰ Morris¹¹ and Wanamaker¹² defend literary integrity and Pauline authorship.

Paul's sense of eschatological¹³ urgency and his passion for his own people drives him to use emotive and sometimes explosive language. It is therefore not necessary to posit 1 Thess. 2.13-16 as an interpolation of polemical vehemence.¹⁴ Though there are expressions uncharacteristic of Paul,¹⁵ this explosion of passion is a reflection on eschatological wrath (1 Thess. 4.15) giving insight into Paul's personal pain at the failure of his people of origin to recognize the crucified Messiah.

b. Reasons for Writing

Paul's kerygmatic language was bound to generate a clash of ideologies between the Christian community and its officially sanctioned cultic neighbours. Abraham Smith,¹⁶ citing

division of 1 Thessalonians into two separate letters, being a) 1 Thess. 1 – 2.12 + 4.4 – 5.28, and b) 1 Thess. 2.13 – 4.1 (*Gnostics*, 126-135, 212-214).

⁶ Richard, *Thessalonians*, divides 1 Thessalonians into two main parts: 1 Thess. 1.1 – 2.12 and 4.3 – 5.28 as an optimistic later letter, and 2.13, 2.17 – 4.2 as an earlier letter. Richard treats 1 Thess. 2.14-16 as an uneasy interpolation of polemical vehemence.

⁷ E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (BNTC. London: A&C Black, 1972), 22-35.

⁸ F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45. Waco: Word Books, 1982), xxxii – xxxiv, xlv – xlv.

⁹ A.J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B. New York: Doubleday, 2000), 79.

¹⁰ Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 11-16.

¹¹ L. Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 15-17.

¹² Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 17-37.

¹³ While this derivative of the word-group ε) sxatoj is used throughout this thesis, mention should be made of Beker's argument for maintaining use of the notion of 'apocalyptic' in Pauline analysis: see *Paul*, 18-19. Fee draws attention in a footnote to 'the loose use of language, where "apocalyptic" and "eschatological" tend to become synonyms'. *First Epistle*, 752, n. 30.

¹⁴ Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 41. See also C. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with their Wider Civic Communities* (SBLDS 168. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 158.

¹⁵ Recent commentators who have regarded 1 Thess. 2.13-16 as an interpolation, inserted after the destruction of the Second Temple, largely follow Pearson, "Deutero-Pauline Interpolation". Cf. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 125-126. Authenticity of the passage is defended by Donfried, "Test Case", 242-253; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 29-33.

¹⁶ A. Smith, "1 Thessalonians – Introduction", *NIB*, volume 11 (2000): 671-737 (677).

de Vos¹⁷ and Koester,¹⁸ has emphasized the degree to which key Pauline words and phrases forced confrontation with Imperial claims. *Parousi/a*, *a)pa/nthsi j* (meeting: 1 Thess. 4.17) and *a) sfa/lia* (security: 1 Thess 5.3) were bound to generate a conflict of claims with the empire. So too were many more Pauline uses: *eu) agge/lion* (gospel)¹⁹ and *duna/mei* (power: 1 Thess. 1.5), *e) ch/xhtai* (sounded forth: 1 Thess. 1.8)²⁰ and *r(u/omai* (rescues: 1 Thess. 1.10)²¹ are all words utilized in military settings and with military overtones that are found in the Thessalonian Exordium alone.²² Paul is, as Wright puts it, ‘ambassador for a king-in-waiting’,²³ and is reinforcing a conflict of priorities between the Thessalonian converts and the wider community.

Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians is a hortatory appeal or exhortation to an audience with whom he feels a powerful emotional bond. It is written primarily as an expression of pastoral concern for his audience – the relief he feels when he receives good news from Timothy at 1 Thess. 3.6 is palpable. It is not necessary to see this relief as belonging in a different context to the outpouring of eucharistic praise in the opening sentence of the letter. Timothy clearly returns during the time at which Paul is writing – he would have been aware of the probable length of time of Timothy’s reconnaissance and may have begun writing a response to the anticipated news. The news Paul receives from Timothy is a cause of great joy, and he bursts into a renewed eucharistic crescendo (1 Thess. 3.9-13) and associated intercession (1 Thess.

¹⁷ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 37-38. See Smith, “1 Thessalonians”, 677.

¹⁸ H. Koester, “From Paul’s Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schemata of 2 Thessalonians”, in R. Collins, ed., *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (Leuven: University of Leuven Press, 1990), 446-447.

¹⁹ 1 Thess. 1.5, 2.2, 2.4, 2.8, 2.9, 3.2.

²⁰ The use at 1 Thess. 1.8 is a NT *hapax legomenon*, but cf. Joel 3.14, which is a setting of military conflict, and 3 Macc. 3.2, which is a setting of conflictual narratives.

²¹ At Gal. 1.4 Paul chooses the verb *e)caire/w*, ‘to rescue’: cf. Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 1. 924: ‘Let me see him who dares to take them from me’. This too is a conflictual verb.

²² Homer: *Iliad*, 17:645: ‘Father Zeus, deliver thou from the darkness the sons of Archaeans’.

²³ N.T. Wright, “Paul’s Gospel and Caesar’s Empire”, in R.A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 160-183 (161).

3.12-13), consistent with his own subsequent injunction to ‘give thanks in all circumstances’ (1 Thess. 5.18). Pao notes ‘thanksgiving itself is understood to be “the will of God”’;²⁴ it is a theme at least as old as the Book of Judith.²⁵

The Thessalonians have been attracted to Paul’s kerygma by its declaration of a power greater even than that of Caesar (1 Thess. 1.5), a power that conquers even death (1 Thess. 1.10). Timothy’s return brings with it specific issues that need to be addressed for the Thessalonians, not least the tension between eschatological hope and the death of some of the faithful (1 Thess. 4.13-18).

The Thessalonians have been concerned at the death of some of their membership. The introduction of this theme at 1 Thess. 4.13, despite the apparent closure at 1 Thess. 3.11-13 or at the ‘finally’ of 1 Thess. 4.1, may indicate an interruption to the writing of the letter, presumably because of the return of Timothy and his delivery to Paul of edifying news. But the death of some of the Thessalonian Christians is a cause of concern to the community, and Paul responds as a theological pastor. It is possible that the deaths have been brought about as either a direct or indirect result of the economic isolation the Thessalonian Christians are experiencing due to their refusal to accept the lordship of Caesar, but there is no direct evidence of this. Be that as it may, Paul emphasizes that loved ones who have died are not separated from the salvation of Christ or from the hope of resurrection (1 Thess. 4.13-18).

Paul has opened this carefully crafted letter with a pneumatological reference (1 Thess. 1.5-6). Pneumatology informs his response to the issues brought back by Timothy (1 Thess. 4.8), and is a key to the concluding exhortation (1 Thess. 5.19-23). The experience of the Spirit and

²⁴ D. Pao, *Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme* (NSBT. Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 101, n. 48.

²⁵ Judith 8.25.

the on-going transformation worked by the Spirit is a down-payment on future resurrection. In writing to the Galatians the experience of the Spirit will again be a powerful vehicle of Paul's argument. The fruits of the transformative work of the Spirit are evidence of the integrity of the gospel, relegating the experience of suffering to secondary importance. In the news Paul has of the Thessalonians there is much cause for rejoicing, and therefore there *is* much rejoicing in the letter. There is also ground for concern, and Paul addresses that concern in a pneumatological framework (1 Thess. 4.8).

1 Thessalonians is Paul's first extant letter,²⁶ and is a single entity. The letter is hortatory, as Paul worries about reports that have reached him about the state of the Thessalonian believers. It is pastoral, as the Thessalonians grieve the death of some of their number. From its *exordium* onwards it is an outpouring of praise, placing praise at the centre of the relationship between audience, author, and God. 1 Thessalonians is a didactic letter, reminding the audience of Paul's own witness and the teachings he has handed on to the Thessalonians, securing them in their faith. This is a subversive document, pitting the claims of Christ's kingship against those of Caesar. It does so for an audience who are a Christian community experiencing and overcoming considerable hardship as a result of their faith.²⁷ 1 Thessalonians is a narrative that encourages its audience to understand themselves to be, from the time of their receipt of the gospel and its demands, a people incorporated into the Christ event. It is a letter designed to give the audience the wherewithal to continue on their faith journey despite the isolations and persecution that they experience. 1 Thessalonians is a letter designed to help the audience

²⁶ A useful attempt at a chronology is to be found in J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 24. E. Richard presents a date some five to six years previously, or perhaps as early as 41 CE, when Corinth became capital of Achaia, but does so without presenting a case. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 8 including n. 14. For other datings see commentaries.

²⁷ See 1 Thess. 1.3, 1.6, 2.2, 2.14, 2.15, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.7.

realize that those very trials are an indication that they are a part of the purposes of a God who is greater than any opposition, even Caesar. It reminds the audience that social alienation is a direct result of their turning from pagan practices to Christ (1 Thess. 1.6-9) and offers eschatological encouragement, interpreting ‘trials’ as an indication of religious authenticity and integrity (1 Thess. 3.3). Most importantly, in the terms of the present study, it is a letter that reveals a high degree of connection and trust between author and audience. In Chapter Three, below, I will indicate more concrete terms by which to measure this generalized observation.

2. Galatians

a. Introduction

Paul wrote to the Galatians with a corrective missiological and pastoral agenda. From the opening sentences he establishes three priorities. First, the blunt introduction ‘[From] Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities’ (Gal. 1.1) establishes Paul’s emphasis on his apostolic authority. No other Pauline letter begins so bluntly and defiantly, and it would appear, without overemphasizing ‘mirror-reading’, that Paul is on the defensive on this issue.

Secondly, Paul’s defiance is a defence in the face of an ‘other gospel’ (Gal. 1.6)²⁸ that has been persuasively proclaimed to the Galatians in the period, however brief a period it may have been²⁹ since his departure from their community. The reference at Gal. 1.6 to the Galatians’ rapid (‘so quickly’) desertion of the Pauline kerygma emphasizes his sense of pastoral and missiological urgency.

²⁸ I use the construct ‘an other’ rather than ‘another’ in an attempt to convey the solemnity of Paul’s *eteron* (*eteron* eu) *agge/lion*.

²⁹ ‘Soon after’. Jewett, *Dating*, 103.

Third, the alternative gospel proposed by the agitators has distorted the audience's understanding of freedom. This has been flagged as Paul's concern from Gal. 1.4: 'the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age'. The question of this freedom is forced on Paul's agenda.

These three concerns dictate the content and the style of the letter, and provide a key especially to understanding Paul's use of autobiographical illustration.³⁰

Questions of date, location and ethnicity surrounding the letter to the Galatians are complex, interrelated, and not able to be answered definitively or even separately. In terms of my concerns of connection and soteriological language, these may not be of great importance. Since it is fairly clear that contingent circumstances rather than chronological developments shape Paul's letters and their content, the impasse between proponents of an early or a late date for Galatians is not of great concern here,³¹ and the unsolvable riddle of the location of the audience is a hermeneutical red herring.³² I accept the date of Paul's writing Galatians as being

³⁰ Cf. Phil. 3.4b-6, where autobiographical detail follows the sudden incursion of memories of interference in Paul's kerygma, perhaps referring to the Galatian interference.

³¹ Proposing an early date, in the late 40s or early 50s, allows time for Paul to hone his position on the relationship between law and gospel between writing to the Galatians and subsequently writing to the Romans. However a more rapid shift in theological perspective, driven by contingent circumstances of author, audience, or both, could have taken place as Paul wrote Romans from Corinth, or in the period of time between a sojourn in Ephesus (from where he may have written Galatians) and his time in Corinth.

³² Most proponents of a 'south Galatian theory', proposing that Paul was writing to the southern or 'provincial' Galatian region, argue for an earlier date. They link the letter, written soon after the infiltration of the agitators (Gal. 1.6) with the Lukan account of the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). See R. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 28; Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxx, lxxii; Witherington, *Grace*, 20. J. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976), 55-57, argues for a southern location but a late date. Dunn, *Galatians*, 19, argues that the letter was written after 1 Thessalonians, in 50-5 CE, before the Corinthian letters. He argues for a long period of theological reflection and refinement as the basis of differences between Galatians and Romans in their treatment of Abraham. He also maintains that the southern cities were strongly populated by Jews, and that the monochrome group of uncircumcised believers envisaged at Gal. 5.2-4 is an unlikely scenario amongst Jewish converts. Esler maintains that the south or provincial Galatian hypothesis is largely the result of prioritising the Acts narrative as the historically correct authority: Esler, *Galatians*, 32. Adherence to the south Galatian hypothesis is not limited to those scholars who hold a high view of Lukan historicity, nor *vice versa*. Furthermore, a south or provincial Galatian hypothesis can be proposed together with a late date of writing, and a north Galatian hypothesis does not preclude an early date. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxxviii. F. Matera, *Galatians*, (SP 9. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1992), 20, cites H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A*

at some time early in the 50s, though not as early as his writing to the Thessalonians.³³ The letter was written to pagan converts, perhaps from the central and northern regions of Galatia, early in the 50s. It was a later letter than 1 Thessalonians, although its chronological relationship with the Corinthian correspondence is harder to ascertain, and, again, I emphasize that it is the local circumstances rather than chronology that give the letter its shape. I accept that these questions generate a great deal of scholarly debate, and cannot be resolved with any degree of certainty.³⁴

b. Reasons for Writing

After Paul left the Galatian region, a new group re-worked his kerygma. Paul's proclamatory³⁵ parameters may have been established by the agitators, and he is adapting their use of the Abraham narrative to his own ends,³⁶ or the Galatian missionaries³⁷ may have revised Paul's earlier references to this narrative, adopting the life of Abraham as an example of the call to circumcision as a hallmark of faith. To Paul Abraham is an *ur*-believer³⁸ but he boldly omits the story of Abraham's circumcision (Gen. 17.26) from his use of the story. The

Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia (Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 5, 12, as an example of 'early north', and R.H. Fuller, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 26, as 'late south'.

³³ Esler argues for a contingent shift in Paul's theology between 1 Thessalonians and Galatians, 'principally for the reason that there are no signs whatever of the righteousness issue in 1 Thessalonians' and that 'righteousness was a later and contingent development in his thought' (Esler, *Galatians*, 36). He develops this argument further in a chapter entitled "Righteousness as Privileged Identity" (141-177), answering the question 'what is righteousness?', and how it is that the concern arises in the Galatian but not the Thessalonian context. However, if the shape of Paul's letters is driven by contingencies, then it could equally be argued that Galatians was written earlier than 1 Thessalonians because it does not address questions of the death of believers!

³⁴ R.B. Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians", *NIB*, volume 11 (2000): 181-348 (see 191-192).

³⁵ It is important to note, as Hays does (following Martyn, *Galatians*, 21), that Paul was not engaging in rhetoric for rhetoric's sake, but as a homiletic tool. Hays, "Galatians", 189.

³⁶ Hays, "Galatians", 189.

³⁷ The publication of my faculty colleague Ian Elmer's Galatians monograph occurred too late for consideration in this study. Despite Elmer's eloquent arguments I remain unconvinced of a unified anti-Pauline front based on Jerusalem. See I.J. Elmer, *Paul, Jerusalem and the Judaizers: The Galatian Crisis in Its Broadest Historical Context* (WUNT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

³⁸ For detailed analysis of Paul's midrashic technique see P.J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 58, 64.

agitators used Abraham to represent the circumcised covenant holder, but neglected to note that the implication of this interpretation was to inflict *all* of Torah's claims on the believer (Gal. 4.8-11).

In reapplying the Abraham-saga to a narrative of faith and law-free 'righteousing', Paul demonstrates belief in the living, contingent role of scripture. He uses not only the Genesis Abraham-saga to serve his counter-offensive, but Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Habakkuk (Gal. 3.10-14) and Isaiah (Gal. 4.27) as well. He also uses early confessional and liturgical traditions from within the Christian community. At Gal. 3.27-28 he adopts a baptismal formula, and other early Christian oral formulae are apparent at Gal. 1.3-4, 2.16, 2.20, 3.13-14 and 4.4-5.³⁹

The Galatian converts are most likely to have been converts from paganism (Gal. 4.8-9) rather than God-fearers. The integrity of their conversion and subsequent life of faith is at stake in their decision whether to adhere to or desert the gospel they received from Paul. Paul's original arrival in their midst was unplanned and his preaching of the gospel was opportunistic (Gal. 4.3-15). His proclamation to them was cross-centred (Gal. 3.1: 'It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!')⁴⁰; the Cross is the means of deliverance from an evil age (Gal. 1.4). The Galatians received this message gladly (Gal. 4.14-15a), were baptized (Gal. 3.26-28) and were 'running well' when Paul left them (Gal. 5.7). Missionaries have subsequently undermined Paul's work (Gal. 1.6) by preaching the necessity of circumcision (Gal. 5.2-4, 6.12).

³⁹ Jewett cites 'Credal Formations', 'Citations of Hymns, Benedictions, and Doxologies', and 'Citations of Scripture and Scriptural Catenae' as amongst Paul's rhetorical arsenal. See his *Romans*, 24-25.

⁴⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 2.2.

This is the reason for writing to the Galatians, and an explanation of the passion Paul exhibits. This passion demonstrates that the issue of ‘Staying In’, to be considered in a later chapter, is a matter of pastoral urgency, and apostasy is not an abstract soteriological possibility. This urgent pastoral concern dictates the style of Paul’s language and the rhetorical methods that he uses.

To ask soteriological questions of Paul is also in part to search for the identity of Paul’s agitators, a major concern to recent Galatian studies.⁴¹ To unmask the identity of the agitators would be to gain greater understanding into what was at stake. The position a reader takes on this question has considerable implication for his or her understanding of Paul’s selection of language and rhetorical technique. However, because the identity of the agitators was known without elucidation to both author and audience, and because Paul appears to refuse to honour the agitators with an identity or name (see Gal. 1.6-7; 5.7, 6.12-13), information is scant.⁴² At Gal. 1.7 Paul refers to the outcome of the agitators’ proclamation as being to ‘pervert the gospel of Christ’. While not informative, this at least suggests that the agitators were proclaiming a gospel sufficiently similar to the Pauline kerygma still to be identified as ‘of Christ’, rather than a temptation to some wholly disconnected religious belief system. To affirm this is to affirm little, but to Paul any ‘other gospel’ is ‘no gospel’ (Gal. 1.7). This indicates that the Galatians are attracted not to one of a host of other religions, as might be the case in a theological and philosophical melting pot such as Corinth, but to what Pauline sees as a corruption of Christianity.

⁴¹ ‘In recent years, especially since the appearance of Walther Schmithals’ studies, the identification of Paul’s opponents in Galatia has become increasingly problematic’. R. Jewett, “The Agitators in the Galatian Congregation”, in M. Nanos, ed., *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 334-347 (334).

⁴² For the significance of ‘naming’ and ‘non-naming’, in Pauline polemics see Marshall, *Enmity*, 342-343. Martyn notes Paul’s refusal to name the opponents as a mark of ‘disdain’ (*Galatians*, 121).

Paul's strategic references to *no/moj*⁴³ make it clear that this is the primary point of disagreement between the gospel as he preached it and the 'hetero-gospel' preached by his agitators. The agitators were insisting on circumcision of the converts (Gal. 5.2-3); it is possible that a person proclaiming such a teaching could themselves have been a Gentile convert who had undergone this rite of belonging. This possibility solves no problems: if they were circumcised after conversion, on whose advice did they undergo the rite? This was a group who were maintaining that circumcision was a *sine qua non* of belonging to Christ. They apparently have strong links with Jerusalem, for Paul uses the city's name as a metonym by which to attack the Jerusalem eldership in his Abraham midrash. At Gal. 4.25-30 he contrasts⁴⁴ the earthly Jerusalem, descendent of the slave girl Hagar, with the heavenly Jerusalem descended from Sarah. Paul commands the Galatians to be rid of Hagar (Gal. 4.30), adapting Gen. 21.10.⁴⁵ The agitators' Jerusalem connection has added credibility to their gospel-version as they have proclaimed it amongst the Gentiles of Galatia.⁴⁶ They have suggested that Torah and circumcision provided signs of identification and belonging to the new faith-community that Paul's proclamation and practice, and the rite of baptism (Gal. 3.27) left inchoate.⁴⁷ The re-

⁴³ Gal. 2.16, 2.19, 2.21, 3.2, 3.5, 3.10-13, 3.17-19, 3.21, 3.23-24, 4.4-5, 4.21, 5.3-4, 5.14, 5.18, 5.23, 6.2, and 6.13. I am accepting the more dominant scholarly opinion that Paul's use of *no/moj* is primarily a reference to 'law' rather than to 'teaching'. See L.E. Keck, "Searchable Judgments and Scrutable Ways", in *Pauline Theology, Volume 4. Looking Back, Pressing On* (E.E. Johnson and D.M. Hay, eds., SBLSS 4. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 22-32. Keck observes 'it is preferable to recognize that *no/moj* serves Paul well precisely because it has multiple meanings, including Pentateuch, torah, and rule or principle' (31).

⁴⁴ See the Martyn chapter entitled "A Tale of Two Churches" (*Galatians*, 457-466).

⁴⁵ Genesis reads 'Cast out *this* slave woman with her son, for the son of *this* slave woman shall not inherit *along with my son Isaac*'. Paul universalises Genesis, saying 'Drive out *the* slave and her child, for the child of *the* slave will not share the inheritance *with the child of the free woman*'. See Matera, *Galatians*, 171.

⁴⁶ So Käsemann. "Die Legitimität des Apostels" (1942) cited in Martyn *Galatians*, 18, n. 16.

⁴⁷ The agitators are, according to Jewett, attempting to introduce circumcision as a *sine qua non*, a ready and theoretically observable sign of belonging and acceptability in the Galatian faith community; 'the agitators argued for circumcision on grounds that entrance into the elect spiritual community demanded prior admission into Abraham's covenant through circumcision'. The agitators may be adopting this rigorist line because they are themselves alarmed (Gal. 6.12) that Zealot enthusiasts are upset by the Galatian converts' lax observance. The agitators' reputations have been tarnished by association with Paul, and believe that a successful correction would be to introduce the rite of circumcision as a rite of Christian belonging in the Galatian milieu. See Jewett, "Agitators", 336.

clothing action of the baptismal rite as administered by Paul is less indelible than the rite of circumcision, even if the latter is applicable only to the male believers.⁴⁸

The agitators do not directly oppose Paul and his kerygma. Instead they suggest that he has always been an advocate of circumcision (so Gal. 5.11), but that he left the region without completing the fine detail of the rites of initiation and belonging.⁴⁹ It is highly likely that Paul did, in his teaching, underestimate the psychological need of his converts for ‘identity-marking’, and that the converts’ unlikely desire to submit to circumcision demonstrates the extent to which this pedagogical omission had unsettled and confused them. Boundary maintenance⁵⁰ is critical in any culture. Paul’s own account of his persecution of the Christian community some years before (Gal. 1.13) reminds us that there were elements in the Jewish community uneasy at co-existence with Christianity. The flashpoint (or as Nanos puts it, ‘exigence’⁵¹) for Paul’s letter is circumcision.⁵² His aim in writing is to stop those considering this *contra*-kerygma step by utilizing all his rhetorical skills to dissuade them. To Paul circumcision represents transition not from the pagan community to the community of Christ, a transition represented where necessary by baptism, but from any community to the community of the old Israel. It is the *wrong* boundary marker. To Paul, the agitators are advocating surrender to ‘the present evil age’, a surrender that Paul has portrayed from the outset of the letter as contrasting to the ‘the will of our God and Father’ (Gal. 1.4).

⁴⁸ An attraction for women to Christianity was likely to have been the availability to them of a sign of belonging, baptism. In the context of this and similar Pauline passages, and especially for the significance of the baptismal formula ‘no longer male nor female’ (Gal. 3.29), see E. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1983), 210.

⁴⁹ Jewett, “Agitators”, 343. Jewett notes that the agitators are claiming not to contradict but to complete Paul’s kerygma. (*ibid.*, 336-337). Verses such as Gal. 3.3, Gal. 4.21 and Gal. 5.9 leave the impression that Paul is countering a demand that reaches beyond those he has made on his converts. The agitators have suggested to Paul’s converts that his proclamation of the gospel had shortcomings, thus significantly undermining his credibility.

⁵⁰ Nanos, *Irony*, 95. See also de Vos, *Church and Community*, 232, 291; Meeks, *Origins*, 69, 212; P. Carter “‘Big Men’ in Corinth”, *JSNT* 66 (1997): 45-71 (49).

⁵¹ See also Stamps, “Rethinking”, 194.

⁵² Gal. 1.6, 3.1-5, 4.21, 5.2-7, 6.12-13. See Nanos, *Irony*, 86-109.

Paul proclaimed a gospel that avoided imposition of circumcision.⁵³ In doing so he had risked failing to provide any visible badge of social identity: though baptism and baptismal re-clothing (Gal. 3.27) provided some rite of passage, the agitators capitalized on this apparent flaw in Paul's kerygma. Consequently, another flashpoint demanding a response is their demand that the Galatians add seasonal observances to their faith in order to seal their social identity.⁵⁴ To Paul this is an anathema: cultic observance of any kind is an addition to the simple demand of 'faith working through love' (Gal. 5.6b). The Galatians must 'stand firm' against the invitation to add to the simple encounter with Christ (Gal. 5.1).

To enhance their criticism of Paul, the agitators may have called into question his apostleship. In response Paul selects his rhetorical, homiletic and epistolary methods carefully, countering the agitators' approach. He utilizes autobiographical detail,⁵⁵ for example, not for the sake of travelogue, but to place his encounter with the Galatian audience into the context of his apostolic commission. This is not a commission by 'James and Cephas and John' (Gal. 2.9) but emphatically by the risen Lord, encountered long before on the Damascus road (Gal. 1.16). In any case, Paul emphasizes, to oppose Paul is to oppose the Christ who works through every aspect of Paul's existence (Gal. 2.20).

⁵³ The issue had not arisen for as long as the Christian community was predominately drawn from the Hebrew culture – the indelible mark of circumcision remained on the male body and consciousness, as it did, indeed, for Paul (Phil. 3.5). It was however quickly emerging as an issue for the Gentile converts. What was the sign of their new social identity? In answer Paul generally cited baptism (Gal. 3.27), but the agitators were offering a sign more visible and tangible than a shared narrative of a remembered but effaceable rite. There was a sign in the flesh.

⁵⁴ For a hypothetical reconstruction of the agitators' teachings on 'times and seasons' see Martyn, *Galatians*, 414-415. These are not necessarily Hebrew observances (Betz, *Galatians*, 217), and their nature is indeterminable from the context, but they are observances which the agitators feel are needed in order to replace the lunar and solar rites originally observed, before conversion, by the Galatians. To the agitators' view, Paul's removal of the pagan rites has left the Galatians in a ceremonial vacuum, perhaps making them conspicuously different to the Jewish community enjoying its uneasy Roman hegemony.

⁵⁵ 'That Paul offers his autobiographical narrative in 1:13-2:21 as substantiation of his claim in 1:11-12 concerning the nature and origin of his gospel suggests that he considers himself in some sense a representative or even an embodiment of that gospel'. Lyons, *Autobiography*, 171.

All these matters addressed by Paul are questions of boundary crossing. It has been suggested, most consistently by Gundry Volf, that apostasy – (boundary crossing in the wrong direction!) – is not possible in the Galatian or any Christian context. Submission to a part of the law, circumcision, is submission to the law in entirety, and a resultant ‘estrangement from Christ which results in an incongruous attempt to live the Christian life apart from Christ’.⁵⁶ To live life in this way, says Gundry Volf, is for the Galatians to ‘remove themselves from the grace which, from beginning to end, is the fundament of salvation’,⁵⁷ and thereby to give up hope for final salvation.⁵⁸ Paul is confident that the Galatians will not (future tense) subscribe to the agitators’ perversion of the gospel: at the time of Paul’s writing, the Galatians have not succumbed to the temptation to apostasy. Gundry Volf rightly maintains that ‘the situation is indeed not hopeless’.⁵⁹

But Paul writes to the Galatians with passion because apostasy *is* possible. He believes the Galatians’ Torah-adherence will destroy their present inclusion and future completion in the Spirit, replacing Spirit with flesh (Gal. 3.3). The aorist of ‘having begun with the Spirit’ is contrasted with the present infinitive (passive) of ‘are you now being completed?’ While it is true, as Longenecker puts it, that ‘completion of the Christian life comes about on the same basis as its inception ... by God’s working’,⁶⁰ the contrast Paul has established at Gal. 3.1-3 and again at Gal. 6.8 is between divine consistency and human inconsistency.⁶¹ At Gal. 6.8 Paul takes this concern and states it in its starkest terms: ‘If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the

⁵⁶ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 212.

⁵⁷ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 213-214.

⁵⁸ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 214.

⁵⁹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 216.

⁶⁰ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 104.

⁶¹ See also Gal. 5.7. Cf. Rom. 1.23, and in the Hebrew heritage, Mal. 3.6-7.

Spirit': this is not a hypothetical possibility but a real soteriological crisis point, and the ball is in the Galatians' court.

These concerns drive the connection between Paul and his audience negatively. Upset by their apparent departure from his kerygma he feels alienated from and dissatisfied with them. This will be demonstrated in quantifiable terms in Chapter Three below, but at this stage it can be stated in simple terms: Paul feels passionate about his argument, but certainly not satisfied with the audience.

3. 1 Corinthians

a. Introduction

In writing to the Corinthians Paul was writing to a faith community for whom he felt great love (1 Cor. 4.21, 16.24), having lived amongst them for eighteen months (Acts 18.11). On this occasion there is no need to doubt Luke's chronology and grasp of the details of Paul's ministry.⁶² Paul's primary concern is that reports have reached him indicating that they are shifting their focus from the kerygma as he proclaimed it to them and lived amongst them. This indicates to Paul that they are slipping in their credibility as a faith community, from the qualities of love he celebrates in chapter 13, to un-Christlike lovelessness. To slip in this way is to be accursed (1 Cor. 16.22a).

It is generally held that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, probably from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16.8)⁶³ in around the mid-part of the 50s.⁶⁴ He had received reports of shifts in the behaviour of

⁶² Johnson, *Acts*, 324-325.

⁶³ In fact the wording 'I will stay in Ephesus' is not definitive in this matter.

⁶⁴ R.F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1999), 24. Some scholars, such as Lüdemann (*Paul*, 263) propose an earlier date of 49 CE, but such dates are based on combinations of Luke's

the Corinthian Christians after his departure, perhaps the result of some ambiguities in Paul's teachings. A letter was sent to him addressing a number of matters on which its authors seek clarification. Emissaries from Chloe reached Paul with further news from Corinth, news that was not all good. He responded to the first issues to reach him in the lost 'Previous Letter' (1 Cor. 5.9), a didactic letter that was misunderstood, perhaps deliberately and provocatively, by the Corinthian leadership, the 'strong' (1 Cor. 4.10). The news brought to him by 'Chloe's people' (1 Cor. 1.11) includes reports of factionalism (1 Cor. 1.11-15) and immorality (1 Cor. 5.1).

b. Reasons for Writing

The news that reaches Paul brings a catena of issues to Paul's attention. Some of these matters are addressed directly, introduced emphatically with phrases such as 'it is actually reported' (1 Cor. 5.1) or 'now concerning the matters about which you wrote' (1 Cor. 7.1). More subtle, and demanding greater rhetorical nuance, are those woven through the text. Their resurfacing in the text betrays the extent to which they are playing on Paul's mind. The most subtle of these, and perhaps Paul's greatest concern, are references to rhetorical skill and wisdom, suggesting that this was a major point at which the Corinthian subversives were undermining Paul's kerygma.

Matters interwoven or recurrent in the text are

chronology with that of fifth century historian Orosius, 'subtracting eighteen months (Acts 18.11) from the time of Paul's encounter with the proconsul Gallio (Acts 18.12)' (Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 10). Murphy-O'Connor stresses that Orosius was, like Luke, prone to analyses and representations of history that served to demonstrate a theological rather than a chronological point. Jewett however allows Orosius greater chronological accuracy than this implies (Jewett, *Romans*, 19).

1. Claims to wisdom/rhetorical supremacy.⁶⁵

2. Paul's refusal to accept financial support. This, primarily at 1 Cor. 9.1-18, is linked to the matter of the Jerusalem Offering, raised at 1 Cor. 16.1-3, presumably in part as Paul struggles to separate the two questions, sponsorship of him being refused, and sponsorship of the 'holy ones' of Jerusalem being supported, in the mind of his audience.

Among the issues directly addressed by Paul are the following:

1. Divisions in the community (1 Cor. 1.10, 3.1-23, 11.18).⁶⁶

2. Extreme sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5.1).⁶⁷

3. Lawsuits (1 Cor. 6.1-8).

4. Matters written about from Corinth (predominately matters of private living):

a) conjugal rights (1 Cor. 7.1-16)

b) circumcision (1 Cor. 7.18-20)

c) social status (1 Cor. 7.21-24)

d) marriage of virgins and widows (1 Cor. 7.25-39)

⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 1.19-20, 1.26-27, 3.18-20, 4.10, 6.5.

⁶⁶ See Marshall, *Enmity*, especially 152. There is no need to separate the divisions of 1 Cor. 11.18 from those of 1 Cor. 1.10: Collins, *First Corinthians*, 421. It was common, since the work of F.C. Baur in the first half of the nineteenth century, to see factionalism, possibly including the existence of an elitist 'Christ faction', as the primary problem faced by Paul in his absence from Corinth. For a detailed history of this interpretation see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 123-133. Dunn emphasizes factionalism as Paul's primary concern in addressing the Corinthians. See Dunn, *Theology*, 574. B. Winter sees factionalism as the motivation behind the law suits of chapter six. To Paul factionalism is a fundamental christological and ecclesiological issue (1 Cor. 1.13). B. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 70-75.

⁶⁷ It appears that the subversive elements in the Corinthian leadership have gone out of their way to misunderstand an instruction given by Paul in his 'Previous Letter'. He has instructed them 'not to associate with sexually immoral persons', and they have taken this to mean that the Christian community were not to have contact with *anyone* who was immoral. To misinterpret the 'Previous Letter' so as to demand exclusion from the whole of society is a deliberate and impractical misinterpretation on the part of the Corinthian leadership, designed to parody Paul's demands. The leaders claimed Paul was asking for complete withdrawal from society, and therefore Paul's kerygma was impossible to fulfil. Paul emphasizes, as a corrective to this wilful misinterpretation of his request for dissociation from evildoers, that such a total withdrawal from society is impossible (1 Cor. 6.10).

5. Food sacrificed to idols (1. Cor 8.1-12). This section, however, introduces a series of interwoven concerns that centre on inappropriate behaviour in times of gathering. The issue of idol-offered food at the feast of gathering is inseparable from 6 below.

6. Behaviour at the *agape*. Paul's response to all matters revolving around the *agape* is effectively summarized at 1 Cor: 10.24, 'Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other'.

7. Head coverings (1 Cor. 11.2-16), also associated with behaviour at the *agape*.

8. Use and manifestation of spiritual gifts, combined with apparent spiritual elitism, in part related again to the question of divisions and 'social stratification' (1 Cor. 12.1 - 14.40).⁶⁸

9. Paul's reference to the matter of resurrection doctrine (1 Cor. 15.12-58) may imply a form of over-realized eschatology. It is possible that the subversives have removed a doctrine of future judgement from their teaching.

Why would the elders of Corinth as, as Hurd put it, have 'intentionally over-interpreted Paul's position'?⁶⁹ It is possible that there had been a shift in the cultural and economic circumstances of the Corinthian Christians. B. Winter,⁷⁰ for example, suggests that the issues addressed in the Corinthians' letter to Paul are a direct response to the changed circumstances in which the Corinthians find themselves. Such a rapid change in a sub-culture's circumstances seems a little unlikely. There is no doubt that there have been private behavioural changes in areas of sexual and marital behaviour, faith-communal behavioural issues surrounding the *agape* gathering, and doctrinal issues surrounding the doctrine of resurrection, and matters of

⁶⁸ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 421.

⁶⁹ Hurd, *Origin*, 149.

⁷⁰ Winter, *After Paul*, 4-7.

confusion, deliberate or otherwise, arising from Paul's own directives concerning the Jerusalem collection (1 Cor. 16.1) and the role of Apollos (1 Cor. 16.12).

1 Cor. 1.10 is a thematic opening to the body of the letter, set down in emphatic position once the formal salutation and thanksgiving are over. It would be foolish to disregard the presence of factions in the struggle for pyramidal ascendancy that has been established since Paul's departure. For Hays to suggest that the factions are no more than 'inchoate dissensions and arguments',⁷¹ may be too gentle, but a scenario of full blooded factional tussles is overstated. Paul is writing to address any deviation from the code of behaviour he established amongst the Corinthians, the code that is a call to be a countercultural sign of the Reign of God.

At the close of 1 Corinthians relations between author and audience were cordial. The assumption was that any matters causing Paul sorrow, such as immorality (1 Cor. 5), lawsuits (1 Cor. 6.1-9) and disharmony at the *agape* meal (1 Cor. 11.17-22) had been or soon would be rectified. There have been moments of disappointment in the relationship, and Paul has been quite authoritarian in tone. However the closing tone of 1 Corinthians is optimistic: 'My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. 16.24): 'authoritarian but connected' summarizes the author-audience relationship at this point.

4. 2 Corinthians

a. Introduction

By the time Paul writes the canonical 2 Corinthians the situation in Corinth has worsened. In mapping what he calls the 'temperature' of relations between Paul and the Corinthian faith

⁷¹ R.B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 22. Cf. J. Munck's reference to 'bickering'. See *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM, 1959), 166.

community, Sampley⁷² records a steady decline, albeit with a slight improvement between the painful visit foreshadowed at 1 Cor. 16.5-7 (alluded to retrospectively at 2 Cor. 2.1) and the writing of what he refers to as Letter D, 2 Cor. 1-9. Sampley's division of the Corinthian correspondence into letters A to E, and his evaluation of the 'temperature' of relations over the period in which the letters were written, provides a useful key to understanding Paul's Corinthian ministry.

Sampley's division of the correspondence is as follows:

Letter A 'Previous Letter' referred to at 1 Cor. 5.9-11

Letter B Canonical 1 Corinthians

A visit to Corinth in accordance with 1 Cor. 16.5-7 – during which Paul encountered verbal abuse, therefore:

Letter C 'Harsh Letter' referred to at 2 Cor. 7.8-16

Letter D 2 Cor. 1-9

Letter E 2 Cor. 10-13

The arguments for division of 2 Corinthians have been extensively chronicled by M. Thrall,⁷³ and will be re-visited only as necessary. In this context it needs to be stated that 2 Corinthians is in this thesis being treated as two documents, chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-13 being separate letters, as proposed by Sampley.

Witherington argues 'there is not a shred of textual evidence to support the view that any part of the letter as we have it did not originally belong where it now is'.⁷⁴ Nevertheless,

⁷² J.P. Sampley, "The Second Letter to the Corinthians". *NIB*, volume 10 (2002): 10-11.

⁷³ M. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 3-49.

⁷⁴ Witherington, *Conflict*, 328-329.

Witherington's case is based primarily on his reading of 'ancient rhetorical conventions',⁷⁵ and these conventions are open to more than one application in the context of 2 Corinthians. In particular arguments from rhetorical structure have been proposed by Betz to present chapters eight and nine as separate chapters.⁷⁶ Betz argues for chapter eight as a letter in the style of a letter of commendation,⁷⁷ and chapter nine as an ambivalent example of the 'advisory letter' form.⁷⁸ Dahl⁷⁹ argues for a unified letter, primarily on the basis of thematic unity between the purported sections of the letter. These unifying themes include that of 'joy'⁸⁰ and 'confidence'.⁸¹ In the case of joy, however, the references cease after 2 Cor 8.2, therefore not precluding a division between chapters 1-9 and 10-13. In the case of confidence there are two references in the purported later letter, but both are of a conditional nature. In 2 Cor. 10.7 Paul writes with heavy sarcasm '*If* you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we'. At 2 Cor. 11.17 he writes in his Boaster's Speech of his own 'boastful confidence', with heavy irony. In each case then Paul's usage in chapters 10-13 is, while an echo of usages in 1-9, nevertheless in marked contrast to the earlier usage.

A further indication of a division of 2 Corinthians is the distinct reduction in language of fictive kinship, explored in greater detail below. There is a considerable fall in usage in either the vocative or dative between 1 Corinthians⁸² and 2 Corinthians, this usage appearing only at 2

⁷⁵ Witherington, *Conflict*, 329.

⁷⁶ H.D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), especially 38-41 and 131-134.

⁷⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 133.

⁷⁸ Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 139.

⁷⁹ N. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 38-39.

⁸⁰ See 2 Cor. 1.24, 2.3, 7.4, 7.13, 8.2.

⁸¹ See 2 Cor. 2.3, 3.4, 5.6-8, 7.16, 10.7, 11.17.

⁸² De Vos draws attention to twenty-nine uses of *a) del fo/j* as well as the use of the metaphor of 'wet nurse' as an image of fictive kinship. De Vos, *Church and Community*, 228.

Cor. 13.11 in the purported Letter E.⁸³ There is a distinct cooling of relations between author and audience between these documents.

There are three main arguments for chapters 10-13 being a fifth act of correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians:

- a. If chapters 10-13 are not a unity with chapters 1-8 or 1-9, and not an *earlier* letter, then they must *ipso facto* be a later letter
- b. At 2 Cor. 12.18 Paul speaks of a past visit of Titus to Corinth, which is identical to the *proposed* visit of 2 Cor. 8.16-24
- c. The critical attitude of the Corinthians towards Paul's apostleship is less pronounced in chapters 1-9 than it is in chapters 10-13, indicating that opposition to him is in its infancy in the earlier canonical chapters.

To propose a division after 2 Cor. 9 is to propose that there were two escalating crises, each followed by a letter from Paul seeking to establish reconciliation between himself and the Corinthians. It is likely that Titus' account of the Corinthian context and the Corinthians' attitudes was accurate, and included mention of the arrival of a new mission team (2 Cor. 3.1) with a new proclamatory style disapproved of by Paul (2 Cor. 2.17). Chapters 10-13 include no explanation as to how Paul received his new information, but reveal deep disappointment that the new found joy referred to at 2 Cor. 7.13 had proved so temporary (2 Cor. 11. 3-6). His direct attack is comparable with Gal. 1.6, a full and direct 'frontal' attack on a new and critical situation.

I will treat 2 Corinthians as two letters: chapters 1-9, and chapters 10-13. Chapters 1-9 were written prior to chapters 10-13, but not by any great length of time. This again

⁸³ 2 Cor. 11.9 and 2 Cor. 12.18 refer to third parties.

demonstrates that it is contingent circumstances rather than the passage of time that primarily shapes Paul's thought.⁸⁴

b. Reasons for Writing

After despatching 1 Corinthians, there were a number of changes in Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, and they are reflected in the changing tone and language across the two documents that form 2 Corinthians. At 1 Cor. 9.19-26 Paul has countered an accusation that he is a chameleon⁸⁵ with the assertion that he is not air-boxing. The context of the accusation was Paul's apparent shifting attitude to finances, financial support, and especially to the Jerusalem Collection, accusations that included portrayal of Paul as an opportunistic flatterer.⁸⁶

These accusations do not go away; Paul has to address similar accusations of inconsistency after the Painful Visit and Sorrowful Letter. The promise of 1 Cor. 16.5-6 has not been fulfilled. Although to a degree we are engaging at this point in mirror-reading, the similarity between 1 Cor. 9.19-22 and 2 Cor. 1.13-24 is to be found in the charge of inconsistency. The fact that the accusation is the same, although the presenting issues differ ('all things to all people' as against inconsistent planner), suggests that there may be a common thread of influence by the same agitators, even though they only arrive in Corinth at or near the

⁸⁴ V.P. Furnish argues that Letter E is likely to have been written from Macedonia, though not necessarily from the same location as Letter D. Letter E is likely to have been written from Beroea or Thessalonica, while Letter D was probably written from Philippi. It is likely that Letter D was written in the early months of 56 CE, while Letter E was written later in the same year. V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 46. See also Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 77. It is possible that Rom. 16.17-20 gives a glimpse of the Corinthian community as it appeared to Paul. In writing to the Romans Paul refers to 'those who cause dissensions and offences', and observes that they 'deceive the hearts of the simple-minded' by their devices. That passage was written from Corinth at a period when Paul was engaging in polemics with the Corinthian agitators. Paul was subtly accusing those Corinthian agitators of engaging in dishonest flattery (Rom. 16.18), an accusation that some in Corinth may have made against Paul. See Marshall, *Enmity*, 281-325.

⁸⁵ Marshall, *Enmity*, 309.

⁸⁶ Note the view of J. Munck that Paul's support of the Collection is a part of 'his intention to save the Jews by making them jealous of the Gentiles'. *Salvation*, 303.

time of Titus' visit. In 2 Cor. 1-9 Paul revokes the accusations of inconsistency that have been repeatedly levelled at him. He does so with counter-suggestions that the rivals in 2 Corinthians more aptly fit the stereotype of flattering mendicant, that it is they who 'peddle the word of God' (2 Cor. 2.17), they who come armed with letters of commendation (2 Cor. 3.1b), who have practised cunning (2 Cor. 4.2), and ultimately, in 2 Cor. 10-13, they who stand condemned as 'false apostles, deceitful workers', deceiving by merely masquerading as apostles of Christ. By 2 Cor. 10-13 Paul's attacks are devoid of subtlety – the battle for the hearts and minds of the Corinthians is at its most furious and the opponents are sarcastically touted as 'super-apostles' (2 Cor. 12.11).

The process of a painful, corrective visit (2 Cor. 2.1) and a sorrowful letter (2 Cor. 2.3) reveal deteriorating relations. There are, as Thrall demonstrates at length,⁸⁷ other interpretations of this chronology, but the most convincing argument is for a rapid reduction in cordiality between 1 Corinthians and the Painful Visit. The planned visit of 1 Cor. 16.5 did not fulfil Paul's expectations, and Paul underwent some unexpected and humiliating experience while he was there.

Paul and his audience share knowledge of the events that took place, and any attempt to ascertain what these were by a third party is conjectural. What can be ascertained is the impact those undisclosed events had on Paul. Paul experienced great pain at the event (2 Cor. 2.5), and, because this pain resulted in worsening relations between Paul and the Corinthians, the entire pastoral relationship has suffered. Convolutionally,⁸⁸ Paul explains that, because his happiness depended to such a great degree on the happiness he experienced in relating to the Corinthians

⁸⁷ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 49-74.

⁸⁸ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 165.

(2 Cor. 2.3), the return possibility of bestowing further happiness is lost. It is a tortuous argument, but it is a challenge to the Corinthians to ensure that the matter, now rectified (2 Cor. 2.6), does not recur.

The lost harsh letter, Sampley's Letter C, has in the interim ensured that the matter is finalized. It has been a stern letter, presumably stipulating some form of punishment for the perpetrator of Paul's pain, but the punishment has now achieved its aim, and does not need to continue further (2 Cor. 2.7-10, 7.9-12). The matter, unlike that of 1 Cor. 5.1-7, is now closed, as far as Paul is concerned.

Another matter is looming: there is a tendency amongst scholars to downplay the extent to which Paul has foreseen the issue. It is possible that the matter is already in Paul's thoughts as he refers to 'cunning' and 'falsification' at 2 Cor. 4.2b. If this is the case then 'those who are perishing' (2 Cor. 4.3b) refers to subversive elements ostensibly *within* the faith community, not those outside. These concerns are introduced with heavy sarcasm at 2 Cor. 3.1b, where Paul makes acid reference to 'some' who approach the Corinthians with letters of reference. The depth of Paul's feeling is underestimated when Sampley writes, 'When [Paul] wrote 2 Corinthians 1-9, intruders were of little consequence. They had come to Corinth with their letters of commendation (3:1-3), but Paul does not treat them as a major problem'.⁸⁹ Georgi⁹⁰ has noted the extent to which Paul is undermining his opponents at this point, though Georgi's emphasis on Paul's frequent use of the verb *sunista/nw*⁹¹ as indicating pneumatic enthusiasm on the part of the opponents is conjectural. Nevertheless the consistent use of the verb through 2 Cor. 3 and 4, and its reappearance in 2 Cor 10-13, suggests that this matter of

⁸⁹ Sampley. "Second Letter", 14.

⁹⁰ D. Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 242-245.

⁹¹ 2 Cor. 3.1, 4.2, 5.12, 6.4, 7.11, 10.12, 10.18 (x 2), 12.11.

opponents and their self-promotion is a major concern of Paul from the time of 2 Cor. 1-9 to the conclusion of the correspondence at 2 Cor. 13.13.

The interferers' destructive impact is lethal by the time Paul writes 2 Cor. 10-13. So severe is Paul's response that some commentators have considered chapters 10-13 to be the Painful Letter referred to at 2 Cor. 2.4 and 7.8. There are a number of bases on which chapters 10-13 might be understood to be the earlier letter. Thrall outlines the arguments, and there is no need to revisit them in depth.⁹² The most telling argument against this theory is simply that the 'Painful Letter' was concerned with only one issue, whereas chapters 10-13 addresses several. At 2 Cor. 2.9 Paul tells his audience that he wrote the painful letter for a single reason, 'to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything'; while this does not preclude there being more than one subject addressed in the letter, the matter is made clear at 2 Cor. 7.11, where only one matter is addressed.⁹³ 2 Cor. 7.11b makes it quite clear that the Painful Letter referred to in the preceding verses addressed one issue only: 'At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter'. The word *pra/gmati*, here translated as 'matter', describes a single deed;⁹⁴ that deed has been rectified and the perpetrator adequately punished.

Titus had reported favourably on the overall state of the Corinthian faith community (2 Cor 7.7, 13)⁹⁵ but the presence of the nameless⁹⁶ agitators is known to Paul (2 Cor. 3.1). The impact of the agitators may not have been a part of Titus' observation, but the implications of their arrival are not lost on Paul. By the time of the fifth letter, 2 Cor. 10-13, it is clear that the

⁹² For full details see Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 13-18.

⁹³ Further indicators that 10-13 is a later letter are addressed by Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 18-20.

⁹⁴ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 495. Thrall's suggestion that the misdemeanour addressed was an act of financial duplicity (68-69) though speculative, has merit.

⁹⁵ Perhaps late in March of 56 CE. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 77.

⁹⁶ Marshall, *Enmity*, 341-348.

apostle's fears are realized. The agitators have adopted a new tactic, accusing Paul of uninspiring personality and presence inappropriate for an apostle of Christ (2 Cor. 10.10).

Paul is forced to heighten his antagonistic rhetoric. Previously he has refused to 'wage war according to human standards' (2 Cor. 10.3b) but now he has no choice. Previously he has downplayed his rhetorical weaponry, relying instead on spiritual resources (2 Cor. 10.4). Now, despite his previous claims of spiritual reliance, he will add rhetorical skill to his arsenal (2 Cor. 10.8). The common thread of accusations against Paul suggests that the same agitators have subverted Paul's relationship with and mission amongst the Corinthians from the very start, but he has underestimated the impact that their presence in Corinth will have on their subversion of his influence.

Paul has overestimated the Corinthians' loyalty to him (2 Cor. 12.11). They have failed to be loyal, and Paul turns to the Fool's Speech as a final and rearguard action to reclaim the attention and loyalty of his audience. Having done so he sets down plans to come to them in person once again (2 Cor. 13.1-10), and only then allows words of encouragement and blessing to close his letter. It can only be assumed that either his letter or his subsequent arrest served to win over the hearts of the Corinthians and maintain for posterity his impassioned correspondence.

Throughout the Corinthian correspondence the changes in Paul's connection can be charted, as outlined in Chapter Three below. Broadly speaking, though, it can be suggested that there is deterioration in relations, with the exception of a brief interlude of warmth following the visit of Titus and charted in 2 Cor. 1-9. Paul generates an increasing tone of authority, tempered with joy in 1 Corinthians 1-9, but undisguised in the final extant letter.

5. Romans

a. Introduction

Murphy-O'Connor hypothesizes the date of Paul's Corinthian sojourn as the winter of 55-56 CE,⁹⁷ but it is difficult to be more confident than to propose that Romans was written from Corinth during Paul's final sojourn there.⁹⁸ That period can be placed between 54 and 59 CE. It is not possible to be more accurate in dating Romans: scholars have proposed a number of dates ranging from 51 to 59 CE.⁹⁹ A similar question is the place of Romans within the sequence of Pauline writings. There have been many hypotheses,¹⁰⁰ but Dunn's caution should be noted: 'the more detailed questions of precise *date* and place of *origin* are of comparatively less importance, [than those of the setting within Paul's life and work] since little hangs on them for purposes of exegesis'.¹⁰¹

Romans therefore dates from the middle to late stages of Paul's epistolary ministry, and although attempts to treat it as a dispassionate compendium of Pauline thought were partially¹⁰² misguided, it is his most extended document to survive, and for that reason provides a vital pointer to his thought. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome he was writing to a faith community he had neither visited nor evangelized in person, an exercise that he had not previously undertaken. When Paul wrote to Rome, having formulated plans to visit, he almost

⁹⁷ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 31.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Jewett, *Romans*, 21-22. Few scholars place the writing site outside Corinth. Exceptions are noted by Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 85.

⁹⁹ '[M]id fifties of the first century'. Esler, *Conflict*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, xliii, and Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 87, provide references.

¹⁰¹ Dunn, *Romans*, xliii. Italics in original.

¹⁰² See P.J. Achtemeier, "Unsearchable Judgments and Inscrutable Ways", in Johnson and Hay, *Looking Back, Pressing On*, 9-13, or Dunn's observation that Romans is 'one letter of Paul's which is less caught in the flux and developing discourse of Paul with his churches than the others'. *Theology*, 25.

certainly did so from Corinth. Prisca and Aquila had returned to Rome (Rom. 16.3),¹⁰³ and Paul had means by which to receive a profile of the Roman community and possibly personal introduction from close and mutually trusted friends when he reached the Imperial capital.¹⁰⁴

b. Reasons for Writing.

While the ‘reasons for Romans’ have been well documented by Wedderburn,¹⁰⁵ no list of reasons can be exhaustive, and some matters are more important than others for the purposes of this study. Many commentators have followed Marxsen¹⁰⁶ in seeing demographic change as the catalyst for Paul’s writing. Christians who were not Jewish were not affected by the edict of Claudius in approximately 49-50 CE,¹⁰⁷ and continued to practise and develop their faith in the city. When the edict expired on the death of Claudius in 54 CE the Jewish Christians returned to a vastly altered faith community¹⁰⁸ in a capital city of an Empire now ruled by Nero. The ascendancy of Gentile Christians may have led to the bitter divisions between strong and weak that Paul addresses in Rom. 14.1-15.6. While this is not the sole subject of the letter, it provided impetus for Paul’s decision to write. Paul assumes that his audience will enjoy familiarity with Hebrew narratives, suggesting that the presence of a Jewish tradition is still a significant element in the make-up of Roman Christianity.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ I see Rom. 16 as an integral part of the letter.

¹⁰⁴ J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33. New York: Doubleday, 1993), 60. The greetings to the Roman faith community are consistent in style with a letter written by an author not personally known to many of the audience members: see Jewett, *Romans*, 9.

¹⁰⁵ A. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

¹⁰⁶ W. Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 92-104.

¹⁰⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 18-19.

¹⁰⁸ Byrne, *Reckoning*, 11-12; D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 4-5; J. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33. New York: Doubleday, 1993), 31-33.

¹⁰⁹ A.A. Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) argues that Paul was writing to a Gentile congregation in Rome (1, 2, 264).

There is room for disagreement about the purpose of Paul's writing to the Romans. It is my position that, following misunderstandings and misrepresentations of his theology, Paul writes to the Roman Christians in order to establish a base for a planned westward mission. He is also, as Wright emphasizes,¹¹⁰ keen to create a contrast between the gospel of Christ and, effectively, the Imperial gospel of Caesar. It is this that Witherington is implying as he writes of group identity.¹¹¹ Wright¹¹² and Witherington¹¹³ have drawn reference to questions of group identity, an aspect of Paul's motivation that is beginning to receive serious consideration only in this century. A simple glance at the text of Romans reveals a number of presenting issues addressed by Paul. Nonetheless, while there is a situational aspect to Romans, there is not the same degree of sequential topicality as there is in 1 Corinthians. Still, a number of 'reasons' can be suggested for writing the document; – the analysis depends to some extent on an interpreter's understanding of the relationship between 'reason' and 'outcome'. L. Morris has listed no fewer than twelve reasons for Paul writing to the Roman Christians, together with their proponents.¹¹⁴ Only four need consideration at this point.

Firstly there have been sociological changes in the Roman faith community.¹¹⁵ The ethnicity¹¹⁶ of the community has changed from the earlier, predominately Jewish community of the Transiberium. The return of the Jewish Christians, now to be a minority group in Roman

¹¹⁰ Wright, "Romans – Introduction", 397-406.

¹¹¹ B. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 11.

¹¹² Wright, "Romans – Introduction", 397-406.

¹¹³ Witherington, *Romans*, 14-16.

¹¹⁴ See L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 8-17.

¹¹⁵ *Contra* Childs, *Canonical Shaping*, 171.

¹¹⁶ Esler notes of his study of Romans, 'A central concern of this reading of Romans is the issue of ethnic conflict'. *Conflict*, 40.

Christianity, generated tension that had not previously existed.¹¹⁷ Returning Jewish Christians were uneasy at the growth of a Torah-free ethos. By personally visiting the Romans Paul could, he hoped, set to rest misrepresentations and misunderstandings of his gospel and ethos – as he had already sought to do in Galatia and, more recently, Corinth. Echoes in Romans of his writings to those centres have been listed exhaustively by Fitzmyer,¹¹⁸ and are summarized by Witherington.¹¹⁹ Consequently Paul has to correct perceptions of antinomianism in his kerygma. Moo suggests¹²⁰ that the Roman faith community has become something of a microcosm of the wider church. It would be possible, if Paul were known only through his relationship with the ‘bewitchers’ of the Galatian correspondence (Gal. 3.1), to portray him as anti-no/moj. Clearly, if Paul is planning to go there, and even more if he is planning to use the capital as a base for his Iberian mission, these misrepresentations need to be put to rest. This does not necessarily imply that there was a ‘Judaizing party’ at Rome, whose position is represented by the imaginary interlocutor of Rom. 3.31, 6.1, 15, and 7.7-13,¹²¹ but that Paul was, from experience, well aware of the way his views could be misrepresented, and is establishing a right perspective from the start, before his arrival. For this reason more than any other Paul’s presentation in Romans is, as Childs notes, ‘the most universal, the least shaped by contingency influences, and with the widest scope of any of Paul’s letters’.¹²²

Secondly, Paul wants to ensure that the Roman faith community will be well disposed towards his plan for further missionary activity in Rome (despite the retraction of Rom. 1.12)

¹¹⁷ ‘It is likely that these returning Jewish Christians would have sought to regain their previous ascendancy and restore a life-style based on more traditionally Jewish lines. Resultant tension between the Jewish and Gentile elements would be the immediate cause or occasion of Paul’s letter’. B. Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1996), 12. See also Campbell, *Christian Identity*, 6-8.

¹¹⁸ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 71-73.

¹¹⁹ Witherington, *Romans*, 24-25.

¹²⁰ Moo, *Romans*, 20.

¹²¹ P. Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 8-9.

¹²² Childs, *Canonical Shaping*, 75.

and in the west (Rom. 15.24, 28). To this extent, Dodd was right to understand the letter to be a letter of self-presentation to ‘secure the sympathy of the church of Rome’¹²³ in preparation for the western mission.¹²⁴ Iberia represents new challenges. West of Rome the ethnic and linguistic make up of the empire differed vastly to that which he had experienced in the east: ‘Spain was a new world in which he would be the complete alien’.¹²⁵ It may have represented to Paul the westward ‘ends of the world’¹²⁶ to which he felt himself called to proclaim the gospel, the completion of a missionary arc across the centre of the known world.¹²⁷ This completion of a missionary vocation may, as Jewett suggests, represent in Paul’s thought a completion of the ‘offering of the Gentiles’ (Rom. 15.16), prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 66.20), by which a transformation of the human race is completed¹²⁸ and the barrier between ‘Greek and Jew’ definitively erased.¹²⁹

Jewett may have pressed too far in this direction in proposing Romans as representative of a genre of ambassadorial writing,¹³⁰ but the point remains that this alone of Paul’s letters is written to a location with which he is not familiar,¹³¹ and at which he appears to be laying groundwork for the future (Rom. 15.22-29). Later Jewett is to make this more clear: ‘The theological and parenetic arguments of the letter all serve this end, aiming at uniting the Roman

¹²³ C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), xxv.

¹²⁴ See also Jewett, *Romans*, 3, and L.E. Keck, *Romans* (ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 30.

¹²⁵ Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 362.

¹²⁶ G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), 52.

¹²⁷ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 872. Cf. R. Jewett, “Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission: Rom. 1:11-7 + 15:14 – 16:24”, in D.M. Hay and E.E. Johnson, eds., *Pauline Theology. Volume 3. Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 89-108 (89-97). Rom. 15.19 portrays an incomplete arc.

¹²⁸ Jewett, “Ecumenical Theology”, 89.

¹²⁹ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 867; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 712.

¹³⁰ R. Jewett, “Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter”, *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 5-20.

¹³¹ Note, though, the observation, ‘There is a good deal of evidence ... that Paul and the Roman Christian community knew a good deal about each other’. T.H. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Rhetoric of Romans* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 73.

house-churches so that such co-operation would be possible'.¹³² Sampley has suggested that Jewett may have narrowed the focus of Paul's purpose too far. More than merely the Iberian or Spanish mission is at stake as the apostle writes,¹³³ and it should be acknowledged that Paul was not without pastoral concern for the church in Rome itself.

A third concern is the need to counter the Imperial Cult. Paul's intended audience lives in the political, commercial and capital centre of the known world. This location was considered by Roman subjects to be the seat of Imperial justice; into this context Paul emphatically endorses and proclaims an alternative gospel of righteousness and justice (see Rom. 1.16-17).¹³⁴ Paul cannot but be aware that he is writing to the seat of the empire, and that he is by that fact issuing a challenge to Rome's and Caesar's Imperial claims. This constantly informs his choice of words and images. The opening of his letter pits his gospel-claims for the Messiahship of the Son-descended-from-David, whose claims to authority are declared by the resurrection event, against any other claims to authority, including those of the emperor. The site of his audience at the seat of Imperial power flavours all his critique of alternative claims to authority. Rom. 1.3-6, together with Rom. 15.12 and its citation of Isa. 11.10 (see also Ps. 72.8), underscore his Christology throughout the letter.¹³⁵ The Christian alternative to the gospel of Caesar does not deliberately or provocatively seek a clash with Roman authorities (Rom. 13.1-7), but where a clash of claim occurs, and the demands of Christ are pitted against the demands of Imperialism, the believer is to know whose theology she or he is under.

¹³² Jewett, "Ecumenical Theology", 90.

¹³³ J.P. Sampley, "Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett" (in Hay and Johnson, *Romans*, 109-119).

¹³⁴ '[T]he announcement of one whose rule posed a challenge to all other rulers'. N.T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans", *NIB*, volume 10 (2002): 393-770 (415-416). See also Wright, "Paul's Gospel", 170-173.

¹³⁵ Wright, "Paul's Gospel", 169.

Paul omits issues from his letter that do not need to be addressed at that time, such as eschatology¹³⁶ and church order. He addresses issues on which he may already have been misrepresented to the Romans, or issues on which he is aware there is division between Roman factions.¹³⁷ He is very aware that his gospel is open to misrepresentation, and is particularly aware that his forthcoming reception in Jerusalem, at least as much as the proposed later reception in Rome, is fraught with the risk of misunderstanding.

Finally, one of Paul's own statements of purpose in writing, to seek the prayers of the Roman faith community, should not be taken lightly. As he faced his journey to Jerusalem he was aware of dangers, and as he faced a subsequent missionary journey to Spain he knew he was undertaking a task more difficult than any he had previously undertaken. To establish a base of prayer and practical support could not be underestimated in value.

Each of these matters is on Paul's mind as he writes to the Roman Christians. The matters inevitably affect the way he expresses himself and the words he uses to do so. Solicitation of prayer or presentation of credentials to an audience will require a less belligerent tone than the correction of perceived inappropriate life-style choices or of a misrepresentation of Paul's teaching. There will be changes of tone within passages of the letter, but an over-all linguistic tenor as well. Romans, because it is written to an audience and location with which Paul is not wholly familiar, betrays a different, more cautious sense of connectivity between author and audience, and reveals Paul in a less hierarchical author/audience relationship than in his other letters. This question will be addressed more fully in Chapter Three.

¹³⁶ However, his world view is informed always by a sense of apocalyptic.

¹³⁷ 'Romans is a speech of exhortation in written form which Paul addressed to Roman Christians to convince them (or remind them) of the truth of *his* version of the gospel'. D. Aune, "Romans as *Logos Protrepitkos*" in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 278-279. Italics in original.

6. **Philippians**

a. **Introduction**

As Paul writes to the Philippians he is engaging in neither reminiscence nor reminder, except insofar as it helps him address the specific aims of the letter. Consequently hints of the history of the faith community are few and far between, and the temptation is to flesh out these few hints by means of the Lukan narrative of Acts 16. This temptation is all the stronger as a result of Luke's sudden shift into a first person plural as he recounts events at Philippi,¹³⁸ or in Macedonia, for his audience. But as with all corroboration of Paul's facts from Luke's later, stylized narrative it is essential that Paul be permitted the first word and highest priority.

Paul does reveal some sketchy details of the history and present circumstances of the Philippian Christians as he writes. He remembers the Philippians' story in order to inform his prayers for them, and writes, at least in part, to reassure them of his prayers (Phil. 1.3-4). He describes the Philippians' encounter with the gospel as 'the first day' (Phil. 1.5), a revealing insight into his missiological self-understanding, ecclesiology, and symbolic narrative.

Paul's praise for the Philippians indicates that he has experienced nothing but on-going support and encouragement from them during his years of missionary endeavour. While in the NRSV the second clause of Phil. 1.7 is translated as 'because you hold me in your heart', it is rendered more accurately as 'because I hold you in my heart'.¹³⁹ Nevertheless there is little

¹³⁸ For a critique of the issues, see W.S. Campbell, *The "We" Passages in the Acts of the Apostles: The Narrator as Narrative Character* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007).

¹³⁹ So NIV; K. Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians* (fortieth anniversary edition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 18; B. Thurston and J.M. Ryan, *Philippians & Philemon* (SP 10. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2005), 50; G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 90; M. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC. London: A&C Black, 1997), 63; P.T. O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians* (NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 68; *contra* G. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43. Waco: Word Books,

doubt that the reciprocal is also true, for the Philippians have shown support for Paul's mission in every possible way since his first departure from them (Phil. 1.19, 2.12, 4.9, 4.15-16), and Paul has been effusive in his praise of the Philippians when writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8.1, 9.2, 9.4). The generosity has not been achieved in circumstances of ease, for they have suffered and are continuing to suffer for the gospel (Phil. 1.28-30, 2.16, 3.17 – 4.1).

The cause of their suffering is likely to have been their adherence to and proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus. While this is simply a *sine qua non* of the Pauline gospel, and was bound to generate a clash of narratives in every centre of proclamation, there are elements in the nature of Philippi as a city that make the clash all the more inescapable.

b. Reasons for Writing

Any need for mirror-reading Philippians is made superfluous by Paul's own epistolary devices. At Phil. 1.12 Paul establishes his primary reason for writing, opening emphatically with the formulaic disclosure clause 'I want you to know...' Whenever Paul uses this formula he is formally indicating a paramount concern,¹⁴⁰ in this case the despatch to the Philippians of information about his state of mind, health and other circumstances. This may be in response to enquiries sent *via* Epaphroditus after his well-being. Answer to these enquiries has been delayed, and the enquirers' concerns exacerbated, by Epaphroditus' ill-health.

1983), 22-23, who argues in support of the NEB translation, and, tentatively, M. Hooker, "The Letter to the Philippians", *NIB*, volume 11 (2000): 467-549 (484). S.E. Fowl, *Philippians* (THNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 29, n. 18, notes the argument has effectively been sealed by J.T. Reed, "The Infinitive with Two Substantial Adjectives: An Ambiguous Construction?", *NovT* 33 (1991): 1-27; see also J.T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (JSNTSup 136. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 387.

¹⁴⁰ See also Rom. 1.13, Gal. 1.11. See also 1 Cor. 10.1, 12.1, 2 Cor. 1.8, 1 Thess. 4.13.

All other reasons for writing are secondary, but Paul addresses them in passing. Having reassured his audience of his own peace of mind and well-being, he is moved to remind the Philippians that their own experience of persecution is an essential corollary of their call: ‘you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents’ (Phil. 1.27-28).

The *Carmen Christi* (Phil. 2.6-11), whether Pauline in origin or not, is an essential part of the letter. It is designed as exemplification *par excellence* of the call to humility that precedes it (Phil. 2.2-4). This is intrinsically related to Paul’s central call to ‘single-mindedness’, the concept he conveys with the verb *frone/w* (ten times in Philippians). *Frone/w* is a verb highly dependent on its context for its meaning,¹⁴¹ but is a favourite of Paul, used more frequently in Philippians than any other letter. He has introduced the theme at Phil. 1.7, but in that context the meaning is little more than the neutral ‘think of’, clumsily translatable as ‘be minded of’. Paul does not use words lightly, and though the verb is neutral in its first context it is to be imbued with more weight as the letter goes on. At Phil. 2.2, therefore, he asks the audience to be ‘minded as he is’, and, at Phil. 2.5, to be minded as Christ is. The two are synonymous, for to Paul his own apostolic ‘mindedness’ and that of Christ are one and the same; Gal. 2.20 is not a passing boast¹⁴² but fundamental Pauline theological anthropology.¹⁴³

The *Carmen Christi* is illustration of the path to ‘Christ-mindedness’, the outcome of which is ‘standing firm in one spirit’ (Phil. 1.27), unity of purpose. It is not necessary to assume by Paul’s focus on unity that the Philippians had become fragmented or factionalized. There is

¹⁴¹ O’Brien, *Philippians*, 66.

¹⁴² G. Theissen refers to this as ‘religious reattribution’. *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 36.

¹⁴³ Or pneumatology, for it is by the Spirit that the unity of believer and Christ is made possible (1 Cor. 2.12, 6.17).

clearly some disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche, but the passing reference to it and appeal to reconciliation does not appear to carry the weight of Paul's concerns at the disunity of the Corinthians.

A more persistent concern appears to be the persecution the Philippians are suffering. The *Carmen Christi* leads into an appeal summarized by the verb ε)πε/χω, translated by the NRSV translators as 'holding fast' (Phil. 2.16). The verb is used, unusually, in its transitive form at this point,¹⁴⁴ referring to the 'word of life' as its object: 'hold fast to the word of life'. Paul has established a general theme of eschatological tenacity since Phil. 1.6, and this, rather than missionary endeavour,¹⁴⁵ is his focus. To 'hold fast' in the midst of suffering, the state common to both author and audience (Phil. 1.7), is the primary evangelistic act, as Paul has himself experienced (Phil. 1.12) and expects to continue to experience (Phil. 3.10).

There are other concerns, but they are secondary to these major concerns of 'mindedness' and steadfastness. They are secondary, but not unrelated. Paul knows from the bitter divisions of Corinth that disagreements between personnel, such as the one he has been made aware of between Euodia and Syntyche, need to be addressed before they become major factional disruptions. On the other hand, if the audience 'hold fast' to the gospel in the face of persecution, then they are unlikely to have room for disagreements or for power plays.

Paul may also be aware of the potential for theological disruption from 'circumcizing parties', arguably inspiring the vitriolic outburst of Phil. 3.2. There is, however, no evidence of a Jewish community in Philippi, and, while law-observant Christians need not have been located only in communities with a synagogue, there is no contextual reason at this point to

¹⁴⁴ Contrast Lk. 14.7, Acts 3.5, 19.22, 1 Tim. 4.16.

¹⁴⁵ For arguments see O'Brien, *Philippians*, 297.

superimpose the Galatian crisis on Philippi. There is no evidence that the threat of law-imposition is present in Philippi, merely recognition from past experience that opposition to the gospel can surface rapidly and powerfully.

Most commentators have associated the outburst of Phil. 3.2 with the threat of a single group¹⁴⁶ of law-observant interferers. O'Brien, for example, moves from a generalized 'opponents who as yet had not made serious inroads into the life of the congregation' to 'the apostle's biting irony might designate Jews, Judaizing Christians, or Gentile proselytes circumcised later in life'.¹⁴⁷ He does so on the basis of the terms *ku/na j* (dogs), *kakou\j e) rga/ta j* (evil doers), *katatomh/n* (mutilators of the flesh), noting that the three terms are 'inversions of Jewish boasts'.¹⁴⁸ Despite O'Brien's association of the three terms with Christian missionary endeavour and experience,¹⁴⁹ there is no need to limit the words to this catchment. The *Didache*, it is true, uses the term 'dogs' of the unbaptized (*Didache* 9.5), but the *Didache* is written a decade or more after Paul's last letters,¹⁵⁰ representing a more advanced (or degenerated) level of vitriol. The usage of the Syrophoenician woman at Mk. 7.28 (Mt. 15.27) is in a dialogue purporting to be derogatory of the Gentile community, the dogs who effectively eat the crumbs beneath the soteriological table, and is a context in which the 'dogs' are the beneficiaries of the exchange between Jesus and the woman. These 'dogs' are the same Gentile community that is Paul's mission field. The terms are generalized epithets of

¹⁴⁶ Fowl, *Philippians*, 145.

¹⁴⁷ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 354.

¹⁴⁸ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 354.

¹⁴⁹ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 354-357.

¹⁵⁰ Scholarly opinions on the date range from 60 CE to late in the second century.

contempt,¹⁵¹ and their referent need not be limited to perpetrators of the act of circumcision but to perpetrators of all acts of mutilation and torture.

Fowl offers a more nuanced version of this interpretation by suggesting that Paul is ‘not referring to any particular group of Judaizers’ but ‘making use of the Judaizers as a sort of stock character’.¹⁵² He offers the added possibilities that the audience may be tempted to succumb to circumcision in order to identify with an accepted religious group within the Empire. Even this may be too nuanced: the ‘mutilating dogs’ may include circumcizers, but may include also all who oppress the Pauline Christian community with physical violence.

¹⁵¹ Fowl, *Philippians*, 145: ‘As this seems to be a fairly common form of insult, we cannot really read behind it for any insight as to whom in particular Paul might have in mind’.

¹⁵² Fowl, *Philippians*, 146.

There have rarely been any serious questions about the Pauline authorship of Philippians.¹⁵³ There are some linguistic surprises: Paul does not use the *swth/r*-group of nouns and verbs familiar from the remainder of his writings, and refers only occasionally to *xa/rij* (but see Phil. 1.7) or *di/kaioj* (but see Phil. 3.9). Fee has noted 42 *hapax legomena* and 34 Pauline *hapaxes*.¹⁵⁴ What this suggests is not pseudonymous authorship, but that circumstances are very different as Paul writes to the Philippians. This again confirms Beker's emphasis on contingencies as the hermeneutical key to Paul. Steadfastness, suffering and joy are the themes of Philippians; the soteriological arguments of Galatians and Corinthians or even Romans are not to be seen because they are accepted 'givens' between author and audience at Philippi.

There is some question regarding the literary integrity of the letter. The aggressive outbursts denigrating the outsider at Phil. 3.2 are one point at which composite or partition theories find a basis for argument, but a soteriological analysis needs to be cautious before dismissing the passages as an editorial interpolation or as a temporary Pauline lapse imported from a second letter. There is a degree of thematic parallelism between the two sections,¹⁵⁵ and,

¹⁵³ Exceptions being Baur (*Paul*, volume 2, 45-79), and the statistical survey of A.Q. Morton and J. McClellan, *Christianity in the Computer Age* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). An unusually high degree of confirmation of the detail surrounding the letter is available from Acts. There is a great deal of credible self-disclosure and description of the author's circumstances (Phil. 1.18-24) and personnel networks (Phil. 2.19-24). The letter is full of specialist Pauline vocabulary, and with ideas and allusions that are characteristically Pauline. See Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xxvii – xxix; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 9-10.

¹⁵⁴ G.D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 18-19.

¹⁵⁵ Joy, for example, a key theme in the epistle as a whole, is mentioned only once as a noun in the section Phil 3.2 – 4.3, at 4.1, and not at all as a verb. By contrast it appears either as a noun four times (Phil. 1.4, 1.25, 2.2, 2.29) or as a verb a further six times (Phil. 1.18, 2.17, 2.18, 2.28, 3.1, 4.10) in the sections Phil 1.1 – 3.2, 4.2 – end. The theme of 'single-mindedness' occurs more evenly through the letter's two purported sections (Phil. 1.27, 2.2, 2.5, 4.7, and 3.15, 3.19, 4.2). The presence of these thematic parallels indicate nothing more than that they were themes and issues that exercised Paul's mind during the period the letter or letters were written, and, as there is little suggestion that any composite parts were far removed from each other chronologically, this is hardly surprising.

in any case, a clumsy editorial seam is less likely than a clumsy authorial transition.¹⁵⁶ I will treat the ‘finally’ of Phil. 3.1 as the conclusion of a train of Pauline thought, allowing a momentary shift to swift vitriolic condemnation of those who are persecuting or distorting the gospel, before resumption of his argument.

There remains some question as to where Paul was when he wrote to the Philippians. Tradition has favoured Rome as the site, but arguments have been proposed for Ephesus, Caesarea and Corinth.¹⁵⁷ There are strong indications from the letter itself that Paul has in mind the Roman Praetorium (Phil. 1.13, 4.22) when he refers to his guard and to the household of Caesar, for, while another military location is just possible, the dramatic effect of the gospel is heightened if the conversions Paul has initiated and the support he has received have come right from the geographical and administrative heart of the narrative of a rival Lord, the Caesar of Rome. If this is the case then it is possible that Paul was writing as late as 62 CE.¹⁵⁸

7. Conclusion

Paul’s letters are highly topical and more often than not polemical and rhetorical devices written in the heat of establishing an apocalyptic religious movement. They are weighted by the

¹⁵⁶ The intensity of debate is apparent in the incompatible positions of F.F. Bruce and R. Pesch on the timing of the purported Letter B, Phil. 3.2 – 4.3; this indicates the high degree of hermeneutical ambivalence. See F.F. Bruce, “St Paul in Macedonia: 3. The Philippian Correspondence”, *BJRL* 63 (1981): 260-284, and R. Pesch, *Paulus und seine Lieblingsgemeinde: Paulus – neu gesehen: Drei Briefe an die Heiligen von Philippi* (Freiburg: Herder, 1985) 25-58.

¹⁵⁷ For a succinct summary of the arguments, see Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians*, 28-30. The main argument for a site other than Rome is the distance between Rome and Philippi, a journey of some 1300 kilometres. Collange, who sees Philippians as a montage of three separate letters, has argued for as many as five exchanges between the author’s location and Philippi, each journey taking ‘four to five weeks’. See J.-F. Collange, *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians* (London: Epworth, 1979), 16. For his complete argument, see 15-17. Bockmuehl has noted it is unlikely that so many exchanges were needed, and the journey was possible and often achieved in the time available – trips of up to 80 kilometres by horse or as much as 50 kms per day on foot were possible. There were also good sea connections, with a trip from Corinth to Dicaearchia (modern Pozzuoli, by Naples), needing only five days in exceptional circumstances (see Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 31).

¹⁵⁸ Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 33.

needs of the moment, and by the demands of rhetoric, the demands of winning arguments that were, in Paul's view, struggles for the credibility of the gospel. The fact that they were, outside Paul's wildest imaginings, canonized and made available to posterity nearly 2000 years later means that they bear a hermeneutical burden unintended by their author. The fact that they have survived may indicate that Paul's powerful rhetoric did win the day; the only other canonical reference to Paul's writings, at 2 Peter 3.16, indicates that they soon came to be treated with wry respect. It is equally possible that Paul's martyrdom won him respect, and that event served to achieve the end his rhetoric never could: establishment of Paul's interpretation of the gospel as the *lingua franca* of theological and missiological discourse.

A twenty-first century hermeneutic that fails to take into consideration the volatile climate of Paul's writing does him a grave injustice. In the remainder of this study I will give Paul's contingent circumstances foremost consideration in any missiological and soteriological statement that he makes. If he shows signs of an inclusive soteriological attitude to those outside the faith community or outside the boundaries of his kerygmatic teachings, then that becomes a weighty observation indeed. If he is dismissive of opponents in the context of acidic debate, less soteriological significance can be attributed to the statements.

At the conclusion of this introductory survey it is possible to make some preliminary observations about the levels of 'connection' or 'connectivity' Paul feels with his intended audiences. 'Connectivity' does not follow chronology, for the audiences with which Paul appears to rely on the greatest rapport are chronologically the first and last of his audiences, the Thessalonians and Philippians respectively. The Galatians are the audience to whom he directs the greatest frustration, while the relation between Paul and the Corinthian faith community appears to disintegrate during that correspondence. In writing to the Romans Paul appears

formal and respectful, but without indication of warm personal knowledge of any except those greeted in the closing sentences. These observations can be made tentatively at this stage, but will be explored in greater detail later. It will be necessary to see if there are ways of quantifying the changing moods¹⁵⁹ of connectivity – referred to here as ‘rapport’, ‘frustration’, ‘formal and respectful’, and if there are ways to quantify the disintegration in relations between Paul and his Corinthians audience. These themes will be addressed particularly as I measure indications of ‘Being In’ in Chapter Three, below.

¹⁵⁹ See Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 264.

Chapter 2: Getting In

Introduction

Paul's view of the world presupposes that his audience have experienced a change in state, from un- or non-believing to believing. They have experienced a change: statements such as 'Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth' (1 Cor. 1.26) or 'even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way' (2 Cor. 5.16) presuppose that there has been a change in state, a change in perspective, a crossing of boundaries from unknowing to knowing Christ, or from unbelief to belief.

In this chapter, then, it is necessary to consider how Paul envisages that change occurring. We are presented with an argument from silence. The change has already occurred, so the extant letters are not evangelical tracts eliciting that change. Paul's kerygmatic work has already achieved that end, and we are not privy to the content of that proclamation because it is already a part of the shared narrative between author and audience. On the other hand, we do see retrospective glimpses of it, most powerfully at 1 Cor. 15.1-11. It is one of few significant recitations of or even allusions to Paul's original message, presented as a reminder, and as such can be reproduced here in full:

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and

that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Some matters raised in this recapitulation, by Paul, of his kerygma are not germane to this study: Paul for example has in his proclamation and this reiteration of it seen it to be important to establish his apostolic credentials ‘as one untimely born’. This is a matter important in his transactions with the audience, but does not impinge on our study of boundary crossing. On the other hand, Paul constantly returns to his apostolic credentials (Rom. 1.1), not, we can assume, in a process of self-aggrandizement (1 Cor. 1.13b), but to emphasize the divine authentication of his message. However the dying of Christ ‘for our sins’, the accord of that event ‘with the scriptures’, the physical death and burial, and third-day resurrection: these are clearly matters that have been central to Paul’s proclamation, and are re-established as agreed common ground between author and audience. Paul does not enlarge on them, but self-consciously restates them:¹ these are the agreed matters that are the basis of communication between author and audience. Proclamation of these matters led to the audience ‘believing’: ‘so we proclaim and so you

¹ For a useful exploration of some of the christological problems raised by this passage, see G. O’Collins, *The Easter Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 1-17.

have come to believe'. Believing, as distinct to not believing, is the point of boundary crossing, what Dunn refers to as 'a step across a chasm'.²

1. Baptism

Baptism is not that step. Paul has surprisingly little to say about baptism. There are more than 45 verses referring to 'believing' in the uncontested Pauline letters, but only ten references to baptism.³ We will note in this chapter the significance of that disparity, but first reference must be made to Paul's mention and treatment of baptism.

As part of a didactic passage in Romans Paul asks the rhetorical question 'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?' (Rom. 6.3). The construction has generally been taken by commentators to presuppose agreement between author and audience, but Jewett suggests that the wording of the question indicates that this association of baptism and the death of Christ is new to at least some of the audience.⁴ Nevertheless the belief that baptism is baptism *into* Christ is not new, and, chronologically speaking, has appeared earlier in the didactic Corinthian correspondence⁵ and at Gal. 3.27.⁶ The association of the rite with cleansing is an obvious visual association,⁷ to which Hebrew Scriptural texts witness.⁸ The association with the death and resurrection of Christ is more metaphorical, stemming at least in part

² Dunn, *Theology*, 324.

³ Rom. 6.3 (x 2), also 6.4 as a noun; 1 Cor. 1.13-17 (x 4), 10.2, 13.13, 15.29, also as a noun; Gal. 3.27. I am not including references such as Phil. 2.5-11 or 2 Cor. 1.22. See also L. Hartman, '*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus*': *Baptism in the Early Church* (SNTW. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 52-53.

⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 396.

⁵ However in the constructions of 1 Cor. 1.13-17, and as a Mosaic parallel at 1 Cor. 10.2, he uses the formula 'baptised in(to) the name of'. See also, e.g., Acts 2.38.

⁶ Incorrectly cited as Gal. 3.37 by Jewett, *Romans*, 397.

⁷ See, e.g., G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: MacMillan, 1962), 3: 'There is good ground for believing that the efficacy of water to cleanse religiously was originally conceived of in a highly realistic manner'.

⁸ See, e.g., Lev. 8.6, 14.9, 15.13, 15.16, 15.18, 16.4, 16.24, 16.27-28, 22.6; Num. 17.7-8.

from the visual appearance of entering a place and emerging from it, dying and rising.⁹ It has been noted, too, that Paul carefully disassociates the resurrection of Christ as past event from the present experience of believers: the resurrection of believers remains a future experience (Rom. 6.5).¹⁰ Neither does Paul at this point in his correspondence with the Romans greatly develop these images along the line of a sacramental theology, for the matter at hand is pastoral and behavioural: ‘do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies’ (Rom. 6.12). The fact that Paul makes a departure from formulae indicating baptism into a name may be ‘daring’,¹¹ but it does not tread ground unfamiliar to author or audience, and he sees no need to explore or explain the meaning of the formula.

At Gal. 3.26 the primary theological matter under consideration is faith: ‘those who believe are the descendants of Abraham’ (Gal. 3.7). In order to associate the believers’ incorporation into Christ with the typological faith of Abraham, Paul has first established their experience of the Spirit and miraculous spiritual manifestations as the lens through which the Abraham narrative must be considered (Gal. 3.2-4). Even before this, in what is presumably an arcane reference to his own proclamation of ‘Christ and him crucified’ along the lines of 1 Cor. 2.1, he has cited their initial encounter with his proclamation as the foundation of all their faith and experience: ‘It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!’ (Gal. 3.1b). That experience of hearing and receiving the kerygma is foundational. The ratification of it is pneumatic experience. The

⁹ O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (SBT 1. London: SCM, 1950), 13-14. The Nicodemus passage of John 3.1-21 demonstrates that in at least some traditions there were associations with the waters of birth as well.

¹⁰ O’Collins, *Easter Jesus*, 122.

¹¹ A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco-Roman Background* (WUNT 44. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), 57.

opposite and renunciation of pneumatic experience is fleshly behaviour, manifested in this case in the observation of rites additional to the kerygma. Baptism is introduced late in the argument effectively as a visual or a mnemonic aid. It may be precisely for the mnemonic value of the rite and the associated practice of 're-clothing' that Paul found the rite useful at all: As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ' (Gal. 3.27). Mention of this action is far less strategic in Paul's rhetoric than reference first to the audience's act of believing (Gal. 3.2) and resultant pneumatic experience.

At Corinth a vastly different manifestation of a similar theological problem arises: by splintering into factions the Corinthians are exhibiting fleshly behaviour (1 Cor. 1.10-17). Paul's initial rhetorical tactic is to downplay the significance of baptism in his mission (1 Cor. 1.14). Hartman correctly observes that Paul 'did not disregard baptism, but normally seems to have left others to perform it'.¹² His disinterest in the rite serves his rhetorical purpose well, contrasting the unimportance of the messenger with the critical importance of the message. It is the kerygma, not secondary rites that stem from encounter with and acceptance of it, that is the locus of power (1 Cor. 1.17). Paul does not separate the kerygma from its subject, does not separate gospel as he has proclaimed it from the Christ who is proclaimed.

Reference at 1 Cor. 10.2 is to 'the ancestors'' baptism into Moses, and need not detain us here. More significant is 1 Cor. 12.13, 'in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body'. The continuation of that verse, 'Jews or Greeks, slaves or free', suggests a common heritage with Gal. 3.27, which continues, famously, with its deconstruction of

¹² Hartman, *Into the Name*, 60.

ethnic and gender barriers in Christ in the following verse, Gal. 3.28. And in the Corinthian context Paul is again associating baptism with incorporation ‘into the body’ and ‘in one Spirit’.¹³ It should be noted again at this point that this process is inseparably associated with the experience of boundary-crossing or conversion.¹⁴ At this point the rite of baptism serves primarily as a vehicle within a metaphor describing the process of boundary crossing, and the signs of a successful crossing. The process is also one of entering into a new body, the body of Christ. Baptism itself serves as only one part of a two-part vehicle serving the metaphor: ‘drinking’ is no less important to Paul’s scheme. ‘Baptism’ becomes a metaphorical depiction of ‘becoming a part of’, just as ‘drinking’ becomes a metaphorical depiction of ‘receiving’, and both are secondary to the primary experience of ‘believing’, receiving the Spirit, which has been dominant since 1 Cor. 12.3. The paradoxical reference to faith at 1 Cor. 12.9 should not distract the audience from the dominant subtext: faith undergirds all the instructions Paul addresses to the Corinthians, faith as found in God (1 Cor. 10.15), faith as revealed in Paul at 1 Cor. 7.25, faith contrasted with ‘unfaith’ in the discussion of ‘unequally yoked’ marriage partners (1 Cor. 7. 1-16), faith as exemplified by Timothy at 1 Cor. 4.17, all the way back at least to 1 Cor. 4.2: ‘it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy’. Fidelity to the teachings that Paul has handed on is the hallmark of inclusion in Christ. If the Corinthians are adding to or subtracting from the kerygma, then they are deserting it (1 Cor. 4.6-7). If the Corinthians are deserting the behavioural roadmap established by their original

¹³ For a discussion of this passage see A.R. Cross, “Spirit- and Water-Baptism in 1 Corinthians 12.13”, in S.E. Porter and A.R. Cross, eds., *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies* (JSNTSup 234. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 120-148.

¹⁴ See Dunn, *Baptism*, 4.

evangelists (1 Cor. 3.5-9), then they risk changing the parameters of their belief back to mere ‘human wisdom’ (1 Cor. 2.5).

To understand 1 Cor. 12.13, then, it is necessary to know that this theme of ‘proof’ of the integrity and authenticity of the believers’ faith has never been far from the author’s mind. The proof of faith is the audience’s experience and knowledge of having received the Spirit (1 Cor. 2.4, cf. 1 John 3.24). All the behavioural instructions since have been addressing innovations, inappropriate behaviours and license that have demonstrated the Corinthians’ readiness to desert the initial experience of the Spirit. Baptism is relatively unimportant: behavioural indication that the believer is still at one with the teachings Paul received and handed on (1 Cor. 15.1) is essential.

Dunn has frequently warned against an eisegetical reading of Paul’s references to baptism.¹⁵ Paul does give weight to the rite of baptism (Rom. 6.3), but he avoids an *ex opere operato* understanding of the rite,¹⁶ by which the rite of baptism *in itself* achieves the end of salvation. He prefers instead to see the rite as a hallmark or re-enactment of all that has taken place as the believer is integrated into the saving, transforming death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6.3-4). In the earliest period of Christianity the elaborate preparation that came to be associated with baptism in later centuries did not exist, and should not be read into Gal. 3.26; the event of a convert’s baptism appears to have been almost spontaneous, at least in Luke’s narrative (Acts 2.41, 16.31-33).¹⁷ As Dunn notes, Paul ‘de-emphasizes’¹⁸ baptism in the Corinthian context, and it is an emphasis on the

¹⁵ Dunn, *Baptism, passim*. Dunn, *Theology*, 442-446.

¹⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 187.

¹⁷ For a summary of the transition from spontaneity to elaborate preparation, see Meeks, *Origins*, 92-96.

¹⁸ Dunn, *Theology*, 450.

regeneration by the Holy Spirit that comes about in the life of the baptized that undergirds a didactic observation such as 1 Cor. 12.13, ‘in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit’. Where baptism, possibly with rites of re-clothing, did take place it was a useful psychological play re-enacting¹⁹ what had occurred in the life of the believer. Dunn has canvassed the extent to which baptism is ‘read into’ hermeneutics of Paul’s conversion theology.²⁰

There is for Paul an inseparable link between baptism and ‘the believing acceptance of the gospel’.²¹ H. Ridderbos is careful to maintain a sequence of relationship between baptism and the death of Christ signified in baptism: ‘the death of Christ is not prolonged in baptism and brought to believers, but believers are in baptism brought to Christ’s death’.²² Starting from this point Ridderbos argues that baptism ‘has the important noetic significance of a personal confirmation and assurance of what once took place in a corporate sense in Christ’.²³ Paul avoids over-emphasising the rite so that baptism becomes a substitute for circumcision, a rite that, *ex opere operato*,²⁴ provides access to salvation divorced from the Christ-event. Baptism in Pauline thought is an acceptable means by which the believer expresses their appropriated belief in Christ and incorporation into Christ. In scholarly discussions of baptismal practice, the beginnings of theological reflection are clearly post-canonical, and certainly post-Pauline! A scholar such as E.C. Whittaker can therefore observe ‘Tertullian first in his *Treatise Concerning*

¹⁹ Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 227-228.

²⁰ See Dunn, *Theology*, 442, n. 1 for a list of loci which focus on baptism in Paul.

²¹ H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 406.

²² Ridderbos, *Paul*, 408.

²³ Ridderbos, *Paul*, 409.

²⁴ Or by a ‘magical’ operation. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 414.

Baptism, and then Hippolytus in *The Apostolic Tradition*, provide the two earliest full accounts which we possess of Christian initiation'.²⁵ A.T. Eastman notes the place of baptism in Paul's theological reflection, but rightly makes no observation about Paul's baptismal practice. He therefore engages in abstract observations that 'In Pauline literature baptism is variously described as a way of shedding pagan values and putting on Christ; as a form of adoption into sonship; as the reception of an inheritance; as a commitment to obedience, as well as a free act of grace; as incorporation into one body; as dying and rising with Christ; as a kind of rebirth'.²⁶ Sacramental theologian and historian A. Kavanagh notes 'Paul's theology of salvation reaches its high point in Romans 6.1-11',²⁷ but in doing so cites a passage in which Paul makes no reference to water-baptismal practice, but symbolic reference to 'baptism into death' (Rom. 6.4), an experience which may or may not involve the physical re-enactment of water rites. Jewett notes 'It is significant ... that Paul refers here not to baptism but to death'.²⁸ It is only from reflection on the death of Christ and believers' incorporation into that event that Paul moves forward to utilize baptismal practice as an illustration of his case.

Another historical sacramental theologian, H.A. Kelly, is more cautious. Kelly makes only minimal reference to texts that are undisputed Paulines, noting that while baptismal references in Romans, such as Rom. 13.12, have been cited as allusions to baptismal catechesis,²⁹ there is in fact little more than a relationship of 'inspiration', what

²⁵ E.C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1960), xiii.

²⁶ A.T. Eastman, *The Baptizing Community: Christian Initiation and the Local Congregation* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 12.

²⁷ A. Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (New York: Pueblo, 1978), 5.

²⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 395.

²⁹ See M.E. Boismard, "I Renounce Satan, His Poms, and His Works", in A. George, ed., *Baptism in the New Testament*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), 107-112.

might be called cross-fertilization, between the baptismal rites and Paul's writing.³⁰ Certainly it is to draw a long bow to find baptismal allusion at Rom. 13.12, where the primary metaphorical construction revolves around the journey from nightfall through night to a new day. Only after that metaphor is established does Paul make reference to re-clothing, and at Rom. 13.12, as at 1 Thess. 5.5-8, the imagery is of donning military armour, not baptismal garb.

What therefore Dunn has highlighted, in my view rightly, is that it is incumbent upon a biblical interpreter to read the text, rather than to read post-Hippolytan (or at best post-Pauline) baptismal theology into the text. There appears to be acknowledgement by Paul that baptism was a significant rite of inclusion into the faith-community, but a concern to understate its significance. Baptism provides a useful tool by which to mark and enact transition but may not be the transition itself. It provides a useful visual or mnemonic aid by which to discuss 'dying and rising with Christ', but is not in itself that death and resurrection. Profession of belief is the process of boundary crossing.

It may be that, where Paul does initially mention baptism in the Corinthian correspondence, his apparent confusion over his baptismal practice (1 Cor. 1.14, 16) is a tactical, feigned confusion³¹ to serve the rhetorical end of emphasizing the comparative unimportance of the baptismal rite: 'Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim' (1 Cor. 1.17a). Paul is not dismissing the importance of baptism,³² or his (to us obscure)

³⁰ See H.A. Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology and Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 25-28.

³¹ 'Paul here purports to eschew the values such comparisons are made on and presents himself, as good rhetors did, as an "anti-rhetor"'. Sumney, *Servants*, 57.

³² J.D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (SBT Second Series 15. London: SCM, 1970), 103.

argument at 1 Cor. 15.29 would collapse.³³ His emphasis is, however, on baptism as ‘only one element in the total complex event of becoming a Christian’.³⁴

Indeed, Paul’s emphatic concern to eradicate any mechanical association of cause and effect in the rites of Judaism makes it highly improbable that he would place comparable association on a rite of the new covenant.³⁵ He goes so far as to protect not only baptism but receipt of the Spirit in conversion from an over-realized eschatology.³⁶ aware of this risk Paul upsets the expected balance of the equation of Rom. 6.4 by balancing burial with Christ not with resurrection with Christ, as might be expected, but with continued and provisional walking in newness of life. The aorist subjunctive *peripath/somen* carries with it all the weight of provisionality, captured in the English translations ‘we should’ or ‘we might’ walk.³⁷

It is simply not appropriate to establish a full-blown doctrine of baptism on a reading of Paul. As a mnemonic, baptism has been, at times, useful to Paul. The experience of the Spirit, and fidelity to the behavioural instructions and the teachings that the Spirit has transmitted and that the audience has experienced through Paul’s proclamation, is the yardstick of ‘Being In’. Later in this study I will return to consider Paul’s use of that yardstick, because the process equal and opposite to ‘Getting In’ might well be ‘Lapsing Out’. In the meantime it is sufficient to say that, while for Paul boundary crossing or ‘Getting In’ is all important, baptism as such is no more than an

³³ On 1 Cor. 15.29 see Carter, “‘Big Men’”, 52, who suggests the opponents saw baptism as ‘a kind of magical insurance policy, which could be taken out on behalf of those who had died’.

³⁴ Dunn, *Baptism*, 104.

³⁵ Dunn, *Baptism*, 146.

³⁶ But see the warning of Sumney against scholarly over-inclination to find over-realized eschatology amongst Paul’s opponents. Sumney, *Servants*, 61.

³⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 366 n. 70, is one commentator who notes this grammatical detail. See also Dunn, *Baptism*, 143-144.

indication and re-enactment of that crossing. But it is important, too, to see why boundary crossing is necessary at all.

2. Baptism in the Spirit

If Paul allows a degree of rhetorical nonchalance to infiltrate his presentation of the importance of baptism (1 Cor. 14-16), he does no such thing in regard to his theology – soteriology, even – of reception of, or ‘baptism in’ the Spirit. That his audience has received the gift of God’s Spirit is often a presuppositional basis of his argument, particularly but not exclusively in the Corinthian correspondence.³⁸ He sarcastically reminds the Corinthians that he, too has the Spirit (1 Cor. 7.40): by implication, since it is this Spirit that led Paul to preach to the Corinthians, and this same Spirit that they received on coming to faith, then either their opposition to him is opposition to the Spirit of God, or their initial experience of faith was a counterfeit experience. 2 Cor. 3.17 serves the same rhetorical purpose. In the heat of the last Corinthian letter he issues the threat that his audience have succumbed to the influence of a ‘different spirit’ (2 Cor. 11.4).

When Paul speaks of the beginnings of an audience’s faith experience he offers no single formulaic pattern. To the Thessalonians, whose context of persecution requires encouragement, he offers a reminder of the joy with which they ‘received the word’ (1 Thess. 1.6, present again as a subtext at 1 Thess. 2.13). The Corinthian context of partisanship, perhaps originally linked to the experience of baptism (1 Cor. 1.10-17),

³⁸ 1 Thess. 4.8; Gal. 3.3; 1 Cor. 2.10, 9.11, 12.13; 2 Cor. 3.6, 4.13.

makes it all the more important that Paul diverts attention from baptism to reception and acceptance of Paul's kerygma (1 Cor. 1.17).³⁹

To the Galatians, where the ideological battleground is one of law and grace, he establishes links between baptism and a new start, echoing Hebrew scriptural images of re-clothing.⁴⁰ This imagery reappears at Rom. 13.14 (and in the deuterio-Paulines at Col. 3.10 and Eph. 4.24). Dunn notes that there is no necessary link with baptism in water, but with the reception of or possession by the Spirit, experiencing 'baptism in' the Spirit at conversion.⁴¹

It is the experience that Paul calls 'baptism in the Spirit' that is the litmus test of, and indeed result of, boundary crossing into the community of belief. This experience may or may not have been coterminous with the experience of baptism in water. It represents an indelible mark in the memory of the believer, and can therefore be cited confidently by Paul as being a sign of belonging or of having belonged to Christ. But in what way does that belonging alter the state of the believer?

3 . The State of Humanity

It is necessary to assess Paul's view of the state of humanity. To Paul, humankind, and perhaps all creation, is in a state of estrangement from its Creator, and therefore in a state in which it cannot meet its potential. Paul's primary short-hand terms for this state are *sa\rc*, usually translated 'flesh' (some 74 times in the undisputed Pauline letters), and *a(marti/a*, 'sin' (some 59 times, but 48 of these occurrences are in Romans). The

³⁹ See also 1 Thess. 1.5, 2.13; 1 Cor. 1.21, 2.4; 2 Cor. 2.17; Gal. 3.2; Rom. 1.16, 10.17, 15.18. On 1 Cor. 6.11, however, see Dunn, *Baptism*, 121.

⁴⁰ Reclotting: Isa. 61.10, Zech. 3.4. Possession by the Spirit: Judg. 6.34, 1 Chron. 12.18, 2 Chron. 24.20.

⁴¹ Dunn, *Baptism*, 110-111.

two terms are not synonymous, for ‘the flesh’ can be used by Paul in a more or less neutral manner (Rom. 11.4) and a manner highly laden with harmartiological meaning (Rom. 7.5, 14) within the same letter.

The relationship between flesh and sin is fluid. Dunn describes flesh as a realm in which sin can make its headquarters.⁴² When this happens, life is lived ‘according to the flesh’, according to the dictates of a fleshly world view, rather than according to the Spirit. Paul is not entirely systematic in his use of the terms: audience contingencies as well as his own circumstances shape his terminology, but generally life lived ‘according to the flesh’ is life lived in a manner inappropriate and unacceptable to God.

A ‘fleshly world view’ need not be expressed in stereotypical acts of sin: a fleshly world view, in the context of the pseudo-gospel being taught to the Galatians by Paul’s opponents, includes reliance on a mark literally in the flesh, circumcision, as a sign of belonging to God and to the family of believers under God (Gal. 6.12). This is therefore more than just ‘human frailty’,⁴³ and perhaps closer to ‘the environment in which human frailty holds sway’. A life lived according to the flesh *may* include a catena of wrongdoings (Gal. 5.19-20), incompatible with existence in the presence of God, but reliance on a fleshly sign of belonging is as unacceptable to God as a life lived in the exercise of blatantly inappropriate behaviour, including the sorts of behaviour listed as works of the flesh.

In general, then, ‘flesh’ is a realm of moral negativity. It differs to ‘body’ (though Paul is not always consistent: Rom. 8.13, 1 Cor. 10.18) in that Paul conceives of ‘the

⁴² Dunn, *Theology*, 67.

⁴³ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 546.

resurrection of the body' (1 Cor. 15.44) but could not conceive of the resurrection of the flesh. 'Body', *sw~ma*, is morally neutral,⁴⁴ so that the word denoting body can be applied with a highly positive value to the faith community as 'body of Christ' (e.g. Rom. 7.4, 1 Cor. 12.27). Following Robinson⁴⁵ and Dunn⁴⁶ we can affirm that *sw~ma* denotes existence within the world while *sa\rc* denotes life lived according to values of unregenerate humanity, the values of the world.

4. Boundary Crossing

In coming to 'belong to' or to be 'called of' Jesus Christ (Rom. 1.6) a 'transition'⁴⁷ has been made; there has been a boundary crossing⁴⁸ from the fleshly realm to that of the Spirit. The Spirit realm is only available to the believer in Christ, not to humanity in general or to creation in general.⁴⁹ The believer in Christ is both one who believes in Christ as the subject of their belief and one who believes within the space or realm made possible by the Spirit by whom or in whom Christ is known, the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8.9).

Whenever this message of transition from flesh to Spirit was proclaimed it was done with the intention of achieving this transitioning response in the life of the hearer (Rom. 10.14). It is also necessary at this point to note a significant sociological difference between Paul's site of writing to our own hermeneutical site, in so far as we approach and

⁴⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 71.

⁴⁵ J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (SBT 5. London: SCM, 1952), 25.

⁴⁶ Dunn, *Theology*, 72.

⁴⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 317-333.

⁴⁸ Nanos, *Irony*, 95; see also de Vos, *Church and Community*, 172, 174-175, 177, 226-228, 232, 277, 291; Meeks, *Origins*, 12, 69. Malina, "We and They", 609-610. E. M. Boring prefers the phrase 'voluntaristic transfer'. "The Language of Universal Salvation in Paul", *JBL* 105 (1986): 269-292 (290).

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 323.

understand the role and place of the individual. For as soon as we speak of ‘boundary crossing’ in a twenty-first century reading site we are likely to picture individuals and individualized journeys. But Paul did not necessarily picture the crossings strictly in these twenty-first century individualistic terms. This has implications for a soteriological reading of Paul. A highly individualistic reading of conversion can be misleading. The semantic idea of ‘individualism’ as such is an invention of the Enlightenment, coined as a philosophical status in contrast to forms of communalism.⁵⁰ It has been argued that, in ancient Mediterranean culture ‘genuine individualism is not really a possibility’,⁵¹ although at least since von Harnack there has been recognition that the individual played a growing role in the soteriological self-awareness of ancient Judaism.⁵² While in modern terms a first century individual might decide, in the face of the gospel, to cross boundaries from association with another religious group to the Christian community, more often than not they would do so as part of a ‘dyadic’ grouping,⁵³ a network of individuals in an interconnected community (1 Cor. 1.16, 16.15).⁵⁴

Yet the individual did exist as a psychological entity and can be ‘traced back at least to Jeremiah’.⁵⁵ While the post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment stress on the individual should not be read back into Paul’s kerygma, there is no doubt that Paul expected that, on

⁵⁰ S. Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 3-39.

⁵¹ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 16.

⁵² G.W. Burnett, *Paul & the Salvation of the Individual* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 70.

⁵³ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 16. See also C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 46. T. Carter, “‘Big Men’”, 45-71, esp. 46-48, disputes the findings of J.H. Neyrey, “Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and his Opponents”, *Semeia* 35 (1986): 129-170, and *Paul, in Other Words: A Cultural Readings of His Letters* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 102-146 that the Corinthian faith community exhibited ‘strong’ group dyadic characteristics. For the purposes of this study however, dyadic identity informs the understandings of Paul and his opponents in their approach to winning the loyalty of their target audiences.

⁵⁴ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 73-75.

⁵⁵ Lukes, *Individualism*, 94-95.

receipt of the gospel, a hearer would shift social allegiances and practices, ideally shifting his or her dyadic network in the process. Paul himself underwent such a shift, albeit, so far as his or Luke's narrative allows us to know, on his own, and spent three years in 'Arabia' and Damascus (Gal. 1.17) processing or 'internalizing'⁵⁶ the implications of his new faith perspective.

If existence in Paul's world was 'dyadic', the 'dyad' was not necessarily the nuclear family presupposed in contemporary western culture. A sentence such as 1 Cor. 7.14 can give the impression to contemporary western readers that a Mediterranean household imitated twenty-first century constructions. As Aasgaard and de Vos have separately shown, children in Paul's world did not necessarily enjoy close relations with parents, divorce was common, and restructuring of dyads was a frequent pattern.⁵⁷ There are no clues in Paul's declaration that he baptized 'the household of Stephanus' (1 Cor. 1.16) as to the shape of the household or the recipients of the rite.⁵⁸ In my next chapter I will note Aasgaard's observations regarding the implications of fluidity for Paul's use of sibling language, but in the context of 'Getting In' it need only be noted that the crossing of a boundary in itself was not unusual. The unusual element was the demand to exclusivity, characterized by the Christian demand that the God of the Hebrews be given exclusive claims to allegiance over and above the claims of, for example, the Emperor as *pater patriae* (e.g. 2 Cor. 1.2).⁵⁹

⁵⁶ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 18.

⁵⁷ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 40. Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 37-40.

⁵⁸ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 74-75. Note especially Collins' reference to J. Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (LHD. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 19-24, and *idem.*, *The Origins of Infant Baptism A Further Study in Reply to Kurt Aland* (SHT 1. London: SCM, 1963).

⁵⁹ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 28.

Paul again sometimes used his own shorthand for the process of handing on this demanding message: generally he referred to ‘proclaiming the gospel’ (1 Cor. 1.17), or ‘proclaiming Christ crucified’ (1 Cor. 1.23). The verb ‘to proclaim’ (khru/ssw) was central to Paul’s missiological self-understanding, appearing fifteen times in the undisputed Pauline letters. The verb that Paul uses appears widely though not universally⁶⁰ through the New Testament canon, and had political undertones, being the verb used of the pronouncement of a royal birth. Its use was not *necessarily* political, but rather sombre, denoting an announcement of great importance. This solemnity underscored the early Christian community’s use of the word. It was a solemnity designed to initiate a shift of belonging in the hearer, from belonging to the flesh to belonging to the Spirit, and as such it provided liberation of the respondent from slavery to sin and evil (Gal. 4.8, Rom. 6.6b).

The gospel forced a crisis of decision on its audience. This was no new thing: the self understanding of at least one strand of Judaism was that the followers of God were respondents to a decision to obey or neglect God’s call: ‘choose this day whom you will serve’ (Josh. 24.15). This notion of ‘decision’⁶¹ is a fundamental corollary of kinship narrative, a driving mechanism of Paul’s kerygmatic method that is possibly influenced by the stark choice-narrative that Joshua narrates (Josh. 24.14-28). Paul, like Joshua, demands adherence to a covenant (2 Cor. 3.6) to the exclusion of all other covenant possibilities.

⁶⁰ It does not appear in the Johannine writings, in Hebrews or in James.

⁶¹ See the chapter “Decisions, Decisions”, L.D. Hawk, *Joshua: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2000), 261-281.

A hearer responding positively to the gospel would then ‘believe’,⁶² ‘receive’,⁶³ ‘stand in’⁶⁴ or ‘adhere to’ (the content of)⁶⁵ the gospel message, and by doing so would be caught up in an act of divine grace that alters their soteriological and eschatological status, their standing in the eyes of God the judge (Rom. 2.16, 1 Cor. 4.4, 11.32). By that change of state the believer is ‘saved’⁶⁶ and passes from death to life (Rom. 6.13). Paul’s language of decision is often in the aorist tense, indicating a past moment with continuing ramifications. The process of conversion was a ‘resocialization’,⁶⁷ too, in which the convert became a part of an entirely new social milieu.⁶⁸

a. Romans

It is notable that Paul addresses the question of ‘Getting In’ primarily in the context of reflection and relatively cautious self-presentation that provides the shape and content of Romans. While a tally of references is inevitably subjective, there are no fewer than 21 occasions on which he makes reference to ‘Getting In’ to the community of faith,⁶⁹ usually simply in terms of ‘believing in’ or ‘having faith in’ the salvific work of God. Where he turns to the Abraham narrative as an archetype of belief he prefers to speak of belief in the promises of God, but the phrases are to all intents and purposes synonymous.

⁶² Rom. 10.9, 14-16, 13.11; 1 Cor. 3.5, 15.2, 15.11; 2 Cor. 4.13; Gal. 2.16.

⁶³ 2 Cor. 6.1, 11.4; Gal. 1.12; 1 Thess. 1.6, 2.13.

⁶⁴ *sth/kw, i (/sthmi)*: see Rom. 3.31, where the verb is applied to adherence to the law, and Rom. 10.3, where it has negative connotations. Also Rom. 5.2, 11.20, 14.4; 1 Cor 15.1 (but see also 1 Cor. 7.37, 10.12); 2 Cor. 1.24.

⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 2.23; 15.1, 15.3; Gal. 1.9; Phil. 4.9.

⁶⁶ Rom. 5.9, 5.10, (future passive) 8.24, (aorist passive) 10.1, (as noun in a conditional phrase) 10.10 (as noun), 10.13 (quotation in future passive conditional voice); 1 Cor. 1.18, (present passive participle) 1 Cor. 1.21, (infinitive) 1 Cor. 10.33, (aorist passive subjunctive) 1 Cor. 15.2 (present passive indicative); 2 Cor. 2.15 (passive participle); 1 Thess 2.16 (passive aorist subjunctive). See also 1 Cor. 7.16, 9.22. The tenses used vary, with future tenses dominating Romans.

⁶⁷ ‘No one ever “converts” in the first century’. Malina, “We and They”, 622.

⁶⁸ Meeks, *Origins*, 162.

⁶⁹ Rom. 1.16, 2.7, 2.10, 2.13-17, 2.29, 3.22, 3.24, 3.30, 4.5, 4.11-12, 4.24-25, 6.3-4, 6.17-18, 8.30, 9.11b-12a, 9.18, 10.4, 10.10-11, 10.13, 10.17a, 13.14.

On occasions he speaks of ‘Getting In’ in other terms, such as becoming obedient to received teachings (Rom. 6.17-18). He speaks in the passive voice, of ‘being justified’ (Rom. 3.24, 3.30, 4.5, Rom. 4.24-25), and uses the language of ‘believing in’ and ‘being justified’ in tandem at Rom. 10.10-11.

At Rom. 2.13-17 Paul arguably opens his thought to the possibility of some form of salvation outside the identifiable Christ community, making reference that is open to a pluralistic soteriological interpretation.⁷⁰ This mention of an extension of salvation beyond the boundaries of the faith community appears, significantly, only in the more rarefied and reflective discourse of Romans, and is driven by Paul’s own context of so-called ‘natural religion’.⁷¹ It is a rare occasion on which a biblical author opens up to the possibility that there are those ‘outside’ who fulfil God’s demands, and significantly it appears in a document not directly inspired by conflict within or beyond the boundaries of faith.

b. Galatians

In the Galatian context the question of ‘Getting In’ is forced on Paul. His opponents have raised questions of boundary crossing, and have introduced the need for circumcision as a hallmark of crossing over and belonging to the Christ community. To Paul this is an anathema, and on ten occasions⁷² Paul turns to images of boundary crossing, ‘Getting In’. The terminology he uses is predominately in the passive voice or places the recipients of faith into the role of object in the sentence structure. The use of Gal. 1.6, for example, makes it clear that the Galatians are the recipient of the action

⁷⁰ For arguments see Byrne, *Romans*, 90-91. On the question of a ‘universal ethic’ see Dunn, *Theology*, 665.

⁷¹ Rom. 1.32.

⁷² Gal. 1.6, 1.15, 2.16-17, 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 3.14, 3.22, 3.27, 4.9.

of ‘calling’ but the initiators of the potential apostasy.⁷³ When Paul writes of his own calling (Gal. 1.15) it is clear that God is the initiator of the action.⁷⁴ At Gal. 2.16-17 the main verbs, *dikaïou~tai* (is justified) and *eu(re/qhmen* (were found), are passive. At Gal. 3.2 the form *e)la/bete* (receive) denoting reception of the Spirit is passive, while at Gal. 3.5 the active verb *e)pixorhgw~n* (supplies) is predicated of God.⁷⁵ Only then does Paul permit the prototypical believer Abraham to be active in belief, in a reference to Gen. 15.6 (LXX).⁷⁶ The passive voice is again used of Gentile believers in the summary verse Gal. 3.9;⁷⁷ there believers are given the complex nominal construction *oi(e)c pi/stewj*,⁷⁸ and, significantly, it is again Abraham who is given the active role in the adjectival form *pistw~|*, ‘trustful’.

At Gal. 3.14 Paul does risk an active voice, ‘that we might receive through faith’, but this is a subjunctive construction, expressing a cautious note of conditionality.⁷⁹ This subjunctive mood is again applied to ‘the believing ones’ *pisteu/ousin*, at Gal. 3.22. At Gal. 3.27, one of the rare occasions Paul introduces baptism into the equation of ‘Getting In’,⁸⁰ the construction is of course passive, *e)bapti/sqhte*.

Finally, and most significantly, at Gal. 4.9 Paul momentarily allows himself the active voice ‘having known God’ (*gno/ntej qeo/n*), but then with rhetorical flourish, immediately corrects himself and reverses the subject/object relations to ‘having

⁷³ *metati/qesqe a)pou\ tou~ kale/santoj*: ‘you turn from the one who called you’.

⁷⁴ For the textual problems associated with this verse see B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: UBS, 1975), 590. However, whether *o(qeo/j* is supplied or not, it is clear that God is the initiator of the action of calling.

⁷⁵ In fact the participles in the sentence, *e)pixorhgw~n* and *e)nergw~n*, are governed by the article *o(*, effectively acting as a circumlocutory pronoun. NRSV supplies the noun ‘God’ in clarification. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 105.

⁷⁶ See also Rom. 4.3 (and Jas. 2.23), where the word order is an exact quotation of Genesis.

⁷⁷ *eu)logou~ntai*, found to be blessed.

⁷⁸ literally ‘the ones from belief’.

⁷⁹ *la/bwmen dia\ th~j pi/stewj*.

⁸⁰ See also Rom. 6.3-4 and, symbolically, Rom. 13.14.

been known by God' (gnwsqe/ntej u(po qeou~). The 'or rather' of the NRSV translates ma~llon, which carries all the weight not only of 'or rather' but of 'but more'.

In the conflictual context of Galatians Paul has chosen his grammatical constructions with great care, ensuring that the audience can glean no active role in the processes of coming to faith or 'Getting In'. The final rhetorical corrective of Gal. 4.9 suggests this was no casual linguistic effect by Paul, but a carefully constructed rhetorical method.

c. 1 Corinthians

The early Corinthian correspondence follows the same pattern, but with reduced rhetorical caution. The acknowledgement of 'all believers' at 1 Cor. 1.2 is given a middle voice, *toi~j e)pikaloume/noij*. At 1 Cor. 1.9 the audience are placed firmly into the passive role of having been called by God. The construction *toi~j klhtoi~j*, predicated of believers generally at 1 Cor. 1.24, is a neutral construction, while the nominal form *klh~sin*, not elsewhere used by Paul, is utilized at 1 Cor. 1.26. The passive voice dominates the strong repetitive construction of 1 Cor. 7.20-24, '... when you were called ... when called ... was called ... when called ... in whatever condition you were called ...'. Here there is no place for ambiguity, for throughout the letter a dominant theme is the dismantling of claims on which the audience might 'boast'.⁸¹ 1 Cor. 12.13 is a passive reference to baptismal rites, echoing the theme introduced at 1 Cor. 1.13c.

⁸¹ The *kaux-* group is used less frequently in 1 Corinthians than in 2 Corinthians, but still appears at 1 Cor. 1.29, 1.31 (x 2), 3.21, 4.7, 5.6, 9.15-16, and 15.31. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 100.

At 1 Cor. 15.1-2 Paul uses a careful construction that leaves the audience as primarily passive recipients of the gospel,⁸² but active in their responsibilities to maintain their faith.⁸³ The overall tenor of the sentence is governed by the conditional clause ‘if you hold firmly to the message’,⁸⁴ placing responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the audience (and, parenthetically, reminding the audience, *contra* Gundry Volf, that apostasy is a real and perpetual threat). The audience’s passive role is reiterated at 1 Cor. 15.11.

d. 2 Corinthians

By the time Paul enters into the worsening conflict of 2 Corinthians, even in the earlier section, he sees no need to risk any misunderstanding on the questions of ‘Getting In’, being more concerned about the issues of ‘Staying In’ and the reverse boundary crossing, ‘Lapsing Out’. Consequently he does not address questions of coming to faith at all.

e. 1 Thessalonians, Philippians

In each of the warmer pastoral contexts of 1 Thessalonians and Philippians he makes passing reference to conversion or ‘Getting In’ on only one occasion. In the chronologically earlier context of 1 Thessalonians he reminds the audience of their conversion, but although the dominant verb (*paralabo/ntej*) is in the passive form, there is no sting in the tail of the argument, and the verb governing the second clause of the sentence (*e)de/casqe*, you accepted) is rendered active. The sole reference to

⁸² *to\ eu)agge/lion o(\ eu)hggelisa/mhn u(mi~n* (‘the gospel **I proclaimed** to you’) ... *di’ ou(~ kai\ sw/lzesqe* (‘by which you are saved’).

⁸³ *o(\ kai\ parela/bete* (‘which **you took hold of**’) ... *e) w(|~ kai\ e(sth/kate* (‘in which you stand’).

⁸⁴ *ei) kate/kete ... ei) mh\ ei)kh~| e)pisteu/sate* (‘if you hold fast ... unless you believe in vain’).

‘Getting In’ in the letter to the Philippians is at Phil. 1.29, where, significantly, ‘the privilege ... of believing in Christ’ is, in the absence of conflict between author and audience, rendered in the active voice.

Context has dictated content, and especially the grammatical rules of content, in Paul’s carefully crafted rhetoric. Later we shall establish guidelines by which the degree of connection or antagonism between author and audience can be measured, but at this stage a pattern can be recognized and acknowledged in Paul’s epistolary art.

5. Conclusion

The believer hears a message proclaimed (1 Cor. 1.17), and responds to that message by believing (Rom. 10.14-17). This is the primary process of ‘Getting In’, on which all subsequent communication between Paul and his audience is based. It can be expressed in other ways (Gal 3.1-2; by inference 1 Cor. 1.13b), but the implications are the same. The believer hears and responds, and, as we shall see below in the chapter ‘Staying In’, has a responsibility to continue to adhere to the gospel as its authentic messengers have proclaimed it. Unfortunately for our purposes this narrative of conversion is so understood as a given between author and audience that Paul offers no enlargement of the theme: ‘Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim’ (1 Cor. 1.17). The Corinthians remember it well, and Paul need say no more.

Paul’s letters, therefore, do not provide a detailed presentation of his understanding of the processes involved in conversion and belonging to the faith community. The reason for this lies in the very nature of epistolary ministry. Paul is writing to audiences from whom he is estranged by time and distance, and sometimes by the shifting

behaviour of the audience. Paul's letters are not studies in evangelism but in corrective and exhortatory pedagogy. Fee, in writing of Paul's pneumatology and embryonic 'soteriological trinitarianism', observes the 'presuppositional'⁸⁵ aspects of Paul's writing. With the exception of the Roman audience, Paul is writing to audiences personally known to him, and with which he has previously spent long periods of time in person, evangelizing, teaching and pastorally caring. There exists a shared narrative, a presuppositional narrative, of inclusion into Christ, of crossing boundaries,⁸⁶ normally from a pagan to a Christian existence (Gal. 4.8, 1 Cor 12.2, 1 Thess. 1.9). This narrative of conversion has been taught and enlarged upon (1 Thess. 2.13, 4.1-2) by Paul in the communities he evangelized.⁸⁷ There is no reason to doubt the Lukan observation that he was a tent-maker (Acts 18.1-3), or to argue Murphy-O'Connor's point that this trade maximized Paul's exposure to the community as he went about his evangelical mission.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ For 'Presuppositional', see G.D. Fee, *Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 84. Trinitarian, e.g. Fee, *ibid.*, 101.

⁸⁶ Nanos, *Irony*, 92-102.

⁸⁷ Dunn makes the same point when he notes that Paul does not engage in argument for the existence or nature of God: 'God was common ground between Paul and the recipients of his letters'. See his "In Quest of Paul's Theology: Retrospect and Prospect", in Johnson and Hay, *Looking Back, Pressing On*, 107.

⁸⁸ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 86-89.

Chapter 3: Being In

Introduction

In terms of the athletics metaphor introduced in my introduction, I will now assess the terminology Paul uses to measure the athlete's status as 'on track', a part of the right race, surrounded by fellow athletes undertaking the same task of endurance. There is a sense in which this section of my analysis is the key to my investigations. I have alluded on several occasions already to the relationship between the author Paul and his various audiences, and have utilized loose descriptive terms such as 'warm' or 'authoritarian', and to equally loose notions of 'connectivity' or 'connection' between author and audience. It is imperative now that some quantifiable indications of this relationship between author and audience are established. Once that is established it will be possible to see whether Paul's relationship with his audience is, in fact, the 'contingent x-factor'¹ that drives and shapes his outlook and his approach to, in particular, soteriology.

Here, then, I seek to establish some method by which to measure connection between author and audience. In the back of my mind is the question to what extent the contingency of emotional connection impacts on Paul's theological, and especially soteriological, outlook. Much of the research on which this chapter has been based was carried out before publication of Aasgaard's study. While Aasgaard's findings are predicated on different questions to those I am addressing, his findings do go some way to corroborate as well as complement mine.

¹ In part this chapter was presented, under the title "Keeping the Umpire Happy: Emotional Connection as Paul's Contingent X-Factor", to the Auckland gathering of the Society of Biblical Literature in July 2008. I am grateful to those present, particularly Dr. Peter Marshall and Professor Robert Jewett, for their constructive feedback.

Here I turn to the terms most frequently used by Paul to indicate states of being in a satisfactory standing in relationship to God, to Paul the agent of God, and to the kerygma Paul has, or in some circumstances others have, proclaimed. What is Paul looking for in his audience behaviourally and theologically? What indications does he give that the right beliefs and behaviour are present in the audience, and therefore that they are, like him, ‘pressing on’ (Phil. 3.12-14) in the right direction? In what way are the audience ‘imitators’ of Paul, as Paul is of Christ?² Does finding or failing to find signs of the audience’s ‘Being In’ affect the way he responds to them, and the language that he uses?

Paul looks for many signs that the audiences are on track, and uses many linguistic indicators that suggest whether or not they are. Methodologically mine is primarily a numerical analysis. Some terms and phrases he uses only rarely in the canon of his correspondence: ‘crucifying the flesh’ (Gal. 5.24) is a term that appears only in the Galatian context, with all its references to flesh and marks in the flesh. Turning to God from idols – and presumably remaining turned that way! – is a requirement mentioned primarily only in the Thessalonian context (1 Thess. 1.9), even if behaviour with regards to idols is an issue elsewhere.³ These terms appear too infrequently, and are too locality-specific, to be useful tools in a statistical analysis. But there are other labels and indications used frequently by Paul, and their distribution through the letters may provide statistical clues to his attitude of connection or disconnection, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, with his audiences. Foremost amongst these is the language of fictive kinship researched in depth by Aasgaard, but it is not the only indication that Paul gives of his relationship to and feelings about his audience, and Aasgaard’s research may be enhanced by consideration of other terms.

² 1 Cor. 4.16, 1 Cor. 11.1, Phil. 3.17, 1 Thess. 1.6.

³ See Rom. 2.22, 1 Cor. 8.1-10, 2 Cor. 6.16.

I have therefore turned to the terms most frequently used by Paul, including but not limited to the use of sibling language, to see if their distribution through the letters provides some clue as to Paul's relationship with his audience. Beyond sibling language, with which I associate and to which I add 'endearment language', I also identify language of grace, joy and thanksgiving, which are etymologically related and often used in conjunction by Paul, and language of faith and believing. 'Believing' is, as we have noted in the previous chapter, the prerequisite of 'Getting In'. Continuation in faith and belief is, *contra* Gundry Volf, prerequisite to 'Staying In'; I explore this in more detail in the chapters 'Staying In' and 'Lapsing Out', below, but at this stage it must be considered as a key indicator of 'Being In'. Having selected key terms on the basis, largely, of the frequency of Paul's use of them, I use them to seek to establish some measurable indications of the emotional connection and satisfaction that Paul feels towards his audience.

There are subjectivities even in a statistical analysis. Clearly, as Aasgaard demonstrates, sibling language is a key indication of Paul's attitude to and relationship with his audience. The language of affection, 'beloved', perpetrates the same fictive kinship, and so I treat it alongside sibling language, even though, numerically, it is on its own quite a minor usage. Being in a 'state of grace' is statistically important, but I can be accused of drawing a long bow to make the etymological associations between grace, joy, and thanksgiving that I do. Nevertheless I do believe, and hope to be able to demonstrate, that Paul is aware of the relationship between these states and the audience responses to them, that Paul is aware of the relationship between these concepts both etymologically and, as it were, causally. To draw the bow in this way is inevitably subjective; on the other hand, the hermeneutical process cannot be anything but

subjective, and, as long as I am not, as Nussbaum put it,⁴ ‘seeing shapes in the clouds, or in the fire’, perhaps the long bow can produce a tune compatible both with the author’s and the interpreters’ parameters of possibility.

Other indicators of a satisfactory standing on the part of the audience could also be included ahead of those I have used. Paul uses phrases that depict being ‘in Christ’, ‘in the Lord’ and ‘in the Spirit’ constantly in the undisputed letters. The very variety of these terms, and the controversy surrounding their state as synonymous or otherwise, generates difficulties. Paul generally uses the formula ‘in Christ’ separately to the ‘in the Spirit’ formula. In Romans, for example, ‘in Christ’ is used on nine occasions in the body of the letter,⁵ (a further four times in the final greetings)⁶ and only in chapter eight does he use the two formulae in close proximity. Dunn⁷ drives a wedge between Paul’s language of being ‘in Christ’ and that of being ‘in the Spirit’,⁸ but notes the close connection between ‘the gift of the Spirit’ and ‘participation in Christ’.⁹ There are some 85 uses of ‘in Christ’ (or ‘in Christ Jesus’) and ‘in the Lord’ in the undisputed Pauline epistles.¹⁰ Of those that Dunn refers to as ‘subjective uses’, that is to say when *believers* are described as being ‘in Christ’ or ‘in the Lord’, there are 32 clear occurrences in the letters under consideration in this study.¹¹ These bear considerable weight as ‘a fundamental aspect of [Paul’s] thought and speech’¹² signifying ‘transfer of lordship and

⁴ Nussbaum, *Love’s Knowledge*, 9.

⁵ Rom. 5.15; (at 6.3 the sense is of entering into rather than of being in); 6.11; 6.23; 8.1; 8.2; (at 8.10-11 Paul uses the opposite formula, Christ in you, and does so conditionally); 8.39; 9.1; 12.5; 15.17 (of Paul).

⁶ Rom. 16.3, 16.7, 16.9, 16.10.

⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 390-412.

⁸ Dunn, *Theology*, 413-441.

⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 395.

¹⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 396-397. Dunn finds 100 uses of ‘in Christ’, ‘in Christ Jesus’ and ‘in the Lord’, but designates only Ephesians and the Pastorals as non-Pauline. Note especially his notes 29 and 37.

¹¹ Rom. 6.11, 8.1, 12.5, 16.2, 16.3, 16.7, 16.8, 16.9, 16.10, 16.11, 16.12 (x 2), 16.13, 16.22; 1 Cor. 1.2, 1.30, 4.10, 4.17, 15.18, 16.19; 2 Cor. 5.17, 12.2; Gal. 1.22, 2.4, 3.26, 3.28; Phil. 1.1, 2.1, 4.7; 1 Thess. 1.1, 1.14, 4.16.

¹² Dunn, *Theology*, 399.

existential participation in the new reality brought about by Christ'.¹³ To these numerous Pauline references to being 'in Christ' could be added numerous 'sun-compounds', many of which are unique to Paul in the New Testament canon.¹⁴ There are also several subjective references to believers' being 'of Christ'.¹⁵ In all this there is a further underlying Pauline assumption highlighted by Dunn: 'Where "in Spirit," "have Spirit," and "Christ in you" all serve as complementary identifying descriptions, the dividing line between experience of Spirit and experience of Christ has become impossible to define in clear-cut terms. At best we may speak of Christ as the context and the Spirit as the power'.¹⁶

All these variables could lead me to a statistical quagmire. Are the phrases 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' synonymous? In his work on Pauline pneumatology Fee makes in passing this equation: 'Life in Christ, and therefore life in the Spirit'.¹⁷ Is this assertion tenable when made in the context of Paul's understanding of fictive kinship? At Rom. 6.11, for example, 'reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but living to God in Christ Jesus' could equally be expressed 'reckon yourselves to be dead to sin or alive to God in the Spirit'. Rom. 15.17, 'in Christ Jesus I have something of which to boast' carries within it the meaning 'in the Spirit' or even 'in the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead' I have something of which to boast (cf. 1 Cor. 15.31). Beker cautions "'In Christ" is not a fixed formula in Paul but is still a flexible term'.¹⁸ This caution is equally applicable to Paul's use of *en pneu/mati*.

¹³ Dunn, *Theology*, 400.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 402-403, especially n. 62.

¹⁵ Rom. 8.9, 14.8; 1 Cor. 1.12, 3.23, 15.23; 2 Cor. 10.7; Gal. 3.29, 5.24.

¹⁶ Dunn, *Theology*, 408.

¹⁷ Fee, *Empowering*, 55. Earlier Fee has maintained that for Paul 'there is no coming to Christ that does not have the experience of the Spirit as its primary element'. Fee, *ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸ Beker, *Paul*, 272.

Throughout Paul's correspondence the pattern is the same. The interchangeability of the phrases 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' is constant. It can be applied throughout the letter to the Galatians.¹⁹ In the prescript of 1 Corinthians Paul addresses 'the ones who have been made holy in Christ Jesus'. Boasting is legitimized only when it is in the Lord; 'let whoever boasts, boast in the Lord' (1 Cor. 1.31),²⁰ or, synonymously, 'in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. 15.31). That 'in Christ Jesus' and 'in the Spirit' are synonymous is particularly clear at 1 Cor. 6.11: 'you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God'. Likewise, at 1 Cor. 6.17, 'anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him'. These formulae confirm Dunn's assessment that the context of being 'in Christ' and of being 'empowered by the Spirit' is synonymous. Christological and pneumatological formulae are less obvious in the late Corinthian correspondence. There an apparent reticence in using pneumatological formulae may be forced on Paul because of the Corinthians' or the opponents' over-confident pneumatology, the same phenomenon that has led to his pneumatological dissertation in the first letter. At 2 Cor. 13.3, in the closing, sterner chapters of the third extant letter, he offers proof that the one speaking 'in me' is Christ, while at 2 Cor. 12.9 he states emphatically that the source of his proclamatory power is Christ: 'I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me'.

I am persuaded by arguments proposed by Dunn, Fee and others that many of these christological and pneumatological phrases are synonymous, but there is enough uncertainty surrounding them to urge caution, even before variations in the pneumatological constructions, 'in the Spirit', 'according to the Spirit' and 'through the Spirit', are introduced into the hermeneutical equation. From a pure statistical perspective, if such a perspective were possible,

¹⁹ See Gal. 2.4, 3.26, 3.28b, 5.6.

²⁰ Cf. 2 Cor. 10.17.

perhaps these phrases and constructions should be considered. But there are simply too many uncertainties surrounding them, and I have omitted them from this section of my study.

There are other ‘signifiers’ of membership that could be considered, too, but I have chosen to ignore them because they are not equally distributed across the epistles. The term $\epsilon) \kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota/a$ has endured as the most widely used descriptor of the community of faith, and is used by Paul some 42 times; these uses are predominately in the Corinthian and Galatian correspondence, and their absence from Romans (excepting Romans 16) skews statistical analysis. Etymologically related to these references are references to the having been ‘called’. Variations on this theme of $\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon/w$ appear almost as often as $\epsilon) \kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota/a$, and are heavily loaded with meaning. But these too are unevenly distributed across the letters, being a major concern only in Romans and in 1 Corinthians, and, in the latter, disproportionately represented in a single passage.

So Paul identifies the insiders of the faith community with a number of labels that signify their belonging-to and continuation-in the Christ-community. These are markers of belonging which, in our metaphor, are akin to a modern athlete’s wearing of a label advertising his or her competitor number, a mark, as it were, of registration and belonging. In this section therefore I will use the frequency of appearance of three key word groups: (1) familial and endearment language ($\alpha) \delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\iota/$ and $\alpha) \gamma\alpha\phi\eta\tau\omicron/j$), (2) the language of grace, joy and thanksgiving based around the root word $\chi\alpha\rho$ -, and (3) language focussing on faith and belief, based around the root word $\pi\iota\sigma\tau$ -. Despite apparent subjectivities of these choices, I believe and will argue that they provide powerful indication of Paul’s emotional connection to and satisfaction with his audience, and I will include statistically based tables to chart those factors.

These tables will provide two possible tools that may serve to indicate the degree of warmth of relationship that exists between Paul and his audience. The Fictive Kinship Indicator will be a straightforward presentation gained by dividing the number of pertinent kinship and endearment references by the number of words in each letter. This will provide some basic and provisional indication as to the extent to which Paul feels a familial connection to each audience.

Nevertheless, as Aasgaard has demonstrated, families, fictive or otherwise, first century or twenty-first century, are not always harmonious, and a refinement of this first finding will be needed. A second indication will be based on Paul's focus on joy and thanksgiving in each letter, and will point towards the degree to which he finds assurance and satisfaction with his audiences and their journey of faith. This, for reasons that will be apparent later, I will call the χ^2/r -indicator. This will not be an entirely satisfactory indication of Paul's emotional and psychological connection with his audience, and will receive further fine tuning in combination. The combination of Fictive Kinship Indicator and χ^2/r -indicator will provide what I have called the Connectivity Indicator.

Yet, for reasons which I will address below, this figure too is not entirely satisfactory, and will in turn require refinement. I will build in a further indication that Paul's audiences are remaining true to his gospel: a measurement of Paul's assessment of 'right belief' will be the final factor to be combined with the Connectivity Indicator, providing a final indication of Paul's satisfaction or otherwise with his audience. That conglomerate or hybrid Satisfaction Indicator will for the remainder of this study provide a key to the most contingent circumstance affecting Paul's approach to his audiences, his satisfaction with their continued lives of faith in

his absence, or what I have referred to as a ‘contingent x-factor’ in Paul’s letter writing ministry.

By this method I hope to build on the work done by Aasgaard, refining some aspects of his findings to provide a quantifiable indicator of Paul’s relationships. I will, towards the conclusion of the chapter, provide a series of tables presenting the statistical breakdown established in the text.

1. a) delfoi/

Methodologically, I will provide a break-down of Paul’s use of familial or fictive kinship language, indicting, again with some inevitable subjectivity, which uses do indicate the state of relationship between Paul and his audience. In particular, but not exclusively, the vocative use of a) delfoi/ will be a primary indicator. There will be other uses, such as direct reference to a third person,²¹ or allusion to some aspect of familial relations,²² that also contribute to a narrative of kinship shared between author and audience. I will address each of these individually and in context. There are some other allusions to siblingship, such as Rom. 8.29, that will need to be addressed, as it were ‘on merit’. Dubious texts, such as Rom. 15.30, will also need consideration before inclusion in or exclusion from the analysis. I would emphasize, too that contemporary translations such as the NRSV do not, because of the editors’ concern for the nuances of inclusive language, always reflect Paul’s usage, sometimes rendering a) delfo/j with gender non-specific terms such as ‘believer’, and always providing the inclusive addition of ‘and sisters’ where the plural a) delfoi/ is used. For the purposes of clarity in an assessment of Paul’s use I have to have primary regard for his own constructions,

²¹ See e.g. Rom. 14.10.

²² See e.g. Rom. 8.29.

recognizing that he and his era were not attuned to the nuances of gender bias in language. Where the NRSV, generally used throughout this study, has provided a gender neutral translation, as for example at Rom. 14.13 or 1 Cor. 7.12, I will provide the Greek for clarification.

a. Romans

In Romans there are 21 uses of sibling language. Eighteen of these are straightforward uses, 10 in the vocative case, and a further eight referring to a brother or a sister in such a way as to reinforce a narrative of fictive kinship. Rom. 15.30 has some textual ambiguities, but despite the witness of $\text{p}46$, arguments for inclusion of $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\iota$ there are persuasive.²³ Three further uses of ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ in Romans, Rom. 8.29, Rom. 9.3, and Rom. 16.15, need closer consideration. Rom. 8.29 (in the dative case) refers to the relationship between Christ and the faith community of Christ. As this is the basis of the fiction of kinship²⁴ there are strong arguments for keeping this reference in a tally of uses of ‘brother/sister’, even though it is an allusion rather than a direct address.

At Rom. 9.3 Paul uses the construction ‘my kindred according to the flesh’, but it is predicated of the Hebrew people. As Aasgaard notes, the use here ‘serves to emphasize [Paul’s] solidarity with his own roots’, but is carefully qualified with the rider ‘according to the flesh’ to emphasize that his meaning here is ‘metaphorical-ethnic’ rather than ‘metaphorical-Christian’.²⁵ This may, in the context of Romans, suggest a softening of Paul’s attitude towards the Jewish people, although the construction ‘according to the flesh’ is a highly charged

²³ See C.E.B Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC. Two volumes. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 1979), 775-776, n. 6.

²⁴ This phrase is synonymous with ‘fictive kinship.’ See M.K. Birge, *The Language of Belonging: A Rhetorical Analysis of Kinship Language in First Corinthians* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 108.

²⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 4, n. 5.

construction in Paul's use. It is clearly not referring to the Christian community and is not pertinent to this chapter.

The usage at Rom. 16.15 does not aid this enquiry, as it refers to the blood sister of a member of the community, and, while it is possible or even probable that the sister of Nereus is a believer, there is in context no firm evidence of this.

The occasions of use in Romans are, therefore:

Rom. 1.13	(vocative)
Rom. 7.1	(vocative)
Rom. 7.4	(vocative)
Rom. 8.12	(vocative)
Rom. 10.1	(vocative)
Rom. 11.25	(vocative)
Rom. 12.1	(vocative)
Rom. 14.10a	Why do you pass judgment on your brother ²⁶ or sister ? ²⁷ (to\n a)\delfo/n sou)
Rom. 14.10b	Why do you despise your brother or sister ? (to\n a)\delfo/n sou)
Rom. 14.13	resolve ... never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister (tw a)\delfw)
Rom. 14.15	If your brother or sister (o(a)\delfo/j sou) is being injured by what you eat
Rom. 14.21	it is good not to do anything that makes your brother or sister (o(a)\delfo/j sou) stumble

²⁶ I will follow the NRSV rendition of a)\delfo/j and its forms unless otherwise stated. Therefore a)\delfo/j will usually be presented as 'brother or sister' or 'brothers and sisters' with the gender inclusive English in bold.

²⁷ The complex issues surrounding scribal transmission, contemporary translation and gender inclusivity in presentation of the vocative are explored in detail by Aasgaard in his essay "Brothers in Brackets? A Plea for Rethinking the Use of [] in NA/UBS", *JSNT* 26 (2004): 301-321, especially 307-309.

Rom. 15.14	(vocative)
Rom. 15.30	(vocative) ²⁸
Rom. 16.1	I commend to you our sister (a) delfh\ɲ) Phoebe
Rom. 16.14	Greet ... the brothers and sisters (a) delfou/ɟ) who are with them
Rom. 16.17	(vocative)
Rom 16.23	our brother Quartus

There are, then, 18 pertinent uses of the fictive kinship in Romans. It is noteworthy that there is no use of the word in the opening salutation, as Paul spends some 185 words establishing a relationship and its context before assuming the confidence of kinship. This is an initial indication that Paul is cautious in his relationship to this Roman faith community that he has not founded.

b. 1 Corinthians

Forms of the word a) delfo/ɟ, including the vocative form, occur more frequently in First Corinthians than in Romans. Rome was a location unfamiliar to Paul, but Corinth, and the membership of the faith community there, are clearly familiar to him. This may be one reason for his more frequent use of the word. But there is, paradoxically, another: Paul is troubled by developments in Corinth, and the fictive kinship narrative may serve to strengthen his rhetorical position of authority in relation to the audience. The vocative form appears no fewer than 18 times, eight more than in Romans, which is a document marginally (some 230 words) longer than First Corinthians. The word a) delfo/ɟ in all its forms appears 37 times in First Corinthians, far more than in Romans.

²⁸ Aasgaard notes: ‘since vocative address in Paul occurs so frequently, and usually has only a weak syntactic and semantic link to the rest of the text, we may infer that omission of such a textual element is generally more likely to take place than addition, though each case must of course be assessed on its own merits’. “Brackets?”, 309.

In the case of the first letter to the Corinthians, too, there are a number of other uses which need consideration on contextual merit.

1 Cor. 5.11 anyone who bears the name **brother or sister**

In this verse Paul warns the audience not to associate with a hypothetical person *who bears the name* brother or sister but who is ‘sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber’. The verse maintains the myth of kinship within the faith community even if the hypothetical pseudo-believer reveals himself or herself to be a false brother or sister and therefore an outsider according to Paul’s soteriology.²⁹ Because the verse maintains the narrative of kinship ties it should be part of this survey. Its role as a signifier of Paul’s demarcation between insider and outsider will be considered in a different chapter.³⁰

1 Cor. 6.5 decide between one **brother or sister**³¹ and another

1 Cor. 6.6 (x 2) a **brother or sister**³² goes to court against a **brother or sister**³³

1 Cor. 6.8 and **brothers or sisters**³⁴ at that!

In the sentences comprising 1 Cor. 6.5-8 Paul narrates the case of lawsuits brought by members of the faith community before civil ‘outsider’ jurisdiction. In these verses he creates a contrast between the insider (the feuding believers) and the outsider (the unbelieving, or, in 1 Cor. 6.1, ‘unrighteous’ courts). This is designed by Paul to strengthen audience awareness of their identity as a separate, countercultural identity, elsewhere defined as a ‘body’. These instances are therefore included in my survey.

²⁹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 300-302.

³⁰ See pp. 303-305, below.

³¹ NRSV: believer.

³² NRSV: believer.

³³ NRSV: believer.

³⁴ NRSV: believer.

- 1 Cor. 8.11 those weak **brothers and sisters**³⁵
 1 Cor. 8.12 against **brothers or sisters**³⁶
 1 Cor. 8.13 (x 2) if food should cause my **brother or sister**³⁷ to stumble ... in
 order that I may not cause my **brother or sister**³⁸ to stumble

In the section 1 Cor. 8.10-13 Paul highlights the Corinthians' unacceptably elitist behaviour, taking place in the context of food offered to idols, and creates another hypothetical scenario to draw a contrast between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. He depicts hypothetical 'weak' brothers and sisters (NRSV: believers) who could be shaken in their faith by the behaviour of the so-called strong. Once again the hypothetical narrative, based presumably on real events, is related in order to rectify errant behaviour amongst the audience members, and is included in this survey of kinship language.

- 1 Cor. 15.31 (vocative: possibly a scribal insertion)³⁹

Many of the authoritative early witnesses omit this sibling reference, indicating that it may have been a scribal insertion – based on the scribe's recognition that this is a context in which Paul would *usually* use the term. Although some weighty evidence from early witnesses suggests that Paul may not have used sibling language at this point,⁴⁰ Aasgaard's warning, 'It is far more likely that scribes should omit instances of address than add new ones'⁴¹ is a significant one, and so after much consideration I decided to leave the verse in the survey.

- 1 Cor. 1.1 our **brother** Sosthenes

³⁵ NRSV: believers.

³⁶ NRSV: against members of your family.

³⁷ NRSV: their.

³⁸ NRSV: one of them.

³⁹ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1249.

⁴⁰ See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 568.

⁴¹ Aasgaard, "Brackets?", 308.

1 Cor. 1.10	(vocative)
1 Cor. 1.11	(vocative)
1 Cor. 1.26	(vocative)
1 Cor. 2.1	(vocative)
1 Cor. 3.1	(vocative)
1 Cor. 4.6	(vocative)
1 Cor. 7.12	if any brother ⁴² (ei/) ti j a) del fo\j)
1 Cor. 7.14	and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband (lit. ‘ in the brother ’)
1 Cor. 7.15	the brother ... is not bound
1 Cor. 7.15	the ... sister is not bound
1 Cor. 7.24	(vocative)
1 Cor. 7.29	(vocative)
1 Cor. 9.5	a believing wife (lit. ‘a sister as wife’)
1 Cor. 10.1	(vocative)
1 Cor. 11.33	(vocative)
1 Cor. 12.1	(vocative)
1 Cor. 14.6	(vocative)
1 Cor. 14.20	(vocative)
1 Cor. 14.26	(vocative)
1 Cor. 14.39	(vocative)
1 Cor. 15.1	(vocative)
1 Cor. 15.6	to more than five hundred brothers and sisters (a) del fo i~j)
1 Cor. 15.50	(vocative)
1 Cor. 15.58	beloved brothers and sisters (a) del fo i/ mou) ⁴³
1 Cor. 16.11	expecting him with the brothers
1 Cor. 16.12a	our brother Apollos
1 Cor. 16.12.b	with the other brothers
1 Cor. 16.15	(vocative)

⁴² NRSV: believer.

⁴³ This emphatic form should be given additional weight, but there is no statistically credible way to do this.

1 Cor. 16.20 All the **brothers and sisters** (a) delfoi\) send greetings

There are, therefore, for the purposes of this survey, 40 uses of fictive kinship indicators in 1 Corinthians.

c. 2 Corinthians 1-9

There is a distinct falling off of sibling language in 2 Corinthians, with only nine uses of a) delfo\j in 2 Cor. 1-9.⁴⁴ Only two, 2 Cor 1.8 and 8.1, are vocative. Four further references are to third parties, Titus and an unnamed brother; on the other hand their status as a brother does serve to maintain or strengthen filial relations between author and audience. Three other uses need close consideration: 2 Cor. 2.13 refers to Titus, but, unlike Timothy, Titus is a third party unrelated to authorship of the letter, and significantly, Paul describes him as ‘my brother’, keeping him separate from the narrative between author and audience. The two references at 2 Cor 8.22-23 raise similar issues: are the brothers, other than Titus, a shared sibling of author and audience or not?

The following, then, are straightforward uses of a) delfo/j, unambiguously serving to maintain a sense of familial ties between author and audience:

2 Cor. 1.1	Timothy (as brother and as, by implication, co-author: Timo/qeoj o (a) delfo\j)
2 Cor. 1.8	(vocative)
2 Cor. 8.1	(vocative)
2 Cor. 8.18	we are sending along with him the brother ⁴⁵

⁴⁴ 2 Cor. 1.1, 1.8, 2.13, 8.1, 8.18, 8.22, 8.23, 9.3, 9.5.

⁴⁵ Thrall notes Windisch’s suggestion that this ‘brother’ is a subordinate. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 547-548.

2 Cor. 9.3 I am sending the brothers
2 Cor. 9.5 to urge the brothers

The three other sentences in the first part of 2 Corinthians that utilise fictive kinship are more nuanced:

2 Cor. 2.13 my brother Titus

In this sentence Paul deliberately identifies Titus with the individualized ‘my brother’, effectively excluding the Corinthians from the sibling relationship. When Paul tells of his search for Titus (2 Cor. 2.13) he also uses this exclusive construction, indicating that any sense of an inclusiveness embracing Paul, Titus and the audience is damaged. On each of the five occasions he mentions Titus in 2 Corinthians it is in the role Titus has undertaken as go-between in the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. Psychologically Paul betrays a degree of mistrust in the three-way relationship between Paul, Titus and the Corinthians.⁴⁶ Paul has deliberately identified Titus as his brother, but is reluctant to triangulate that sibling relationship with his audience. At this point Paul’s emphasis is on his sense of the divisions between him and the Corinthians.

2 Cor. 8.22 our brother⁴⁷

2 Cor. 8.22 speaks of a second unnamed brother who will accompany Titus and the first unnamed brother of 2 Cor. 8.18. Titus alone is named and given Paul’s imprimatur as ‘partner’ (2 Cor. 8.23). ‘The brother’ of 2 Cor. 8.18 is now joined in the narrative by one afforded the possessive construction ‘our brother’. But, from the point of view of an analysis of sibling

⁴⁶ Paul may be quarantining Titus. Barrett notes that Titus’ role as an emissary from Paul had not been to quash rebellion at Corinth, it was to carry the Painful Letter. C.K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 125.

⁴⁷ This is a third delegate, accompanying Titus and the brother of v. 18. See Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 553.

language as a connection-indicator, it should be noted that Paul's sibling language at this point is remarkably cautious, as Betz in particular has emphasized.⁴⁸

Here, in fact, sibling language serves a function of *exclusion* rather than *inclusion*. This use of 'our brother' is an authorial possessive, and Paul goes on to contrast his relationship with the unnamed brothers to the relationship he shares with the 'partner and co-worker' Titus who he has refused to triangulate in sibling relations with the audience. 'Titus is my partner and co-worker ... as for [the others]' is, effectively, the construction that will follow in 2 Cor. 8.23. Betz is probably right:⁴⁹ the recognition of the brother status of the two unnamed emissaries is reluctant; but it is not for that reason that I omit the references from my tally. The critical issue here is the use of 'our': is it inclusive of author and anyone else, and if so is the 'anyone else' the audience or another party? The associated clauses in 2 Cor. 8.22 are definitive: 'we have often tested and found eager' may refer to testing by Paul (the authorial plural voice), or by Paul *and* Titus (a literal plural), but the first person plural is *not* inclusive of author and audience. 2 Cor. 8.22 then is not a part of the narrative of shared kinship, because it is not about the relationship between Paul and his audience, but between Paul and the unnamed emissaries.

2 Cor. 8.23 our brothers

Here, as seen, Paul is similarly cautious. Titus is *Paul's* 'partner and co-worker', and the anonymous brothers are presented conditionally: they are to be shared in a narrative of kinship only if the Corinthians 'show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you'.

⁴⁸ 'Paul did little more than recognize them as members of the delegation and fellow Christians of whom he had approved'. Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 80.

⁴⁹ But see Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 548.

These three cautious, conditional verses need to be excluded from a statistical analysis of kinship as indication of warmth of connection between audience and author. There are therefore just six kinship references to kinship between author and audience in the earlier section of 2 Corinthians.

d. 2 Corinthians 10-13

There are only two sibling references in the latter part of 2 Corinthians, and only one of these is vocative. They are, in text order:

2 Cor. 12.18 I sent the brother

2 Cor. 13.11 (vocative)

It is notable that 2 Cor. 12.18 refers to the unnamed sibling in the third person, without the possessive qualifiers ('my', 'our' or 'your') that could clarify the context in terms of sibling warmth. Nevertheless fictive kinship is utilized in this verse: even if this brother does remain unnamed, he remains a 'brother' both in the audience's and Paul's experience. Betz's caution about the unnamed brothers of 2 Cor. 8 is applicable here too in terms of the relationship between Paul and the emissaries, but that is not our primary concern here. 2 Cor. 12.18 remains part of this statistical analysis because both audience and author experience the sibling-quality of this emissary. This remains so, and is effectively a matter of theological honour, even if, as Aasgaard has reminded us all along, the emotional and psychological quality of the relationship between the siblings is strained.⁵⁰

At 2 Cor. 11.9 Paul differentiates between the Macedonian Christ-community and the Corinthians. Paul maintains a narrative of fictive kinship with the Macedonians: in a sentence

⁵⁰ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 37-57.

heavy with sarcasm, that kinship is contrasted with his experience of the Corinthians. This verse does not belong in a survey of kinship relations between Paul and the Corinthians.

Reference to false siblings in the litany of trials of 2 Cor. 11.24-33 refers to past experience and is not a part of the shared experience between author and audience, and is therefore not to be included in this survey.

There are therefore just two references to kinship shared between author and audience in the final phase of Paul's epistolary relationship with the Corinthian faith community.

e. Galatians

Galatians provides more straightforward analysis. There are nine vocative uses of sibling language,⁵¹ and two further uses. There also references to 'false' brothers (siblings), excluded from this stage of my study.⁵²

The nine vocative uses of language in Galatians indisputably involve author and audience in a shared narrative of kinship. Two further uses of sibling language should not be included in this survey. Gal. 1.2 generates a sense of the *differences* between the two parties, the siblings gathered around the author at his place of writing, and the audience. Gal. 1.19 refers to a biological brother of Jesus, and must be excluded from the survey. Given the relations Paul appears to be experiencing with the Jerusalem authorities this may be a deliberate contrast on his part between spiritual siblinghood and biological siblinghood.

There are therefore nine significant kinship references in Galatians.

⁵¹ Gal. 1.11, 3.15, 4.12, 4.28, 4.31, 5.11, 5.13, 6.1, 6.18.

⁵² See p. 238-239, below.

f. Philippians

There are nine sibling references in Philippians, six in the vocative, and all serving to engender fictive kinship.

Phil. 1.12	(vocative)
Phil. 1.14	most of the brothers and sisters
Phil. 2.25	my brother
Phil. 3.1	(vocative)
Phil. 3.13	(vocative)
Phil. 3.17	(vocative)
Phil. 4.1	(vocative)
Phil. 4.8	(vocative)
Phil. 4.21	the brothers and sisters ⁵³ who are with me

At Phil. 2.25 Paul uses the authorial possessive ‘my brother’ of Epaphroditus, as he did of Titus at 2 Cor. 2.13. Nevertheless Epaphroditus, having first been sent from Philippi to Paul as an emissary, was a part of the Philippian faith community and therefore shares in the narrative of fictive kinship between author and audience. In the case of both Phil. 1.14 and 4.21, the third party is introduced into the conversation to reinforce kinship; in both of these cases the third party includes members of the Imperial guard.

There are therefore nine uses of kinship indicators in Philippians, including the emphatic ‘my brothers (and sisters)’ at Phil. 3.1.

⁵³ NRSV: friends.

g. 1 Thessalonians

In 1 Thessalonians there are no fewer than 19 uses of *a)delfo\j*. Fourteen are vocative, and the remaining five verses also serve to further a sense of kinship between author and audience.

- 1 Thess. 1.4 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 2.1 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 2.9 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 2.14 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 2.17 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 3.2 Timothy our **brother**
- 1 Thess. 3.7 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 4.1 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 4.6 no one wrong or exploit a **brother or sister** in this matter
- 1 Thess. 4.10a you do love all the **brothers and sisters**
- 1 Thess. 4.10b (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 4.13 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.1 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.4 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.12 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.14 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.25 (vocative)
- 1 Thess. 5.26 Greet all the **brothers and sisters**
- 1 Thess. 5.27 to all the **brothers and sisters**⁵⁴

There are 19 uses of sibling language that reinforce a sense of kinship between author and audience in 1 Thessalonians.

⁵⁴ NRSV: them.

h. Summary

From an assessment of this frequent Pauline identifier of the insiders of the faith community a few observations may be made before considering other signifiers.

There is a clear difference of frequency in the usage of the fiction of kinship in each of the letters. This becomes more marked when plotted against the total number of words in each letter, and this will provide what I shall refer to as the ‘fictive kinship indicator’. This is an initial yardstick by which Paul’s sense of connection to or emotional involvement with his intended audience may be measured. This can be measured as percentage, based on the number of times the word is used compared with the total number of Greek words in each epistle.

Table 1: a) *de1f*- usage, in order of frequency

Epistle	Total words	a) <i>de1f</i>o/j	As % of total words⁵⁵
1 Thessalonians	1480	19	1.28%
1 Corinthians	6829	40	0.59%
Philippians	1629	9	0.55%
Galatians	2230	9	0.40%
Romans ⁵⁶	7058	18	0.26%
2 Corinthians 1-9	3001	6	0.20%
2 Corinthians 10-13	1459	2	0.14%

Before investigating other Pauline terms of inclusion some further aspects of the fictive kinship relationship should be noted.

Each of the canonical letters addresses a different context and therefore produces different results. In his letter to the Romans, Paul is writing to an audience at least in part not personally

⁵⁵ These figures are rounded down to two decimal points.

⁵⁶ The word count for Romans includes contentious verses such as 16.20, 16.24, and 16.25-27, as, even if not Pauline, these are in Paul’s style.

known to him and therefore ‘unfamiliar’. Here, then, the ‘fictive’ aspect of the kinship relation is heightened, for, while individuals within his audience may be known to him, the audience as a whole is unfamiliar. His use of kinship terminology therefore indicates a relationship far beyond that of known or seen connection, a ‘fictive kinship group’⁵⁷ even more ‘fictive’ than when writing to churches he has founded and amongst whose members he has lived on site. But Paul shows some caution in his use of the address, and the longest of Paul’s letters rates fifth on this fictive kinship indicator, close to the volatile contexts of the later Corinthian correspondence.

The most frequent use, numerically though not proportionately, of the a) *delf-* root is in the early combative context of 1 Corinthians. There Paul is fighting to regain the moral and theological propriety of a group which he founded in the faith and for whom he feels a deep sense of responsibility. This explains the passion with which Paul is addressing the Corinthians, and is not any indication that he is supportive of their behaviour: warmth of passion or familial feeling is not always synonymous with approval! As Aasgaard has demonstrated, relations of literal, biological, as well as fictional siblinghood in antiquity as in modernity are not always relations of mutual warmth, but are usually relations generating great vigour.⁵⁸ At the very least we will see that this fictive kinship indicator can effectively plot the deterioration of relationships between Paul and the Corinthian faith community through the period of his correspondence with them, and is therefore of some use as an indicator of feelings between author and intended audience.

⁵⁷ Smith, “Thessalonians”, 688.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 263-265.

The rhetorical ploy of fictive kinship ceases to be useful as the Corinthian situation deteriorates. In 2 Cor. 1-9 Paul retains some degree of sibling language, so that, for example, at 2 Cor. 1.8 he is able to draw his audience into his narration of suffering and to elicit their understanding of his apostolic credibility and authority, or at 2 Cor. 8.1 he draws the audience into the narrative of the Jerusalem Collection. But the tone is more cautious than it was in the earlier context, and the fiction of kinship is more strained.⁵⁹ By the time of 2 Cor. 10-13, the metonymy of kinship is extended to the audience only at 2 Cor. 13.11, and to the unnamed third party at 2 Cor. 12.18: the boundaries have been all but completely re-crossed by the audience.

Paul's use of the language of kinship is proportionately highest in 1 Thessalonians. There he sets out from the opening verses to emphasize the distinctive and contrasting character of the Thessalonian faith community. He feels a deep affinity for them, for they are living a society contrasting to⁶⁰ and called out of⁶¹ the wider Thessalonian community. The Thessalonians have been held in high regard by Paul, for phrases such as 'we were made orphans by being separated from you' and 'you are our glory and joy!' (1 Thess. 2.19-20) are not mere rhetorical ploys. Although separation from communities that he has loved and nurtured is an inevitable corollary of his peripatetic mission, there is no doubt that he has felt this separation keenly: 'we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way' (1 Thess. 2.18).

⁵⁹ In the context of Josephus, M. Birge remarks '*However* fictive their kinship ties may be...'. *Language of Belonging*, 109, italics mine. This use of 'however' indicates the uncertainty surrounding sibling language, and highlights the need for *some* quantifier of fictive kinship.

⁶⁰ 1 Thess. 2.14: ε)πα/qete ...kai\ u(meij u(po\ tw~n i)di/wn sumfuletw~n ('you were made to suffer by your tribes-people').

⁶¹ ε) kklhsi/a | 1 Thess. 1.1.

In this peripatetic context it is particularly hard for Paul to know that his audience is suffering. At 1 Thess. 3.3 Paul makes it clear that he knows of the audience's persecutions, something he had previously predicted (1 Thess. 3.4). But prediction is different to reality, and the news they were standing firm in their faith despite trials was a joy to him (1 Thess. 3.6). It is these emotional responses, rather than the need for cut-throat rhetorical skills, that drive the tone of this letter. Paul is concerned to answer the Thessalonians' questions, but, unlike those he later receives from Corinth (1 Cor. 5.9-11) these are questions without subversive undertones. The letter therefore remains genuinely warm and compassionate, as Paul reconnects and, he hopes, lays foundations for a future visit (1 Thess. 3.11).

In writing a shorter letter to the Galatians, kinship address is used nine times, despite the stridently aggressive tone, and therefore the proportionate use of the familial formula is relatively high. Direct language of endearment is conspicuously absent, and the kinship language may be a part of Paul's rhetorical strategy. The emphatic *a) delfoi/ mou* is absent in Galatians and in 2 Corinthians; it is absent also in 1 Thessalonians, but there the theological label 'brothers [and sisters] beloved by God' (1 Thess. 1.4) renders it redundant.

Paul reminds the Galatian audience that it was through his proclamation that they came to believe (Gal. 3.2), and that any deviation from the kerygma he announced is a deviation from truth. This is one rhetorical ploy. The use of kinship language operates at a similar level: again and again, at strategic points in the letter, Paul reminds the audience that it is he, not the opponents, who has spawned and nurtured them in faith. This strategy is particularly apparent at Gal. 4.8-20 and 5.11-13 where kinship language is used in quick succession. The obvious disappointment, bordering on hostility, that flavours the letter to the Galatians does not detract from the rhetorical fiction of kinship. Thiselton notes, 'This family word also occurs when Paul

fears that he needs to offer a rebuke, but wishes to indicate affection and solidarity with the addressees at the same time'.⁶² By using fictive kinship in writing to the Galatians Paul enhances his rhetoric, coercing his audience to his viewpoint (this despite his occasional disingenuous disassociations from the rhetorical arts!).

In the short letter to the Philippians α) δελφο/ῖ is used eight times, giving this letter the second highest rate of kinship acknowledgement. Here, towards what we now know was the closure of his life and ministry, he is adopting a more accommodating tone. It could be argued that this is a chronological development, but the evidence lends itself to more complicated interpretation than that. The outburst at Phil. 3.2 is a reminder of the psychological scars Paul carries from his experiences in relationships with the Galatian and Corinthian audiences. Still, he continues to feel more secure in his relations with the Philippians, who have been loyal in support throughout the period of his evangelical mission (Phil. 1.5), and his language towards them is unmarred by subtexts of antagonism and betrayal.

i. Sibling Address: a Note on the Vocative Use

Paul's direct or vocative use of kinship language also shifts according to each context. The correlation between the frequency of use and the degree of affection Paul has for his audience is a complex one. In a letter of great warmth, 1 Thessalonians, the vocative construction is used frequently. This vocative kinship language reduces as the Corinthian correspondence goes on, from no fewer than 20 uses in 1 Corinthians⁶³ to just two in 2 Corinthians 1-9⁶⁴ and one in 2 Corinthians 10-13.⁶⁵ In Galatians, as noted above, it is used

⁶² Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 287.

⁶³ 1 Cor. 1.10, 1.11 (emphatic possessive), 1.26, 2.1, 3.1, 4.6, 7.24, 7.29, 10.1, 11.33, 12.1, 14.6, 14.20, 14.26, 14.39 (emphatic possessive), 15.1, 15.31, 15.50, 15.58 (emphatic possessive), 16.15.

⁶⁴ 2 Cor. 1.8, 8.1.

effectively as emphatic punctuation,⁶⁶ though this is a deliberate rhetorical ploy. There the use has the effect of drawing the audience in to the narrative of kinship in order to remind them of the loss of that kinship that would be implicit in apostasy from Paul's teachings. The positive side of this technique is revealed in Philippians,⁶⁷ especially Phil. 3.13 – 4.8, where the vocative is used with high frequency, four times in some 276 words. Here the vocative emphasizes the reality, in the author's mind, of connection between him and his audience. Clearly from the point of view of this study, if both exasperation and endearment can produce an increase in sibling-language, a more nuanced tool will be needed to measure author-audience relations as a contingency driving Paul's modes of expression.

Any suggestion that the stylistic shift is a chronological one is rendered spurious by the stylistic similarities between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. In the latter, too, the frequency of vocative uses of fictive kinship is high, the emphatic possessive is included, and one passage in particular (1 Thess. 4.13 – 5.14) uses the endearment addresses with an emphatically high ratio to overall word usage. In Romans the term is used nine times,⁶⁸ not a high ratio when the total number of words is built into the equation, as will be apparent in Table 2, below.

2. a) gaphto/j

There is a potential weakness in limiting analysis of Paul's relationship to his audience merely to his use of sibling language. However complex first century life was, there were certainly forms of address that signified either close emotional and psychological relationship, or, indeed, as seen in the case of 2 Cor. 8.18 above, a relationship of 'familial honour' where

⁶⁵ 2 Cor. 13.11.

⁶⁶ Gal. 1.11, 3.15, 4.12, 4.28, 4.31, 5.11, 5.13, 6.1, 6.18.

⁶⁷ Phil. 1.12, 3.1, 3.13, 3.17, 4.1, 4.8.

⁶⁸ Rom. 1.13, 7.1, 7.4 (emphatic possessive), 8.12, 10.1, 11.25, 12.1, 15.14 (emphatic possessive), 15.30. Cranfield argues persuasively for the inclusion of the word in this corrupted text: *Romans*, volume 2, 775-776, n. 6.

close emotional and psychological relationship ties are stretched beyond discernment. For that reason it is necessary to cast the net a little wider in order to catch other terms signifying emotional connection.

Paul occasionally refers to his audience as ‘beloved’, and I will here consider fifteen of these references.⁶⁹ But not all of these fifteen belong in this survey.

He refers to his audience both as beloved of God (Rom. 1.7), and, adopting an authorial possessive, as his own beloved (Rom. 12.19).⁷⁰ The former is used only in Romans⁷¹ and 1 Thessalonians.⁷² At Rom. 1.7 Paul uses *xa/rij* and *klhto/j* in conjunction with *a)gaphtoi=j qeou=* in a formulaic greeting, the formula thus being synonymous with ‘Christians’,⁷³ a term not available to him.⁷⁴ At Rom. 9.25 Hosea is quoted twice, but these uses are in the accusative case and refer not directly to the audience but to Hosea’s vision of the people of God. At Rom. 11.28 *a)gaphtoi/* is an adjectival form in the nominative case, and the reference is in any case to Israel, and therefore not relevant to our enquiry.

At Rom. 16.5-12 Paul extends four greetings, respectively to ‘beloved Epaphroditus’, ‘Amplius ... beloved in the Lord’, ‘beloved Stachys’, and ‘beloved Persis’. It is tempting to include these recipients of personalized greeting in a survey aimed at measuring the warmth of relationship between author and audience. It is because there are at least *some* in Rome that Paul knows personally that he is able to overcome any sense of familial dislocation, of non-

⁶⁹ Rom. 1.7, 11.28, 12.19, 16.5, 16.9, 16.12; 1 Cor. 4.14, 4.17, 10.14, 15.58; 2 Cor. 7.1, 12.19; Phil. 2.12, 4.1. Philem. 1 and 16 are of course outside the range of this statistically based survey, though they too are examples of this use.

⁷⁰ Aasgaard notes this structure. See *Beloved*, 262.

⁷¹ Rom. 1.7; 9.25; 11.28. However this tally excludes the negative part of the Hosea equation at Rom. 9.25.

⁷² 1 Thess. 1.4.

⁷³ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 68.

⁷⁴ So too Meeks, *Origins*, 20.

belonging to his audience. On the other hand he greets a catena of friends: Prisca and Aquila, Mary, Andronicus and Junia, Urbanus, Apelles, those who belong to the family of Aristobulus, those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Rufus and his mother, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and those with them, Philologus, Julia and Olympas. He also makes reference to biological kin: ‘Nereus and his sister’, as discussed above, and ‘my relative Herodion’. These listed effectively provide a passport to communication with a community with which Paul is unfamiliar, but cannot be built into an assessment of emotional connection between author and audience. They are a part of the collective ‘beloved’ who are the audience ‘beloved of God’ in Rom. 1.7. If they were additionally tagged with the adjective ‘beloved’ they would effectively form a subset of that collective, but arguments could be proffered that their additional tagging indicated a greater degree of emotional connection. Paul, fortunately, rescues this interpreter from that decision!

Other occurrences of the use of ‘beloved’ as a term of endearment may need to be added to the fictive kinship phrases to get a true register of Paul’s feelings for his audience, so that recognition of the kinship as being under the parenthood of God is acknowledged. So far we have Rom. 1.7 and 12.19. To this needs to be added 1 Cor. 4.14, where the phrase translated ‘as my beloved children’ faithfully renders the Greek, but remains ambivalent. The phrase should not be read as ‘as *if*’ my beloved children but ‘*as* my beloved children’. As Collins emphasizes, ‘For Paul to write about the Corinthians in this fashion is more than for him to make use of a common literary (epistolary) convention or a trite expression’.⁷⁵ Also to be added are 1 Cor. 10.14, and the doublet at 1 Cor. 15.58, where the vocative *a) delfoi/* is further qualified by the adjectival *mou a) gaphtoi/*, to make ‘my beloved siblings’. In the second extant letter

⁷⁵ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 194.

to the Corinthians the formula appears once, at 2 Cor. 7.1, and in the third letter at 2 Cor. 12.19. It appears in Philippians at Phil. 2.12 and 4.1 and in 1 Thessalonians in the variant but synonymous form ‘beloved by God’ (1 Thess. 1.4). The form is absent in Galatians, underscoring the observation that varieties of warmth, ranging from love to lovelessness, can exist within the phenomenon of ‘family’.

We need therefore a slight alteration of Table 1 in order to provide a more accurate assessment of the strength of connection and kinship narrative between author and audience in Paul’s letters.

Table 2: a) *de1f-* and a) *gaphto/j* in usage order: the Fictive Kinship Indicator.

Epistle	Total words	a) <i>de1fo/j</i> + a) <i>gaphto/j</i>	As % of total words
1 Thessalonians	1480	20	1.35%
Philippians	1629	11	0.68%
1 Corinthians	6829	43	0.63%
Galatians	2230	9	0.40%
Romans	7058	20	0.28%
2 Corinthians 1-9	3001	7	0.23%
2 Corinthians 10-13	1459	3	0.21%

The impact of building the expression ‘beloved’ into the equation of kinship is to reverse the order of relationship intensity between Philippians and 1 Corinthians. This correction is needed because when Paul is writing to Philippi he is writing to a community with whom he feels no conflict and he uses a collection of terms of love, connection and endearment. Language as intimate as ‘beloved’ is the language of the closest human relationship, including the closest filial relationships of the family household community. This combination begins to provide a new basis by which to measure the relationship between Paul and his audience.

By the time Paul is writing the first extant letter to the Corinthians he is locked into conflict regarding the behaviour of some within the faith community. The language of filial relationship and endearment is more reserved.

3. Recipients of Grace and Mercy

Although I have deferred consideration of it until after addressing endearment language, the second most significant Pauline indication of membership of the faith community, or of ‘Being In’, is being a recipient of grace.⁷⁶ For Paul it is a given in all speech of the divine/human relationship that the initiator of the relationship is God.⁷⁷ His abbreviated term for this initiation of relationship is *xa/rij* (grace), emphasizing the one-sidedness of the initiative. It is the key word⁷⁸ used to describe all dealings between the faith community, its membership, and God, and it is the hallmark of the member of the faith community that his or her life is ‘in Christ’, a state of grace made possible only by the Spirit. Dunn notes ‘In several places *xa/rij* could be replaced by *pneu=ma* without significant alteration of sense’.⁷⁹ Are there significant patterns in his use of *xa/rij* in its various forms?

Paul appears to be aware of the etymological – or at the least phonological – links between the *xa/rij* (grace) and *xara/* (joy) word groups, and often uses them, in all parts of speech, in close syntactical connection.⁸⁰ In Rom. 5.14 – 6.1, for example, a wordplay is introduced incorporating grace and *xa/risma* (gift), the latter being a derivative of *xara/*

⁷⁶ ‘The topos of grace is perceived to be *a* if not *the* centrepiece of Paul’s theologizing. Given the significance attributed to this topos one would expect that it significantly influenced not only the theologizing but also the social interactions within the early Christ-movement’. Ehrensperger, *Dynamics*, 63.

⁷⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 319-323.

⁷⁸ See, however, Beker, *Paul*, 265-267.

⁷⁹ Dunn, *Baptism*, 116. Dunn cites R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (two volumes. London: SCM, 1952, 1955) volume 1, 156: ‘The synonymity of *pneumatiko/n* (“spiritual gift”) and *xa/risma* (“gift”; lit. “token of grace”) indicates that “grace” can also be synonymous with “spirit” ’.

⁸⁰ On linguistic models in Hebrew poetry, see A. Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry”, *NIB*, volume 4 (1996): 301-315; esp. on phonology, 307-308.

and *xai/rw*.⁸¹ At Rom. 6.15-17 Paul writes of the audience's experience of the invasion of *xa/rij* (Rom. 6.15), then exclaims in doxology 'thanks be to God ... (**xari/j** de\ tw~| qew~|)'. The doxological outburst is recognition, untranslatable in English, that thanksgiving is a response to God's prior free-giving.⁸² Fee in particular has drawn attention to this correlation between joy as experience and joy as expression.⁸³

Likewise, *xa/rij*, as for example at Rom. 6.17 and 7.25, and *xa/risma*, at Rom. 6.23, are associated in Paul's mind. At Rom. 12.6 the link is unambiguous:⁸⁴ 'we have **gifts** that differ according to the **grace** given to us'. Paul prefaced his thoughts on *xari/smata* at Rom. 12.3 by emphasizing that any observation he makes about giftedness is made only 'by the grace given to me'. The doxological outburst develops into a hymnic instruction (Rom. 12.9-21), in which attention is shifted to the *xai/rw* derivatives: 'rejoicing in hope' (Rom. 12.12: *th=| e)lpi/di xai/rontej*) and the further instruction 'rejoice with those rejoicing' (**xai/rein** meta\ **xairo/ntwn**). At Rom. 16.19-20 a similar parallelism of *xai/rw* and *xa/rij* is used, though, as Rom. 16.20b is contentious, too much cannot be made of this passage.⁸⁵

⁸¹ For a similar view see Fee, *Empowering*, 86.

⁸² Morris notes 'Paul does not praise [the Romans] for what they have done, but thanks God for what he has done in them'. Morris, *Romans*, 262.

⁸³ '[T]he emphasis on joy is not so much on the experience of joy, but the active expression of it'. Fee, *Empowering*, 54.

⁸⁴ D. Pao draws attention to the same link in 1 Cor. 1.1-7: 'The juxtaposition of *charis* ("grace", [1 Cor.]1:4) and *charisma* ("gift", [1 Cor.] 1.7 within this thanksgiving paragraph is therefore not coincidental, and the same connection can be found elsewhere in Paul'. Pao draws attention to Rom. 12.7, and to the Pauline or Pauline influenced Eph. 4.7. Pao, *Thanksgiving*, 83.

⁸⁵ It is unlikely that this verse is a scribal insert, and it is consistent with Pauline usage, but clearer associations can be made from uncontested verses. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 539-540.

a. Romans

There are 24 references to grace in Romans. Not all describe the experience or state of the faith community. The following 19 references do fit that criterion, and are therefore language predicated by Paul of the state or milieu of the believer: it should be noted that this list includes the two formulaic greetings (Rom. 1.7 and 16.20) which are used by Paul not as a formality but as a means by which an action of God is made present in the life of the recipient, God's word as action.⁸⁶

Rom. 1.5	we have received grace
Rom. 1.7	Grace to you
Rom. 3.24	they are now justified by his grace
Rom. 4.4	wages are not reckoned as a gift
Rom. 4.16	in order that the promise may rest on grace
Rom. 5.2	we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand
Rom. 5.15b	more surely have the grace of God
Rom. 5.15c	in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ
Rom. 5.17	God's abundant provision of grace
Rom. 5.20	grace abounded all the more
Rom. 5.21	grace might also exercise dominion
Rom. 6.1	that grace may abound
Rom. 6.14	you are not under law but under grace
Rom. 6.15	we are not under law but under grace
Rom. 11.5	chosen by grace
Rom. 12.3	by the grace given to me
Rom. 12.6	according to the grace given to us
Rom. 15.15	because of the grace given me by God
Rom. 16.20	The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

⁸⁶ 'By using *χα/ρις* at this point Paul makes the third part of the epistolary prescript into the vehicle of a profound theological and evangelical meaning'. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 71.

The remaining references fall outside the scope of this study. At Rom. 6.17 and at Rom 7.25 the word is in the nominative case, in doxology to God. At Rom. 11.6 the word is used three times, once as a dative and twice as nominative, but the uses form a hypothesis that states noting about the *actual* state of the faith community.

Paul's association of xa/rij, euxariste/w and xai/rw is striking from the opening verses of Romans and continues to be so throughout the text. It is 'Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received **grace**' (Rom. 1.4-5),⁸⁷ and it is through him that the Pauline greeting '**grace** to you and peace from God' (Rom. 1.7b) is made, laden with theological meaning. It is through grace-encounter (Rom. 1.5) that Paul's own thanksgiving, 'First I **thank** my God through Jesus Christ for all of you' (Rom. 1.8) is made possible: Paul's own refracted grace can be bestowed on his audience: 'I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual **gift** (Rom. 1.11). At Rom. 5.15 this pattern is repeated; there is in that verse a close relationship between xa/rij (grace) and xa/risma (*free* gift), as well as with the synonymous but less theologically loaded dwrea/ (gift).

To references to grace, then, we need to add references to thanksgiving, gifts, 'gifting' (or giving) and joy. These are:

Thanksgiving (eu) xariste/w)

Rom. 1.8	I give thanks to God
Rom. 1.21	they did not give thanks to God
Rom. 8.32	will God not freely give up ⁸⁸
Rom. 14.6	(1) they give thanks to God

⁸⁷ The NRSV used here provides varied English equivalents, so here and in the lists that follow I have provided **bold** type for the English equivalent.

⁸⁸ The verb used is xari/zomai (see also 1 Cor. 2.12, 2 Cor. 2.7, 2.10, Gal. 3.18, Phil. 1.29, 2.9, and Philem. 22).

Rom. 14.6 (2) they **give thanks** to God

At Rom. 16.4 Paul uses the word ‘I give thanks’ in a colloquial or ‘conversational’⁸⁹ sense, without its customary theological overtones.

Gift/gifting (xari/smata)

Rom. 11.29 the **gifts** ... of God

Rom. 12.6 We have **gifts** = **xari/smata** that differ ... (...according to the
xa/rij = **grace** given to us)

Joy (xara/)

Rom. 14.17 [the kingdom of God is ...] **joy** in the Holy Spirit

Rom. 15.13 God will fill you ... with much **joy**

Rom. 15.32 I may come to you with **joy**

Rejoice (xai/rontej)

Rom. 12.12 **Rejoice** in hope

Rom. 12.15 **Rejoice** ...

Rom. 12.15 ... with those who **rejoice**

Rom. 16.19 I **rejoice** over you

Even if Paul does not consciously create rhetorical links between these etymological relatives, he at the very least instinctively adopts phonological techniques in developing his argument in letters that were, it must always be remembered, written to be read out loud.

⁸⁹ P.T. O’Brien, “Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology”, in D.A. Hagner and M. Harris, eds., *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), 50-62 (57).

b. 1 Corinthians

There are ten uses of the word *xa/rij* in 1 Corinthians, but not all are germane to this study. At 1 Cor. 15.57 the word is used in doxology, and, as was the case with Romans, I have omitted it from this survey. At 1 Cor. 16.3 Paul loads his directives regarding the Jerusalem Collection with the whole weight of the word *xa/rij*, and this cannot be considered a casual use;⁹⁰ given this weighting it needs to be considered in a discussion of the responsibilities of the Christian insider, of ‘being in’, and so is included here. 1 Cor 15.10 is effectively only one use, predicated by Paul of his own experience, and used as illustration for the audience. I shall only count this threefold repetition as a single reference. There are then for the purposes of this study, seven references to grace in 1 Corinthians. It should be noted, though, that of these 1 Cor. 3.10 is predicated of Paul, and not of the Corinthians.

1 Cor. 1.3	Grace to you
1 Cor. 1.4	because of the grace of God
1 Cor. 3.10	According to the grace of God given to me
1 Cor. 10.30	If I partake with thankfulness
1 Cor. 15.10	But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me
1 Cor. 16.3	take your gift to Jerusalem
1 Cor. 16.23	The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

There are effectively seven references to grace in 1 Corinthians, though the word itself appears on ten occasions.

⁹⁰ ‘*xa/rij*, “gift,” describes the contribution as a free act’. H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 296.

Again Paul deliberately or instinctively makes phonological connections between grace, thanksgiving and joy, xa/rij, eu)xariste/w and xai/rw. In the prescript to 1 Corinthians this association is particularly clear, again with **bold** type highlighting the English words used in the NRSV to convey the Greek: ‘**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I **give thanks** to my God always for you because of the **grace** of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus’. Only 35 words separate this reference to the ‘grace of God’ from the wish that the Corinthians may not be lacking in eschatological giftedness, or ‘gracing’ (1 Cor. 1.7), ‘so that you are not lacking in any spiritual **gift/grace** as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ’.

Similarly, at 1 Cor. 10.30, thankfulness and awareness of being a beneficiary of grace are inseparable: ‘If I partake with **thankfulness**, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give **thanks**?’ This is not coincidental and not unique to this letter. At 2 Cor. 4.15 thanksgiving and grace are likewise linked: ‘**Grace**, as it extends to more and more people, may increase **thanksgiving**’.⁹¹ A more complete list is therefore needed.

thanksgiving⁹² (eu) xariste/w/eu) xaristi/a)

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1 Cor. 1.4 | I give thanks |
| 1 Cor. 1.14 | I give thanks ⁹³ |
| 1 Cor. 10.30 | that for which I give thanks |
| 1 Cor. 11.24 | he had given thanks |
| 1 Cor. 14.16 | ‘amen’ to your prayer of thanks |
| 1 Cor. 14.17 | you may give thanks |

⁹¹ For arguments surrounding translation of this difficult clause, see Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 344-346.

⁹² The following incorporate some of my own translations.

⁹³ This verse is cited by O’Brien as a ‘conversational’ use (“Thanksgiving”, 57). It is however a fundamentally pious statement of thanksgiving, and therefore should be retained as indicative of Paul’s attitude. The same applies to 1 Cor. 14.18.

1 Cor. 14.18 **I give thanks**

While it is anachronistic to suggest that Paul understands ‘giving thanks’ as a liturgical eucharist there can be no doubt from the last four, and perhaps five, of these references that Paul is associating thanksgiving with formal rites of the gathered faith community.

gift/gifting (xa/risma)

1 Cor. 1.7 not lacking in any **spiritual gift**

1 Cor. 2.12⁹⁴ the **gifts** bestowed on us by God

1 Cor. 7.7 each has a particular **gift** from God

1 Cor. 12.4 there are varieties of **gifts**

1 Cor. 12.9 **gifts** of healing

1 Cor. 12.28 **gifts** of healing

1 Cor. 12.30 **gifts** of healing

1 Cor. 12.31 the greater **gifts**

rejoicing (xai/rw and derivatives)

1 Cor. 7.30 those who **rejoice** as though they were **not rejoicing**

1 Cor. 12.26 **rejoice** together

1 Cor. 13.6 it does not **rejoice**

1 Cor. 13.6 but **rejoices** in the truth

There are no references to joy in 1 Corinthians.

c. **2 Corinthians 1-9**

In analyzing Paul’s kinship language above it was clear that there is a definite cooling of Paul’s relations with the Corinthians over the period of the three extant letters. This does not

⁹⁴ xarisqe/nta.

mean that Paul chooses in the same way to reduce his emphasis on grace, standing as it does as a hallmark of Christian existence; it may be that the opposite is true as he engages in corrective didactics.

There are sixteen references⁹⁵ to grace in the first section of 2 Corinthians. Not all of these are germane to this study, and even those that are betray Paul speaking of grace in a highly provisional manner. Those that can be disregarded in this study are

2 Cor. 2.14	thanks be to God
2 Cor. 8.1	of the Macedonians
2 Cor. 8.4	of the Macedonians
2 Cor. 8.6	of Titus' potential work amongst the Corinthians
2 Cor. 8.16	thanks be to God
2 Cor. 8.19	of Titus
2 Cor. 9.15	thanks be to God

These are not included in my numerical analysis.

Those that are unambiguously an affirmation or salutation of grace in some form are as follows (to clarify matters, I include the referent of the grace):

2 Cor. 1.2	Grace to you and peace
2 Cor. 1.12	by the grace of God (as experienced by Paul)
2 Cor. 4.15	so that grace ... may increase thanksgiving
2 Cor. 8.9	you know the generous act of our Lord

⁹⁵ 2 Cor. 1.2, 1.12, 1.15, 2.14, 4.15, 6.1, 8.1, 8.4, 8.6, 8.7, 8.9, 8.16, 8.19, 9.8, 9.14, 9.15.

2 Cor. 9.14 because of the surpassing **grace** of God

In the following references the introduction of grace to the sentence is with a highly provisional or conditional character:

2 Cor. 1.15 so that you might have a double **favour**

2 Cor. 6.1 we urge you not to accept the **grace** of God in vain

2 Cor. 8.7 excel also in this **generous undertaking** (grace)

2 Cor. 9.8 God is able to provide you with every **blessing** (grace)

Additionally, the semantically related list of references to joy, gifts or ‘gifting’, and thanksgiving in the first section of 2 Corinthians is as follows:

thanksgiving (eu) xariste/w/eu) xaristi/a)

2 Cor. 1.11 many will **give thanks**

2 Cor. 4.15 may increase **thanksgiving**

2 Cor. 9.11 which will produce **thanksgiving** to God

2 Cor. 9.12 overflows with many **thanksgivings** to God

gift/gifting (xa/ri/sma)

2 Cor. 1.11 for God’s **gracing** us⁹⁶

act graciously (xari/zomai)

2 Cor. 2.7 you should act **graciously** to him⁹⁷

⁹⁶ My translation.

joy (xara/)

2 Cor. 1.24 we are workers with you for your **joy**

2 Cor. 2.3d so that you would share my **joy**

2 Cor. 7.4 I am over**joyed**

2 Cor. 7.13 at the **joy** of Titus

2 Cor. 8.2 their abundant **joy**⁹⁸

rejoicing (xai/rw and derivatives)

2 Cor. 2.3c it was necessary for me to **rejoice**⁹⁹

2 Cor. 6.10 always **rejoicing**

2 Cor. 7.7 I **rejoiced** still more

2 Cor. 7.9 Now I **rejoice**

2 Cor. 7.13 we **rejoiced** still more

2 Cor. 7.16 I **rejoice**

At 2 Cor. 1.11-12, xari/smata, eu)xaristw~ and xa/rij are interwoven. The NRSV translates it in this way:

... you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf
(eu)xaristhqh|~) for the blessing (xa/risma) granted us through the prayers of many.
Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with

⁹⁷ My translation.

⁹⁸ Note proximity to xa/rin in 2 Cor. 8.1.

⁹⁹ e)/dei me xai/rein: my translation to convey phonological sense of the original.

frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God (e) n xa/riti qeou~) — and all the more toward you.¹⁰⁰

In order to emphasize the word plays, unclear in the NRSV, these verses can be for our purposes translated in this way:

just as you work together with us by your intercession, so that many players might raise their faces in **gratitude** (eu) xaristhqh|~) for our being so **graced** (xa/risma).¹⁰¹ For this is our boast, the witness of our conscience is that we have behaved in the world with integrity and in the purity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the **grace** (e) n xa/riti) of God, and especially so towards you

A number of points regarding these references warrant closer attention. In the first place, it is significant that Paul considers his own God-bearing presence with the Corinthians to be in itself an act of grace (an echo, as is often the case, of the sentiments of Gal. 2.20). Consequently, reference to his planned visit to the Corinthians at 2 Cor. 2.15 is couched in terms of ‘a double grace’. The scribal confusion between xa/rin and xara/n at 2 Cor. 1.15 suggests that Paul’s sense of the interconnectedness of the two was not his alone.¹⁰²

By 2 Cor. 1.24 Paul observes that the Corinthians’ xara/ has always been the purpose of his graced mission to them, made possible as always only by the grace from God (see 2 Cor. 1.2). It is this that they risk in their rejection of Paul. Even his own rejoicing is effectively a necessity designed to generate joy in his audience (2 Cor. 2.3). A few verses later (2.7) the

¹⁰⁰ In the Greek the word order is xa/risma ... eu)xaristhqh ... xa/riti.

¹⁰¹ An alternative translation. Thrall notes that at Rom. 5.15-16 ‘xa/risma is almost a summary term for God’s gracious intervention through Christ: it might then be used also of some more particular occasion of divine intervention’. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 123-124.

¹⁰² ‘[T]he reading xara/n ... appears to be a scribal modification of xa/rin ... perhaps under the influence of 2.3’. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 576.

Corinthians are reminded that they should demonstrate graciousness (*xari/sasqai*) to the punished offender now under discussion. This word is repeated three times at 2 Cor. 2.10; first once again in the second person, *xari/sasqai*, and then twice reminding the Corinthians of Paul's own readiness to demonstrate graciousness – and therefore 'gracedness' – by reference to his own willingness to forgive (act graciously). This leads to doxology to the God of grace.¹⁰³

From 2 Cor. 7.4 to 2 Cor. 8.19 Paul moves to a prolonged reflection leading from *xara/* to *xa/rij*. He introduces the theme by reflecting once more on his own *xara/* in the Corinthians, and the growth of that joy,¹⁰⁴ as he hears of changes to the Corinthians' lives: 'I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us'.¹⁰⁵ The theme is repeated, as Paul reflects on his news of the Corinthians, 'we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus' and at 7.16, 'I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you'.

After this, Paul shifts from *xara/* to *xa/rij*: 'We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia' (2 Cor. 8.1) and begins a series of repetitions of the theme of divine *xa/rij* (my translations):

2 Cor. 8.4 with much beseeching [they were] entreating of us the grace and the fellowship of the ministry to the saints¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ 2 Cor. 2.14.

¹⁰⁴ 2 Cor. 7.7.

¹⁰⁵ 2 Cor. 7.9: *nu=n xai/rw, ou)x o(/ti e)luph/qhte a)ll' o(/ti e)luph/qhte ei)j meta/noian:*

¹⁰⁶ *meta\ pollh=j paraklh/sewj deo/menoi h(mw~n th\n xa/rin kai\ th\n koinwni/an th=j diakoni/aj th=j ei)j tou\j a(gi/ouj*. The NRSV loses Paul's wordplay by repressing the English word 'grace', relegating it to a footnote at 2 Cor. 8.4, 8.6, 8.9 and 8.19, and avoiding it altogether at 9.8. This robs Paul of a crucial emphasis.

- 2 Cor. 8.6 so we implore Titus, that just as he began, so also he should complete
this grace¹⁰⁷ among you
- 2 Cor. 8.7b we want you also to excel in this grace
- 2 Cor. 8.9 for you know this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Again at 2 Cor. 9.11-15 Paul entwines grace and thanksgiving, though with an ear open to overworking an etymological and audible effect he closes the passage with the word *dwrea/*:¹⁰⁸

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ^[12] for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many **thanksgivings (eu)xaristi/an** to God. ^[13] Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ^[14] while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing **grace (xa/rin)** of God that he has given you. ^[15] **Thanks (xa/rij)** be to God for his indescribable gift!¹⁰⁹

d. 2 Corinthians 10-13

This association of grace and thanksgiving, as well as the laudatory tone are conspicuously lost in the later segment of 2 Corinthians, 2 Cor. 10-13. There are just two references to grace, at 2 Cor. 12.9 and at 2 Cor. 13.13. At 2 Cor. 12.13, a sentence laden with irony, Paul once more uses the verb *xari/zomai*, but the irony of his use is such that it makes no

¹⁰⁷ *ei)j to\ parakale/sai h(ma~j Ti/ton, i(/na kaqw\j proevh/pcato ou(/twj kai\ e)pitele/sh| ei)j u(ma~j kai\ th\n xa/rin tau/thn*. The 'grace' referred to is the 'gracious work' of the Jerusalem collection, with the emphasis on *xa/rin* designed, together with the Macedonian illustration, to shame the Corinthians into completing a work begun long before. Translation mine.

¹⁰⁸ See also Rom. 5.15-17. The author of Ephesians uses this form at Eph. 3.7 and Eph. 4.7.

¹⁰⁹ On this occasion the NRSV 'gift' translates *dwrea|* ~ rather than *xa/rin*.

contribution to any appraisal of the presence of grace, joy or thanksgiving in the relationship he is discussing.

e. Galatians

In the conflictual context of Galatia Paul feels very little *xara/* (see Gal. 5.22 only) but repeatedly emphasizes the place of *xa/rij* in order to counter the teachings of the opponents.

The seven references to grace are:

Gal. 1.3	Grace to you and peace
Gal. 1.6	deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ
Gal. 1.15	God ... called me through his grace
Gal. 2.9	the grace given to me
Gal. 2.21	I do not nullify the grace of God
Gal. 5.4	you have fallen away from grace
Gal. 6.18	May the grace of our Lord Jesus

While there are seven references to grace, there is only one to joy. At Gal. 3.18 Paul uses the verb *kexa/ristai*, the perfect middle indicative of *xari/zomai*, but it is predicated of Abraham. Gal. 1.6 and 5.4 are describe that which has been *lost* by the Galatians, and therefore only the greetings Gal. 1.3 and 6.18 are applied to the Galatians at all; the rest are predicated of Paul and used for illustrative purposes only. Even the reference to joy at Gal. 5.22 is not to joy *present* in the Galatian community, but to an ideal to which they should aspire. The picture at the Galatian community is a bleak one. The verb *eu)xariste/w*, to give thanks, is absent altogether.

f. Philippians

In writing to the Philippians the proportional use of the words is reversed. Reference to joy and thanksgiving occur no fewer than 18 times, with just three references to grace. There too Paul utilizes the wordplays of eu)xariste/w and xa/rij: ‘**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; **I thank** my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with **joy** in every one of my prayers for all of you’. The scene is an unparalleled celebration of xara/, because there is no evidence of any abuse of grace in the Philippian community.

The references to grace are at Phil. 1.2 in greeting, at Phil. 1.7 in common shared affirmation, and at Phil. 4.23 in closing benediction. The affirmation of shared experience of grace at Phil. 1.7 is so strong there is no further need for discussion of the matter; there is great opportunity for discussion of the shared experience of joy, xara/. This is so despite the equally shared experience of trial and persecution.

thanksgiving (eu)xariste/w/eu)xaristi/a)

Phil. 1.3 **I thank** my God

Phil. 4.6 by prayer and supplication with **thanksgiving**

gift/gifting (xa/risma)

Phil. 1.29 he has **graciously** granted you

Phil. 2.9 and **graciously** gave¹¹⁰

joy (xara/)

Phil. 1.4 praying with **joy**

¹¹⁰ Translation mine to emphasize phonology.

- Phil. 1.25 for your progress and **joy** in faith
- Phil. 2.2 make my **joy** complete
- Phil. 2.29 welcome him ... with all **joy**
- Phil. 4.1 my **joy** and my crown

rejoicing (xai/rw and derivatives)

- Phil. 1.18a in that I **rejoice**
- Phil. 1.18b I will continue to **rejoice**
- Phil. 2.17 (x 2) I am **glad** and **rejoice** with all of you
- Phil. 2.28 that you may **rejoice**
- Phil. 3.1 **rejoice** (imperative)
- Phil. 4.4a rejoice (imperative)
- Phil. 4.4b rejoice (imperative)
- Phil. 4.10 I rejoice

It is clear then that in a comparatively short letter of only 1629 words, joy, thanksgiving, grace are an overwhelming theme, setting the tone that is the hallmark of this late correspondence.

g. 1 Thessalonians

This pattern is repeated in 1 Thessalonians, where xa/rij is used only in the opening greeting and concluding benediction, but where xara/-derivatives appear nine times. This, though, is the letter in which fictive kinship has been at its most marked. Here the emphasis in the letter is one of thanksgiving and joy, and, while there may be unacceptable teachings

dwelling at the fringes of the community's thought, there is no over-arching need to emphasize and re-emphasize the communal need for *xa/rij*.

Xa/rij appears only at 1 Thess. 1.1, where it is in the nominative case as a greeting, and at 1 Thess. 5.28, also nominative, in closing benediction. Mentions of joy, thanksgiving and rejoicing are more frequent in 1 Thessalonians than are those to grace. There are ten uses of the *xar-* derivatives in this way:

thanksgiving (*eu xariste/w/eu xaristi/a*)

- 1 Thess. 1.2 We always **give thanks**
- 1 Thess. 2.13 We also constantly **give thanks** to God
- 1 Thess. 3.9a How can we **thank** God enough
- 1 Thess. 5.18 **give thanks** in all circumstances

joy (*xara/*)

- 1 Thess. 1.6 you received the word with **joy**
- 1 Thess. 2.19 what is our hope or **joy** or crown
- 1 Thess. 2.20 you are our glory and **joy**
- 1 Thess. 3.9b in return for all the **joy**¹¹¹
- 1 Thess 3.9c that we **enjoy**¹¹²

rejoicing (*xai/rw* and derivatives)

- 1 Thess 5.16 **Rejoice** (imperative)

¹¹¹ Note the threefold linkage of thanksgiving, joy and en-joy-ment in this verse.

¹¹² Translation mine to emphasize the etymological and phonological sense of *xai/romen*.

There are therefore two direct mentions of grace and a further ten references to thanks-giving, joy or rejoicing in 1 Thessalonians.

h. Summary

Local factors alter Paul's use of key words. Where there is a communal tendency to neglect the central doctrine of $\chi\alpha/\rho\iota\varsigma$, then $\chi\alpha/\rho\iota\varsigma$ is a word repeated as a refrain throughout the letter. Where a community has internalized that message and shows no sign of renegeing, Paul allows $\chi\alpha/\rho\iota\varsigma$ to remain an unstated theme, occasionally utilized in greeting and/or concluding benediction. This affects a statistical analysis.

Table 3: use of $\chi\alpha/\rho\iota\varsigma$ and $\chi\alpha/\rho$ -derivatives in order of frequency ($\chi\alpha/\rho$ -indicator)

Epistle	Number of words	Use of $\chi\alpha/\rho$ – derivatives	As % of total words
Philippians	1629	21	1.29%
2 Corinthians 1-9	3001	26	0.87%
1 Thessalonians	1480	12	0.81%
Romans	7058	33	0.47%
1 Corinthians	6829	28	0.41%
Galatians	2230	7	0.31%
2 Corinthians 10-13	1462	2	0.13%

This table provides a new and more complete, detailed key to Paul's mindset as he writes. Joy and grace are at the forefront of his mind as he writes to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, and in the second of the three extant Corinthian letters. The heightened sense of joy, grace and derivatives in the first part of 2 Corinthians may at first appear to be an anomaly, but this includes an outburst of praise that follows the *meta/noia* of the chief sinner (2 Cor. 1.22 – 2.13, 7.1 – 8.2) in which $\chi\alpha\rho\alpha/$ is an overriding theme. Paul's joy at this return of a prodigal is consistent with the values of the faith community that are outlined in the Jesus

parable of that name. In the earlier Corinthian correspondence Paul is concerned to rectify his audience's behaviour, and particularly to correct their libertine temptation to abuse grace; for this reason α/τ -derivatives are frequently repeated. In the third extant letter even 'grace' only appears twice (2 Cor. 12.9, God's scriptural address to Paul, and the formulaic 2 Cor. 13.14), and other α/τ -derivatives not at all: any warmth of relationship is all but extinguished.

This indicator can be further nuanced by combining the α/τ -indicator (Table 3) with the earlier Fictive Kinship Indicator (Table 2). This, which I refer to as the Connectivity Figure, is as yet a provisional figure to which more information needs to be added. It is arrived at by the simple expedient of adding the Fictive Kinship and α/τ -indicators, and dividing by two.¹¹³

Table 4: Paul's connection with his audience (The Connectivity Indicator)

Epistle	Author/audience connectivity
1 Thessalonians	1.08%
Philippians	0.98%
2 Corinthians 1-9	0.55%
1 Corinthians	0.52%
Romans	0.38%
Galatians	0.36%
2 Corinthians 10-13	0.07%

Table 4, then, combines the Fictive Kinship Indicator and the α/τ -indicator to provide an indication of the warmth and connection Paul feels in relationship between author and audience. This is to be called the Connectivity Indicator. This table is therefore a statistical

¹¹³ For the algebraically literate, the simple equation is, if the Fictive Kinship Indicator is α and the α/τ -indicator is β , $\frac{\alpha + \beta}{2}$.

indicator of the warmth and satisfaction that Paul experiences in communication with his audience. It combines the two indicators, Fictive Kinship and χ^2/τ -indication, to form a single indicator of satisfaction connection. This provides, in the terms made indispensable by Beker, indication of a significant *contingency* that affects the way in which Paul addresses his audience. The letters can now be presented in a sequence of degree of connectivity/disconnectivity that exists between Paul and his audience.

We now have two indicators of the warmth of relationship – or, more accurately, the depth of passion – between Paul and his audience. The Fictive Kinship Indicator (Table 2) is gained by dividing the number of kinship references by the number of words in each letter, and provides some indication of the degree of familial feeling Paul has for each audience. But families, fictive or otherwise, are not always harmonious, and a second indication, based on Paul's focus on joy and thanksgiving in each letter, indicates the degree to which he is satisfied with his target audience and their journey in Paul's kerygma (Table 3). The combination of these provides the Connectivity Indicator, by which in the remainder of this study, the contingent circumstance of Paul's sense of connection with his audience may in part be measured.

It is possible to suggest some reasons for this finding based on the knowledge that we have of other historical and sociological contingencies pertaining to each letter, as discussed in Chapter One of this study.

In broad terms, when writing to the Thessalonians Paul is writing to a community for whom he has great fondness, and doing so in pastoral concern and love as they face crises

brought about by their seemingly apocalyptic circumstances. Paul has concern for their well-being but not for their behaviour.

A similar pattern is at work as Paul writes to the Philippians. These Macedonian Christians have been faithful in their support of Paul throughout his public ministry. As he writes to them from prison – with many of the vicissitudes of his life removed from his control – he feels concern for their well-being. He feels, too, some concern regarding a slight misunderstanding in communication between himself and his audience. He recalls with passion other experiences of interference and this memory triggers an outburst of some vehemence (Phil. 3.2-3). He generally feels no concern that anything outside their ability to cope will effect their behaviour or beliefs.

Paul has great love for the Corinthian community, but they increasingly bewilder and frustrate him by their behaviour and departure from the gospel he proclaimed to them. As the relationship deteriorates the tension grows – but news of successful remedial action in the life of one influential convert brings Paul great joy in the second extant letter. That second extant letter is itself a corrective to what is likely to have been emotionally a highly disconnected missive, the ‘Sorrowful Letter’ now lost. Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians ends up taking a sharp downturn following the infiltration by a group of opponents, so that the correspondence ends on the sourest note of all the extant correspondence.

In writing to the Romans Paul is writing to a location with which he is not familiar – no matter how many of the audience he knows personally he is slightly less able to presume on a fiction of kinship than is normally the case. This is reflected then in a ‘cooler’ approach to his audience.

The Galatians have been, in Paul's terms, foolish in allowing themselves to be seduced by proponents of another, false gospel. As a result Paul is furious. He is furious primarily not so much with his audience, for whom he feels a deep love, but with the opponents who have subverted his mission. He therefore establishes an air of conditional warmth, issuing stern warnings tempered with genuine pastoral compassion for an audience group who once supported him and his gospel with such openness.

As foreshadowed in my introduction to this chapter, one further modification is needed to refine this measure of relations between Paul and his audience. There are many life-ingredients Paul wants his audience to perfect, but the main critical indication is 'right belief'.

4. pisteu/ontej

Critical issues for Paul, based again on the number of references he makes to them, are the matters of 'faith' (pi/stij) 'belief' or 'believing' (from pisto/j), and the related term of affirmation and belonging, 'believers' (pisteu/ontej). This last is used as a signifier of belonging, applied to those within the community of faith (or belief), to operate as another flag of membership alongside terms of endearment and terms of fictive kinship. Paul's use of these signs warrants close analysis, for they are key descriptive and definitive terms for Paul.¹¹⁴ Once more the context will determine the applicability of Paul's use of the word: does he refer to and endorse the faith or belief of his audience, or does he refer to himself or to a third party? Does Paul utilize the word in such a way as it includes or excludes the audience? Once again there is an inevitable degree of subjectivity in assessment, but, given this variable, this process should provide some further litmus test of relationship between Paul and his audience.

¹¹⁴ The NRSV and similarly inclusive translators' habitual use of 'believer(s)' for *a) delfoi* – as, for example, at 1 Cor. 7.12 – while an appropriate response to demands of gender inclusion, muddies the theological question at hand.

a. **pisteu/w**

From the perspective of an evaluation of audience faith the verb *pisteu/w* is used with relative infrequency; there are 24 relevant uses predicated of the audiences across the canonical letters.

It appears 21 times in Romans, but not all these uses fit the criteria required here. Eleven uses of the word group that don't meet the criteria are:

Rom. 1.16 and 3.22: these are not predicated directly of the Roman audience but of 'someone' and 'Jesus Christ' respectively.

Rom 3.2 is predicated of the Jews.

Rom. 4.3, 4.5, 4.11, 4.17 and 4.18 are predicated of Abraham.

Rom. 10.14 and 10.16 apply to an abstract third party.

Rom. 14.2, though it could by extension be related to 'faith', primarily applies to ethical and gastronomical choices.

This leaves the following ten uses:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Rom. 3.22b | the righteousness of God through faith in/of Jesus Christ for all who believe |
| Rom. 4.24 | It will be reckoned to us who believe |
| Rom. 6.8 | we believe that we will also live with him |
| Rom. 9.33 | whoever believes in him will not be put to shame |
| Rom. 10.4 | everyone who believes |
| Rom. 10.9 | believe in your heart |
| Rom. 10.10 | one [as indefinite pronoun] believes with the heart |
| Rom. 10.11 | [quoting and applying to the audience Isa. 28.16] 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame' |

Rom. 13.11 when we became **believers**
 Rom. 15.13 joy and peace in **believing**

Although the word appears nine times in 1 Corinthians, there are just six occurrences relevant to this investigation.¹¹⁵ Paul's use of *pepi/steumai* at 1 Cor. 9.17, though etymologically related, is not germane to our discussion. Similarly 1 Cor. 11.18 is not related, and 1 Cor. 15.2 is a hypothetical negative. We have, therefore:

1 Cor. 1.21 God decided ... to save those who **believe**
 1 Cor. 3.5 through whom you came to **believe**
 1 Cor. 13.7 [Love] It bears all things, **believes** all things
 1 Cor. 14.22 (x 2) Tongues, then, are a sign not for **believers** but for unbelievers,
 while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for **believers**.
 1 Cor. 15.11 so you have come to **believe**

In the early part of 2 Corinthians the verb is used just twice, in the single verse 2 Cor. 4.13. There are also only two relevant verb-references to believing in Galatians, as Gal. 3.6 refers to Abraham rather than to the audience: at Gal. 2.16 Paul refers to his own conversion narrative, using an authorial plural of collusion to implicate the audience in his surmise. The example of his life is to be one from which his audience can learn, and so is relevant to an assessment of author/audience relations. At Gal 3.22, where he uses the much disputed phrase 'faith of/in Jesus Christ', the debate does not altogether impinge on this investigation. Whether the author and believer share in a common narrative of faith *in* Jesus Christ, or benefit from the faith *of* Jesus Christ, they nevertheless share the relationship of a common narrative.

¹¹⁵1 Cor. 1.21; 3.5; 13.7; 14.22 (x 2), 15.11.

Unusually, Paul uses an infinitive construction at Phil. 1.29¹¹⁶ as he describes the Philippians' vocation 'to believe' and 'to suffer'. In 1 Thessalonians Paul uses the form on three occasions as he affirms the Thessalonians in their believing: The Thessalonians are described as 'believing ones' (τοι=j pisteu/ousin) a participle construction, at 1 Thess. 2.10 and again at 1 Thess. 2.13, and Paul identifies with them in a first person plural at 1 Thess. 4.14. At 1 Thess. 1.7 the non-Thessalonian 'Macedonian' believers are referred to, but affirmation of the Thessalonians' faith is reserved to the next verse where their pi/stij (as a noun: see below) is affirmed, so this reference is not counted. At 1 Thess. 2.4 Paul uses the verb with an authorial plural, with the meaning 'to be entrusted', a different sense of the word.

b. pi/stij

Scrutiny of Paul's identification of believers is complex, for he constantly refers to faith or belief as a defining attribute of his audience or of those historical examples that he uses to make a point to his audience. Excluding references that are predicated of Abraham, textually suspect references, and references to bad or absent faith, there are 27 such references in Romans alone. But of these how many are directly predicated as an attribute of the audience? Once more there is the inevitable degree of subjectivity in tallying these verses, but by my reckoning the following 22 verses apply the concept of faith directly to the audience:¹¹⁷

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Rom. 1.5 | through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name |
| Rom. 1.8 | your faith is proclaimed throughout the world |
| Rom. 1.12 | so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith , both yours |

¹¹⁶ Elsewhere only at Rom. 15.13.

¹¹⁷ At Rom. 1.17 Paul cites Hab. 2.4, and the word occurs three times. It is not however directly applied to the Roman audience. At Rom. 3.3 it appears as an abstract or hypothetical. At Rom. 3.27 Paul refers to 'the law of faith', a third party.

	and mine
Rom. 3.25	effective through faith
Rom. 3.26	the one who has faith in/of Jesus ¹¹⁸
Rom. 3.28	a person is justified by faith
Rom. 3.30 (x 2)	since ... God will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith
Rom. 3.31	Do we then overthrow the law by this faith ?
Rom. 4.5	such faith is reckoned as righteousness
Rom. 4.16 (x 2)	to those who share the faith of Abraham
Rom. 5.1	we are justified by faith
Rom. 9.30	righteousness through faith
Rom. 10.6	the righteousness that comes from faith
Rom. 10.8	the word of faith that we proclaim
Rom. 10.17	faith comes from what is heard
Rom. 11.20	you stand only through faith
Rom. 12.3	each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned
Rom. 12.6	prophecy, in proportion to faith
Rom. 14.1	Welcome those who are weak in faith
Rom. 14.22	The faith that you have

In 1 Corinthians, Paul uses *pi/stij* terminology of his audience on six relevant occasions.¹¹⁹ In the earlier section of 2 Corinthians Paul refers to the audience's faith a further six times,¹²⁰ and just once in the final section of the Corinthian correspondence.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ See on Gal. 3.22, above, p. 142.

¹¹⁹ 1 Cor. 2.5, 12.9, 13.13, 15.14, 15.17, 16.13. 1 Cor. 15.14 and 1 Cor. 15.17 are hypothetical proposals to which the audience is expected to assent. 1 Cor. 13.2, however, is predicated only of Paul – even if as a hypothetical it should be assented to by the audience!

¹²⁰ 2 Cor. 1.24 (x 2), 4.13, 5.7, 8.7, 10.15.

¹²¹ 2 Cor. 13.5.

There are 24 references to faith in Galatians¹²² but the critical question again is how many of these references are applied to the audience. These will not include references to Christ at work within the audience that are conditional on the audience's acquiescence to Paul's corrective instructions, nor to references to the faith *of* Christ. Even if the possessive genitive hermeneutic were not applied, the application of Gal. 2.16a and Gal. 3.22 to the audience as words of affirmation is highly tenuous. At Gal. 3.26 Paul does allow his rhetoric to surmise the faith of his audience (though, in a cynical reading, one might even suggest this use of *pi/stewj* is a reference to the results of the faith of Jesus!). I shall therefore now list the sentences in which Paul's references are to the faith of his audience, together with (*in italics*) a summary statement of their applicability or otherwise to my enumerations. I have highlighted in **bold** the references I consider to affirm the audience's faith. These will include two verbal uses of Gal. 2.16b and Gal. 3.22, referred to above.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Gal. 1.23 | the faith he once tried to destroy (<i>external reference</i>) |
| Gal. 2.16 (x 2) | we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in/of Jesus Christ (<i>hypothetical, or possibly predicated of Jesus</i>). And we have come to believe (e)pisteu/samen: <i>verbal, used to express authorial collusion</i>) ¹²³ in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in/of (<i>hypothetical, or possibly predicated of Jesus</i>) Christ |
| Gal. 3.8 | God would justify the Gentiles by faith (<i>of Gentiles as abstract</i>) |
| Gal. 3.9 | those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed (<i>hypothetical</i>) |
| Gal. 3.11 | The one who is righteous will live by faith (<i>hypothetical and conditional</i>) |
| Gal. 3.12 | the law does not rest on faith (<i>of the law</i>) |

¹²² Gal. 1.23, 2.16 (x 2), 2.20, 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 (x 2), 3.11, 3.12, 3.14, 3.22 (x 2), 3.23 (x 2), 3.24, 3.25, 3.26, 5.5, 5.6, 5.22, 6.10.

¹²³ See on pisteu/w, pp. 201-203, above.

- Gal. 3.14 so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through **faith**
(authorial collusion with audience)
- Gal. 3.22 (x 2) what was promised through faith in/of Jesus Christ *(hypothetical, or
possibly predicated of Jesus)* to those believing *(abstract)*
- Gal. 3.23a before faith came *(historical and conditional)*
- Gal. 3.23b until faith would be revealed *(historical and conditional)*
- Gal. 3.24 so that we might be justified by **faith** *(conditional, but inclusive of
author and audience)*
- Gal. 3.25 now that faith has come *(historical)*
- Gal. 3.26 you are all children of God through **faith** *(affirming audience)*
- Gal. 5.5 through the Spirit, by **faith** *(affirming audience)*
- Gal. 5.6 the only thing that counts is faith working through love *(external and
abstract)*
- Gal. 5.22 the fruit of the Spirit is ... faith *(external and abstract)*
- Gal. 6.10 especially for **those of the family of faith** *(affirming audience)*

Paul's faith references when writing to the Galatians are references of contrast: the circumcisors have replaced all-important focus on faith with an impostor gospel (Gal. 1.6). References to faith in Galatians are overwhelmingly to examples of faith, trust and trustworthiness *outside* the Galatian community. In Gal. 2.15-21, where Paul speaks of faith four times in 130 words, the references are all in the authorial plural.¹²⁴ In the 436 words of Galatians 3, Paul uses faith terminology 16 times, but the majority of these refer either to the faith of Abraham, or of his descendants, including Paul and those like him (Gal. 3.14b, 3.23-

¹²⁴ The most significant study of Paul's use of the authorial plural is Karl Dick, *Der schriftstellerische Plural bei Paulus* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900). Dick stresses the importance of context rather than grammatical rules in determining what George Lyons calls 'the antecedent of each occurrence of the first person plural' – that is its literal-numeric or stylistic plural. Lyons, *Autobiography*, 15 n. 4.

25). At Gal. 3.26 the voice changes to the second person: ‘As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ’. The voice now though is conditional second person: ‘*if* you belong to Christ’ (Gal. 3.29). The NRSV provides ‘believe’ for the participle *pisteu/ousin* (Gal. 3.22) and translates the passage as a contrast between faith and belief on the one hand and works and law on the other. In English translation the etymological connections, of which Paul is always aware, are lost.

The rule that has governed my hermeneutical investigation at this point is that it is important to remember the focus of the investigation: Paul can only affirm the faith in or of his audience where it actually present – not where it may be present conditional upon their obedience to his written instructions. On how many occasions does Paul actually unconditionally affirm the faith he and his audience share? Again there must be some degree of hermeneutical conjecture, but I find only Gal. 2.16b, 3.14, 3.24, 3.26, 5.5, and 6.10 to meet these criteria.

When writing to the Philippians, Paul’s tone is less didactic. At Phil. 3.9 Paul is reflecting on his own life of faith (using the word twice) but the remaining three references to the faith of the Philippians¹²⁵ are in contexts in which the Philippians’ faith is a cause of joy and celebration. At Phil. 1.25 Paul’s reference is to the ‘joy of faith’, enlarged as ‘the faith of the gospel’ at Phil. 1.27.

In the warmth of that early Thessalonians correspondence faith and believing are celebrated often, with eight affirmations or encouragements of the audience’s faith.¹²⁶ At 1 Thess. 1.3, where Paul recalls the ‘work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in

¹²⁵ Phil. 1.25, 1.27, 2.17.

¹²⁶ 1 Thess. 1.3, 1.8, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.10, 5.8.

our Lord Jesus Christ’ of the Thessalonians, the sentence is to be read in its entirety as an identifier of the faith community by its characteristics.

One characteristic Pauline expression of appropriate belief could be named ‘cardiac belief’ – ‘for one believes with the heart and so is made righteous’ (Rom. 10.10b). This usage appears throughout Paul’s writings,¹²⁷ with the exception of Philippians.¹²⁸ The heart as seat of right or wrong relationship with God is a recurrent Hebrew scriptural theme adopted by Paul.¹²⁹

c. pisto/j

The uses of pisto/j in the Pauline letters are predominately of God or of a hypothetical third party.¹³⁰ This includes 1 Cor. 4.2, which speaks of ‘stewards’ as being found ‘trustworthy’ in a way in which the audience are asked to extrapolate significance for their own lives. Paul does not make the direct assessment of his audience that they are trustworthy. He makes similar indirect associations at 2 Cor. 6.15b and Gal. 3.9.

d. Summary: pist-derivatives as an Affirmation of Audience Belief

Faith, in Paul’s understanding, is the appropriate response to hearing the gospel proclaimed (Rom. 10.17). He is able to speak of those who respond to the gospel with faith, as believers – the etymology could better be expressed in English if the word ‘faithful’ were used. He can then speak of ‘faith’ objectively as something apparent in and impacting on the life of his audience, or subjectively of them as ‘faithful’, as believers. Is it possible to surmise that the

¹²⁷ Rom. 2.29, 5.5, 6.17, 10.9, 10.10; 2 Cor. 1.22, 3.3, 4.6; Gal. 4.6 (by implication); 1 Thess. 2.4, 2.13, 3.13.

¹²⁸ Phil. 1.7 refers to ‘holding Paul’ in the heart of the audience. Phil. 4.7 refers to the work of the Spirit.

¹²⁹ E.g., Gen. 6.5, 20.5-6, Exod. 4.21, Lev. 26.41, Deut. 2.30, 4.29, 6.5, 6.6, 8.2, 10.12, 11.13-18, 13.3, 26.16, 30.1-17, Josh. 11.20, 24.23, Isa. 51.7, Jer. 31.33.

¹³⁰ Of God: 1 Cor. 1.9, 10.13, 2 Cor. 1.18, 1 Thess. 5.24. Of Timothy: 1 Cor. 4.17. Of Paul: 1 Cor. 7.25. Of Abraham: Gal. 3.9b. Of abstract third party: 1 Cor. 4.2, 2 Cor. 6.15b, Gal. 3.9a.

more he can affirm his audience as faithful the greater the warmth and connection he feels for them – an equation as simple as the more he uses the verb form *pisteu/w* the more he expresses warmth for and connection with his audience?

Some tenuous observations can be made at this point. Where *pisteu/w* is predicated of Paul's audience Paul more often than not responds with a warm tone in writing. In the case of Philippians there is a clear exception. Philippians is a late letter, written after Paul has experienced the bitter conflicts and betrayals apparent in the Corinthian and Galatian correspondence. He is, as it were, battle-scarred, and, as part of a 'safeguard' (Phil. 3.1b) against further disappointment, offers stern warnings (Phil. 3.18, 4.2) and expresses deep disappointment and cynicism about enemies within the faith community (Phil. 3.2-4a, 19). He has seen 'belief' slide into subversion and opposition, and counters the possibility grimly when writing to this audience (Phil. 4.1). These psychological scars alter Paul's writing style, and language subjectively affirming audience belief is less noticeable here than in the comparably warm and connected but earlier 1 Thessalonians. It must be acknowledged that this is one sense in which chronology could to some extent explain the shift in Paul's perspective, but we are in this case referring to an emotional rearrangement of Paul's linguistics rather than the theological re-positioning implied by those that Beker was refuting.

The table that follows simply charts the frequency with which Paul speaks of, in any collusive or affirming manner, the faith he shares with his audiences. It can be noticed that Romans, which has a low to mid-range connectivity, has the second highest use of *pist*-derivatives. Galatians, though similar in 'connectivity' to Romans, has a much lower use. References to faith in an objective sense, to faith as a phenomenon, skew these results. It would be possible, if discussions *about* faith were not separated from affirmations *of* the audience

practice of faith, to miss an emerging connection between Paul’s subjective affirmation of the faith of the audience and the language of kinship. Does Paul, when he finds laudable faith in his audience, more readily use kinship language? I have noted that Philippians, with a high connectivity, has a low use of *pist*-derivatives. In that context battle-scarred Paul feels secure in the appropriate faith of his audience, and feels little need to discuss it.

Table 5: belief and connectivity (in connectivity order)

Epistle	Total words	Total <i>pist</i> -Derivatives	Total <i>pist</i> -derivatives as %	Connectivity Indicator
1 Thess.	1480	12	0.81%	1.08%
Phil.	1629	4	0.25%	0.98%
2 Cor. 1-9	3001	7	0.23%	0.55%
1 Cor.	6829	12	0.18%	0.52%
Rom.	7058	36	0.51%	0.38%
Gal.	2230	6	0.27%	0.36%
2 Cor. 10-13	1459	2	0.14%	0.07%

A reversal of order between 1 Corinthians and Romans is explained by Paul himself. As part of the formal thanksgiving Paul praises the Romans for their faith ‘known throughout the world’ (Rom. 1. 8). He has no great emotional connection with the Romans – the salutation and thanksgiving are quite formal – but Paul has a genuine respect for them based on the many reports he has received (Rom. 16.19). By contrast he knows the Corinthians intimately, having lived amongst them and seeded the gospel among them (1 Cor. 3.6), but is disappointed at news that he has received (1 Cor. 1.10). Consequently his language is warm – but in the face of bad reports he is less prepared to commend the Corinthians’ faith.

Is this then a way of ascertaining the degree to which Paul expects a responsive reception from his audience? That reception would in turn be indicative of his perceptions of their

receptivity and openness to the Spirit working through him (1 Cor. 14.37). A further comparison can be made between Paul's sense of connectivity with his audience and the total of references to belief, subjective or objective, in his audiences.

5. Conclusion: Combined Emotional Connectivity and Faith Affirmation (Paul's Satisfaction)

The final statistical analysis to be applied to these findings is found by combining the faith affirmation and connectivity indexes.¹³¹ This combination provides a key to the sense of satisfaction Paul experiences with each of his audiences. Where he can affirm their faith, give thanks for them, and rest comfortably with the knowledge that he is united with them in a common kinship bond, then Paul's satisfaction is high: these indications will indicate that satisfaction rating. Where there are problems in any of these areas the contingency changes, and with the changing contingency there is a change in Paul's language, as well as in his perspective on many non-essential matters. These contingencies shape each of Paul's letters, and we are approximating some tangible measurement of that contingency.

By combining the faith affirmation and connectivity indexes, we arrive at the following figures. The Connectivity Indication was achieved by assessing the frequency of kinship and endearment language. That assessment is now combined with Paul's assessment of the right belief of his audience. The only anomaly to emerge in the order is the reversal of the first and second extant Corinthian letters; this caused by a short-lived escalation of Pauline satisfaction based on the receipt of news from Titus (2 Cor. 7.13-16).

¹³¹ As with the Connectivity Indicator above, the maths is simple: the combination, if the connectivity indicator is a and the pist-indicator is b , is $\frac{\alpha + \beta}{2}$.

Table 6: Paul's satisfaction with his audience

Letter	Satisfaction Rating
1 Thessalonians	0.68%
Philippians	0.52%
2 Corinthians 1-9	0.34%
1 Corinthians	0.30%
Romans	0.26%
Galatians	0.22%
2 Corinthians 10-13	0.03%

By this method a basis is reached on which an evaluation might be made of Paul's contextual language. It is a partial indication rather than a complete and fool-proof one, for there remain many variables. In Galatians and 2 Corinthians, for example, there is no use of either the emphatic 'my beloved sibling' or the earlier Thessalonian 'siblings beloved of God'. This has the effect of lowering the fictive kinship in the Galatian and later Corinthian correspondence: the emphasis is greater on the 'fiction' than on the 'kinship' in the equation of fictive kinship!

At this point it is a useful exercise to measure these findings against the private letter Philemon. As observed above, Philemon is a letter of just 334 words, and as such it could skew statistical findings. A quick glance at this letter, however, suggests that in broad terms the patterns established in Paul's longer public 'ecclesial' letters are continued. Paul uses the $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\acute{o}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ four times in the letter (1, 7, 16, 20), which, combined with two uses of $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (1, 16), gives a Fictive Kinship Indicator of 2.10%, far higher even than 1 Thessalonians (1.35%). The Connectivity Indicator, as Paul finds or expresses signs of 'being in' in his audience and his own relationship with them, is 1.65%, again higher than the closest public letter (again 1 Thessalonians, 1.08%). Paul's use of two $\pi\iota\sigma\tau$ -derivatives (5, 6) is less

frequent than other key indicators in the letter, but at 0.60% is again lower only than 1 Thessalonians (0.81%). This is unsurprising, as Paul's primary concern is the practical question of Philemon's treatment of his slave, rather than the question of right belief. Indeed 'right belief' is a given between author and his audience, and is the basis on which Paul addresses Philemon so confidently (Philem 4-7), and no further mention need be made of the assumption.

These factors combine to give an overall Satisfaction Rating of 1.13%, the highest of any of Paul's letters (Aasgaard rates it as second highest). This is not altogether unexpected, as Paul is using his own emotional ties with Philemon as the primary rhetorical key in presentation of his case on behalf of Onesimus: 'I am bold enough in Christ to command you' is not a strategy likely to improve Onesimus' future if there is no connection upon which to presume!¹³² It is worth noting that this is the only letter in which Paul unambiguously utilizes humour as a rhetorical tool.¹³³

It is also useful to compare these findings with those of Aasgaard. He notes 'Address is thirteen times more frequent in 1 Thessalonians than in 2 Corinthians, and two and a half times more frequent in Galatians / Philippians than in Romans'.¹³⁴ He too argues that the differences cannot be explained chronologically, but that 'his use of address changes with the circumstances', and that this is a rhetorical strategy.¹³⁵ Because Aasgaard doesn't divide 2 Corinthians into separate acts of correspondence the degeneration of relations between Paul and that audience is less clearly charted in his findings. He does note that in 2 Corinthians 'the

¹³² Barth and Blanke note the 'particularly dense' use of emphatic pronouns 'I' and 'Thou'. *Ibid.*, 109.

¹³³ Barth and Blanke, *Philemon*, 118-119. See however L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005) and L. Welborn, "Euangelistes Parasitos: Paul's Caricature of his Chief Rival as a Pompous Parasite in 2 Corinthians 11:20" in L. Welborn, *Paul's Enemy, Paul's Friend: The "Wrongdoer" in Second Corinthians*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. Forthcoming.

¹³⁴ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 268.

¹³⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269.

virtual lack of sibling address probably reflects the crisis between him and them: siblingship is almost non-existent'.¹³⁶ Aasgaard's table of distribution of sibling address produces a different order to my satisfaction ratings. His order is based on the number of verses per use of sibling address, and is as follows:¹³⁷

Table 7: Aasgaard's 'Distribution of Address'

Letter	# of address	# of verses	Verses per address
1 Thessalonians	14	89	6.4
Philemon	2	25	12.5
Galatians	9	149	16.6
Philippians	6	104	17.3
1 Corinthians	20	437	21.8
Romans	10	433	43.3
2 Corinthians	3	256	85.3

Aasgaard then further ranks the letters in terms of 'degree of social cohesion'.¹³⁸ On this basis he establishes the following rankings:

Table 8: Aasgaard's characterization of relations¹³⁹

Letter	Social cohesion	'charge'	'Emotional stamp'
1 Thessalonians	Close	Positive	Unstrained
Philemon	Close	Positive	Unstrained
Galatians	Close	Ambivalent	Strained
Philippians	Close	Positive	Unstrained
1 Corinthians	Close	Positive	Strained
2 Corinthians	Distant	Negative	Strained
Romans	Distant	ambivalent/negative	Unstrained

¹³⁶ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 270.

¹³⁷ See Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 268.

¹³⁸ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269 n. 44.

¹³⁹ See also Aasgaard's Figure 10, *Beloved*, 294.

Aasgaard defines ‘social cohesion’ as ‘the degree of social cohesion between Paul and his addressees, for instance whether Paul is the founder of the community or not, and the degree of contact he has preserved with it’.¹⁴⁰ His term ‘charge’, with metaphorical implications of electronic connectivity, ‘refer[s] to the character of the ties between Paul and his addressees ... for instance the character of Paul’s authority and the addressees’ (expected) loyalty towards him’.¹⁴¹ The terminology ‘Emotional Stamp’ is undeveloped by Aasgaard beyond general reference to ‘positive, negative and neutral’¹⁴² address in antiquity.

The differences between Aasgaard’s order and mine are based on a number of factors. Aasgaard, as mentioned, does not separate the later Corinthian correspondence into two letters. This means that the degeneration of relationship is not so closely charted. He does on the other hand include Philemon in his analysis, an inclusion I have made only tangentially because of the comparative numerical insignificance of the word count in that brief letter. But most telling, Aasgaard’s primary field of assessment, that of sibling address, is balanced only by relatively intangible assessments such as ‘expected loyalty’, ‘character of authority’ and ‘strength of ties’. My analysis, based on a more concrete sample of additional word usages, may provide a more accurate assessment of the most telling of contingencies affecting Paul’s thought and expression, his emotional connectivity to and satisfaction with his audience. This is effectively an assessment of Paul’s imprimatur or otherwise of the audience’s state of and success at ‘Being In’.

¹⁴⁰ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269 n. 44.

¹⁴¹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269 n. 44. For ‘charge’ see also *ibid.*, 265. Birge provides a slightly more quantifiable reference when she writes of Paul’s shift ‘from terms and actions associated with consanguinity ... to terms and actions associated with the kinship of household affinity’. Birge, *Language of Belonging*, 16.

¹⁴² Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 269 n. 44.

Chapter 4: Staying In: A Life Under Scrutiny

Introduction

Since Sanders¹ there has been vigorous debate on questions regarding covenantal nomism, and the question I am addressing here, ‘Staying In’ the faith community. A significant issue for this study is whether ‘Getting In’, as considered above, and ‘Staying In’ considered here, are synonymous: whether to be in Christ is to be *irrevocably* in Christ. Gathercole² notes that the tense of these two constructions robs discussion of an element of eschatology that is fundamental to understanding Paul. He proposes a corrective perspective, suggesting ‘getting *there*’.³

This suggestion pre-empts the arguments proposed by Gundry Volf, flagged by Dunn as ‘rather tendentious’.⁴ Gundry Volf argues on the basis of passages such as 1 Cor. 5 that because ‘false profession’ is a possibility,⁵ lapsing from genuine profession is impossible. She maintains that ‘the “unrighteous” inside the church are as much unbelievers as the “unrighteous” outside’,⁶ and on that basis reasons that ‘the Corinthian church attached too little importance to the implications of conduct for the genuineness of professed faith and had thus welcomed into its fellowship those who did not truly belong’.⁷

¹ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*.

² S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 23.

³ Gathercole, *Boasting*, 24. Italics in original.

⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 497, n. 153.

⁵ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, e.g. 120, 125.

⁶ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 136-7.

⁷ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 137.

This robs the early Christian community of responsibility to maintain right conduct, including the conduct of right belief.⁸ The community is left only with discernment in selection and inclusion, and this becomes the opposite of a gospel of grace: any inappropriate conduct by a member indicates that that miscreant member was never a member of the community of saints in the first place. Gundry Volf's interpretation 2 Cor. 12.20-21 demonstrates that 'Paul suspects church members who practice vices of never having truly converted',⁹ or that their conversion is 'inauthentic'.¹⁰ Despite this, she concludes 'Converts to Christianity who abandon faith in the gospel of grace through which they were initially saved can put themselves outside the sphere of its saving power'.¹¹

This being the case, and because '*apostasy* remains a real possibility for the Pauline believer for the duration of the eschatological tension',¹² it is important to consider the responsibilities of the insider to ensure their *continued* belonging 'inside' or 'of' the family of Christ. We need to see if Paul's linguistic response to his audience differs depending on his sense of their fidelity to the gospel as he has proclaimed it. It becomes an important issue in a soteriological analysis: do signs of slippage from the faith as Paul proclaimed it result in a less universalizing understanding of the Christ-event? This is once more a consideration of boundary crossing: where are the parameters of acceptable faith and practice, and what indicators are available to Paul and his audience to show they are not risking departure from orthodoxy and orthopraxy?

⁸ N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 1-2.

⁹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 140.

¹⁰ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 271.

¹¹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 285, citing Gal. 5.1-4, Rom. 11.17-24. It should be noted that there appears to have been *as yet* no apostasy in the Thessalonian context. See de Vos, *Church and Community*, 168, 170.

¹² Dunn, *Theology*, 497. Dunn's italics.

We have a significant difficulty: Paul's teaching and formation of the faith communities to which he wrote was primarily residential: he lived and worked among those who later became his epistolary audience (1 Cor. 2.1, 2 Cor. 1.15-16),¹³ and his primary instruction took place when he was present with them (Phil. 4.9). Consequently his written instructions are less specific than we might wish. An instruction such as 'pursue love' (1 Cor. 14.1a) can appear vague and non-specific to an unintended audience disconnected as we are from Paul's original teachings and demonstrations of the faith and its demands. We must assume that author and audience shared common understanding of his teachings and the demands that he made of the audience as they received the gospel from him (1 Thess. 4.2).

The method in this chapter is once more to look at the demands Paul makes of his audience, and the encouragement he offers to them to remain faithful to his kerygma. Again I have taken a numerical approach: what are the most frequent indicators that reassure Paul and his audience that the latter are on track? Now, in the light of my previous chapter, we can ask a further question: is there a relationship between the audience's ability to 'stay in' and Paul's relationship of connectivity and satisfaction with them?

Once more there are inevitable subjective judgements made in analysis, but it seems to me that the primary consideration is that the audience know themselves to be 'under scrutiny', both by God and humans, as outlined below. By withstanding that scrutiny they 'stay in' the community of Christ. They are, first and foremost, simply to know that they are to be exemplary, effectively walking advertisements (though Paul didn't use the phrase!) of the integrity of the gospel and the Christ-event it proclaims (section 1, below). The primary field, numerically assessed, in which they must be exemplary is by the quality of their love, which is

¹³ See also 1 Cor. 16.5-7, 2 Cor. 1.23.

to be mutual (section 2). This is seemingly a self-evident statement, but in the light of some of the behaviour that Paul is aware of in his audience communities, self-evidence is insufficient. Following this I go on to examine the significance of subjection to various forms of authority (section 3), obedience to the dictates of God-given conscience (section 4), and the importance of a life-style pattern that can best be described as ‘living to Christ’ (section 5). This is then followed by discussions of the importance of renouncing what is shameful (section 6) and by the negative connotations of boasting (section 7). Finally I consider what might be termed ‘pneumatic’ indications that a life is being lived ‘in the Spirit’ (section 8) before offering a conclusion to the chapter. The premise undergirding all these assessment indications is that the Christian’s life is ‘a life under scrutiny’. In all of these fields there is a subtext: does acquiescence to Paul’s demands improve the relationship between author and audience?

1. Be Exemplary!

Before looking at specific ways and occasions in which Paul commands his community to stand out as an exemplary counterculture (Rom. 12.2), it is necessary to come to some understanding of his expectations and understandings of counterculturality. In what ways did the Christian community become conspicuous, and in what ways did they blend into the background of the first century Mediterranean milieu? Meeks’ investigations into the origins of Christian morality provide a basis by which to investigate early Christian counterculturality, the strengths and failures of the Pauline communities, and I need to address his observations before making any of my own.¹⁴

¹⁴ In particular Meeks provides definitions of ethics and morality. Meeks, *Origins*, 3-8.

In part Meeks bases his observation on the *Apology* of the Athenian Aristeides, post-dating Paul by some seventy years, but nevertheless serving to demonstrate the continued countercultural impact of the moral ideals that Paul¹⁵ had espoused. Meeks draws attention to Aristeides' boasting defence 'they do not commit adultery or fornication, they do not bear false witness, they do not deny a deposit, nor covet what is not theirs; they honour father and mother; they do good to those who are their neighbours'.¹⁶ Aristeides may be implying the confrontational subtext 'unlike others', as Paul does (1 Thess. 4.4): polemics is not necessarily the birthplace of truth, and the implied contrast by Paul or Aristeides may not be sociologically accurate, for all communities rely on codes of behaviour to ensure continued existence. But Aristeides, with many echoes of Paul, is determined to provide contrasts with the wider society: 'they do not eat the meat of idol sacrifices' (see 1 Cor. 8.1-6); 'they do good to their enemies' (see Rom. 12.14, 20); they extend siblinghood to 'their servants or handmaids or their children if they have any' (see especially Philem. 16); 'they walk in all humility and kindness' (an echo of the Pauline school: see Col. 3.12); 'they love one another' (as explored below, a recurring motif in Paul, though by no means unique to him); 'they do not call brothers those who are so after the flesh, but those who are in the spirit and in God' (as Aasgaard has explored in depth).¹⁷

These thoughts, though not necessarily suggesting direct Pauline influence on Aristeides, indicate that Paul's ethos was a recognizable element of the witness of the faith community two generations later. There were other distinguishing features, not related to Paul's instructions:

¹⁵ But not John: 1 John 3.1.

¹⁶ Arist., *Apol.* xv. Page references are to the 2004 Gorgias Publications reprint of Rendel Harris' edition; this text was also published in 1891 with an essay by Professor Harris' wife Helen Harris. This quotation is from the Gorgias Press facsimile reproduction (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2004), 48.

¹⁷ On Aasgaard, see above, 25-32.

‘when one of their poor passes away from the world ... then [one of the faith community] provides for his burial’.¹⁸ Paul left no instructions for burial of the dead, but by the time of Eusebius Christian practice in this regard was conspicuous.¹⁹ When Aristeides notes ‘every morning and at all hours they praise and laud’ [God] he may be citing traditions influenced by Paul’s ‘give thanks in all circumstances’ (1 Thess. 5.18).²⁰ Aristeides’ ‘they do not worship idols’ echoes Paul’s directive at 1 Cor. 10.14, and while Aristeides’ ‘over their food and drink they give thanks’ may not allude directly to 1 Cor. 10.30 it demonstrates that the *berakot* traditions preserved by Paul were a conspicuous part of Christian culture long after his death.²¹

Aristeides makes particular note of the Christian practice of forgiveness, and while there is no suggestion this is unique to Paul²² it was important to him. In writing of forgiveness Paul generally prefers *xari/zomai*,²³ with its etymological echoes of grace, to *a) fie/nai*, as preferred by Luke. Paul uses *a) fi/hmi* with the sense of ‘forgiveness’ only in quotation at Rom. 4.7,²⁴ perhaps because he is used to using the verb with negative connotations (Rom. 1.27). Aristeides notes the doctrine of forgiveness as a particular feature of the Christian community’s praxis, albeit with the cautious rider that it is the forgiveness of pre-conversion sin, not post-conversion sin, which is under consideration.²⁵

A doctrine of sin, a harmartiology, was a distinctive doctrine, borrowed by the Christian community from its Jewish forebears. The Jews taught that sin was an act of rebellion,

¹⁸ Aristeides concedes this practice is observed by the Jewish community as well. *Apol.* XIV. Gorgias 48.

¹⁹ ‘Most of our brethren showed love and loyalty in not sparing themselves while helping one another, tending to the sick with no thought of danger and gladly departing this life with them after becoming infected with their disease’. P Maier, ed., *Eusebius - the Church History: A New Translation with Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 269. The passage is from Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* vol. 7, 22.9.

²⁰ Attention must again be drawn to references such as Judith 8.25 as antecedent to this emphasis.

²¹ *Apol.* XV, Gorgias 48-49.

²² Mt. 6.12 // Lk. 11.4.

²³ Rom. 8.32; 1 Cor. 2.12; 2 Cor. 2.7, 2.10, 12.13; Gal. 3.18; Phil. 1.29, 2.9; Philem. 22.

²⁴ But see the deutero-Paulines at Eph. 1.7 and Col. 1.14. The quotation is an exact rendering of Ps. 32.1.

²⁵ Arist., *Apol.* XV, Gorgias 50.

‘violation of a relationship, a breach of contract, betrayal of a solemn treaty’.²⁶ The Christians adopted the doctrine, and while Paul’s emphases are skewed by his 46 uses of the word ‘sin’ in Romans, nevertheless it is an issue in all his letters except Philemon and Philippians. To avoid sin is to be exemplary.

Paul, in harmony with the bulk of the first generations of Christians, places his doctrine of sin into the context of eschatological judgement (Rom. 14.10). The universal experience of suffering and evil is not ignored by the Christian community; perhaps Paul’s genius was in emphasizing its place, symbolized by the cross, as the symbol *par excellence* at the heart of the kerygma (1 Cor. 1.23). If evil happened at the heart of the self-revelation of God, and was turned into a symbol of hope, then cycles of evil were broken. Paul also placed forgiveness into the context of traditions of eschatological judgement (Rom. 12.19-21).

When Aristeides cites a conversion narrative he does so with echoes of Paul’s autobiographical account: ‘when it chanced that one of them [“Greeks”] turns, he is ashamed before the Christians of the deeds that are done by him, and he confesses to God, saying, in ignorance I did these things: and he cleanses his heart, and his sins are forgiven him, because he did them in ignorance in a former time, when he was blaspheming and reviling the true knowledge of the Christians’.²⁷ There is no easy room for the forgiveness of post-conversion sin: ‘if again they see that one of their number has died in his iniquity or in his sins, they weep bitterly and sigh, as over one who is about to go into punishment’.²⁸

²⁶ Meeks, *Origins*, 122.

²⁷ Arist., *Apol.* xvii, Gorgias 51. The passage echoes Gal. 1.13.

²⁸ Arist., *Apol.* xv, Gorgias 50.

Aristeides paints a glossy portrait of the Christian community for his apology, and paints the Christians' neighbours in the darkest possible light. He, like Paul but with less finesse, utilizes caricature. His echoes of Paul's observations and instructions at one level only indicate that Paul's writings were familiar to Aristeides (he directly quotes Rom. 1.23),²⁹ yet the echoes may also suggest that Paul's struggles gave birth to distinctive characteristics for the Christian community amidst the Roman socio-religious melting pot.

Paul's vision was of a community that would be a conspicuous counterculture. To fail in this demand would be to slip away from the gospel as Paul proclaimed it and his audiences received it (e.g. Gal. 1.9, Phil. 4.9). How could the audiences achieve this demand of counterculturality? To fail to do so was to fail to stay in. But, for example, love of husband, wife or child was hardly peculiar to the Christian community, and was not conspicuous enough to make conversion or 'resocialization'³⁰ an identifiable, much less conspicuous, boundary crossing. Paul denied the Gentile Christ-community the distinctive Jewish rite of circumcision, and placed little emphasis on baptism: what did he leave them?

Meeks highlights a number of distinctive features of the Christian community. The Christians clearly saw their boundary crossing as being from one form of existence, the world, to another.³¹ Their abstention from 'theft or robbery or adultery', or their commitment 'not to break their word, and not to deny a deposit when demanded', failed to impress Pliny or the Emperor Trajan, but another aspect of their lifestyle alarmed the Roman authorities: their failure to curse Christ or to have 'recited a prayer to the gods' or 'to make supplication with

²⁹ Arist., *Apol.* IV, Gorgias 38.

³⁰ Meeks, *Origins*, 8.

³¹ Meeks, *Origins*, 14.

incense and wine'.³² The Jewish traditions of Daniel and Maccabees provided ample precedent to inspire the Christians,³³ but by the time of Pliny there was no evidence that they were any more than 'one of the lesser problems that confronted Pliny',³⁴ and in the earlier time of Nero they received no more attention than the Bacchanals, Chaldean soothsayers, or other impetuous cults that from time to time raised fears for the safety of the Roman hierarchy and the Roman state.³⁵

When they did come to the attention of the authorities, they were to be tested for their fidelity to the religious expectations and standards of Rome. For all Paul encouraged his audience to be 'subject to the governing authorities' (Rom. 13.1), there was no question of divided loyalties; when divinely appointed authorities clashed with demands that God's authority claimed highest priority on human loyalties (1 Cor. 15.24), there was no compromise position. Christians who failed to make supplication with incense to Trajan's statue were making a powerfully countercultural statement. Paul, if not the inventor of the litmus test of using and abusing Christ's name (1 Cor. 12.3, 16.22) was aware of its countercultural ramifications, and would have approved of his successors in faith who stood firm under duress. But he needed to be sure his audience would live up to this standard. Is there a suggestion at 1 Cor. 12.3 that the audience are slipping away from this benchmark? Certainly it seems to Paul that their behaviour in other aspects is slipping (1 Cor. 11.33-34) and their failure to exemplify higher standards is beginning to drive a wedge between author and audience.

³² Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* X:97; see J. Stevenson, ed., *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to A.D. 337*, (London: SPCK, 1987), 18; also *Letters of the Younger Pliny* (trans. and ed. B. Radice. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 294.

³³ See W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 44-50.

³⁴ Frend, *Martyrdom*, 181.

³⁵ Frend, *Martyrdom*, 109-116.

Martyrdom was a tool available *in extremis* to enhance the witness of the faith community, but not all of Paul's audience members were paying with their lives for their faith. The Thessalonians were experiencing persecution (1 Thess. 3.3) and some were dying, though not necessarily for their faith (1 Thess. 4.13). The Corinthian, Galatian and perhaps Roman audiences appeared to be relatively untroubled for their faith within their faith communities, with the social status of Erastus seemingly uncompromised at the time of Paul's letter to Rome (Rom. 16.23). While cause and effect could be debated, it is notable that Paul's greatest sense of connectivity and satisfaction is with the audiences that are experiencing suffering or persecution. To undergo trial is a sign of fidelity to the gospel.³⁶ Paul's own list of trials (2 Cor. 11.23), is a credential proving his apostolic authenticity.³⁷ While Paul's sufferings as listed are dramatic and brutal, he does not present them as if he saw himself as having approached death for his faith, and while experiencing the trials of prison life when writing to Philemon he is hoping for imminent release (Philem. 22). Within the uncontested Paulines only at Phil. 3.8 is there a hint that Paul was beginning to reflect on the possibility of his own martyrdom. Suffering is almost a corollary, and certainly an authentication of faith and a hallmark of staying in the community of Christ. For that reason Paul's language with an audience experiencing suffering is more connected language.

How were Paul's audience to live if they were to represent an alternative society of Jesus in the wider community? Later Christians would set off for the desert, once martyrdom for faith became unlikely, in order to hone their ascetic spiritual athleticism. This option was neither necessary nor attractive to Paul: Arabia (Gal. 1.17) is a generic term with no undertones of eremitic lifestyle.

³⁶ 1 Thess. 2.14, 3.4; Phil. 1.29. See also 2 Cor. 1.6-7.

³⁷ Rom. 5.3, 8.17-18; Phil. 3.8-10; 1 Thess. 3.4.

Again, Aristeides may offer some tools by which to analyze Paul's counterculturality. Aristeides' commendation of the Christians' concern for widows has no correspondence in Paul's writings, and Paul's only mention of widows is not made in a pastoral-ethical context but in the context of sexuality and marriage: 'to the widows and the unmarried I say that it is well for them to remain as I am' (1 Cor. 7.8). It does not at first seem particularly countercultural, until it is noted that, in first century Roman society, 'a widow was expected to remarry within a year'.³⁸ Whether a widow or widower,³⁹ a post-marriage adult was expected to return to face responsibilities to acquire and manage property, to maintain socio-economic status, and to reproduce as soon as possible after loss of a partner. To fail to do so, particularly for a female, was to lose status, role and *raison d'être* in the community. Paul's directive changed that, allowing widows and widowers a role and function in the faith community, and establishing a pattern of pastoral concern that was recognizably countercultural, and which stood in direct contradiction to an Imperial decree.⁴⁰

Similarly, while Aristeides' reference to the Christians' care of orphans and children has no direct corresponding directive in Paul's earlier instructions,⁴¹ reference to fasting to provide the supply of alms for the needy may find an antecedent in the ethos of Paul's eager support for the Jerusalem Collection (1 Cor. 8.1–9, 8.15, 16.2, Gal. 2.10). The ethos within which Paul was

³⁸ A. Rouselle, "Body Politic in Ancient Rome", in P.S. Pantel, ed., *A History of Women in the West. Volume 1. From Ancient Goddess to Christian Saints* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 296-336 (316). Cited in Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 515.

³⁹ For the gender issues surrounding translation of α) γα/μοι j as widows/widowers, see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 516; Sampley, "1 Corinthians", *NIB*, volume 10 (2002): 783-1003 (874).

⁴⁰ D.G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 158-159. See also Fiorenza, *In Memory*, 223-224.

⁴¹ But see Jas. 1.27.

operating was one of compassionate counterculture, and ramifications of the compassion were visible 70 years later.⁴²

Baptism was a rite that served to remind believers of their conversion and resocialization,⁴³ but Paul places little emphasis on the rite (1 Cor. 1.17).⁴⁴ As an adult rite it served in believers' memories to mark a turning point, but, unlike circumcision,⁴⁵ it was not indelible, and the reports that Pliny received and relayed to Trajan indicate that there were many who renounced the claims the rite made on them. Paul's emphasis on inner transitions, especially the reception of the Spirit (Gal. 3.1-5), could not clinically be proved to be more indelible, but certainly they served a powerful rhetorical purpose. If his audiences had indeed experienced powerful pneumatic encounters, then renunciation of that experience was a conspicuous return over a boundary once crossed in conversion, from 'in Christ' to 'outside'.⁴⁶ Such transition was possible, as the transgressions of Galatian and Corinthian audience members demonstrate, but they were not likely to pass by without leaving psychological footprints. The experience of the risen Christ, and of the Spirit who was effectively the sign of the authenticity of that experience, was not easily ignored by the believers.

Paul's rhetorical skill in emphasizing the place of an instrument of torture as the heart of God's mastery of salvation, turning 'things that were despised' into a means by which the wise were shamed (1 Cor. 1.27) was to prove a masterstroke of Christian identification and boundary reinforcement. The eccentric Alexamenos cartoon of a crucified donkey-figure found in the *Domus Gelatiana* on the Palatine Hill may have dated from around 70 CE: the crucified messiah

⁴² Meeks, *Origins*, 106-108.

⁴³ Meeks, *Origins*, 32.

⁴⁴ See "Getting In", especially 126-133, 139, 145, above.

⁴⁵ But see 1 Cor. 7.18a!

⁴⁶ 1 John 4.13 suggests that this view was not unique to Paul.

was seen as an identifiable characteristic of Christian belief and worship from a very early stage of Christian history, a characteristic easily parodied.⁴⁷ The oral passion narratives and the proclamation of the crucifixion of Jesus as a central tenet of faith antedate Paul, but are emphasized by the apostle, and serve as metonym for all that he proclaimed (1 Cor. 1.17-18, 1.23, 1.28, 2.2). Paul counters ‘incipient factiousness’⁴⁸ in the troubled Corinthian faith community with rhetorical emphasis on the instrument of torture: ‘not on talk’, says Paul, ‘but on power’. Despite his own rhetorical skill, the ‘talk’ he renounces is rhetorical embellishment, and the ‘power’ he embraces is the cross (1 Cor. 4.20), the antithesis of the models of power that are the hallmark of the Roman Empire. Paul’s ‘power’ is ‘love in a spirit of gentleness’ (1 Cor. 4.21), a form of foolishness (1 Cor. 1.21) in a militaristic society, and a statement conspicuously countercultural in an environment where leaders aspire to kingship (1 Cor. 4.8). Paul later summarises his countercultural theology in the context of a recitation of the kenotic hymn (Phil. 2.7),⁴⁹ prefacing the recitation with his own emphatic instruction that his audience should look ‘not to your own interests but to the interests of others’.

The rite of eucharist provided a regular reinforcement of the believer’s sense of belonging to the Christ-community. The gathering of different socio-economic class representatives in the one ritual meal venue was not in itself unusual,⁵⁰ but Paul’s observation that the arrogance of

⁴⁷ L.T. Johnson notes the extent to which religious societies in Paul’s time vilified each other. See his “The New testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Rhetoric”. *JBL* 108 (1989), 419-441.

⁴⁸ Meeks, *Origins*, 63.

⁴⁹ “[T]he term “hymn” is not employed in the modern sense of what we understand by congregational hymns with metrical verses. Nor are we to think in terms of Greek poetic form. The category is used broadly, similar to that of “creed,” and includes dogmatic, confessional, liturgical, polemical or doxological material’. P.T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44. Waco: Word Books, 1982), 32-33. To this observation should be added one from a systematician: ‘not only are songs, hymns, parables, Wisdom sayings, cultic formulas, and prophetic discourse the ordinary manner of handing down a tradition, but so too are juridical pronouncements and poetically sophisticated historical saga, legend, story ... all of which in the earliest times were governed by mnemotechnical needs’. H.U. von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. Volume 1. Seeing the Form*, translated by E. Leiva-Merikakis, edited by J. Fessio and J. Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 78.

⁵⁰ Meeks, *Origins*, 96.

the rich was humiliating ‘those who have nothing’ (1 Cor. 11.22) suggests that he was guiding the faith community into an egalitarianism that was supposed to be radically countercultural.⁵¹ This was to be a sign of authentic witness, and, where the counterculturality was apparent, would generate greater connection between author and audience. At Corinth, the audience are beginning to mimic the behaviour of those gathered at the meals of the cults surrounding them, and a wedge is driven between the audience and Paul: ‘You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons’ (1 Cor. 10.21).

At the time of Paul’s ministry harmatology and theodicy were not fully developed and systematic whole doctrines: malpractice at the Lord’s Supper might lead to sickness and death (1 Cor. 11.30). Nevertheless Christians were developing a strong if not unique sense of answerability to a God of judgement. This was not unique to Christianity, for it was borrowed from Jewish expectation. G.F. Moore noted ‘The idea of God’s rule in his own people widened into the expectation of a day when his sovereignty should be established and acknowledged by all mankind’ (see Zech. 14.9).⁵² But the Christians adapted the doctrine, accepted that they were answerable for their actions, and believed that the world around them would likewise be judged (1 Cor. 11.32).

A doctrine of judgement had been present in texts at least since the time of Daniel and the exposure of the Hebrews to Zoroastrianism, but the joyful emphasis Paul sometimes places on

⁵¹ The view of S. Friesen that Paul’s congregations were ‘probably composed mostly of individuals living near, at or below subsistence level’ fails to account for the apparently reasonably high social status of, e.g., Prisca, seemingly of some social independence (see Jewett, *Romans*, 955) or Onesiphorous (2 Tim. 4.19). See S.J. Friesen, “Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth Among the Churches”, in Schowalter and Friesen, *Urban Religion*, 351-370 (370), and P.H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 482.

⁵² G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of Tannaim* (three volumes. 1927-1930. Repr. in two volumes. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), volume 1, 119.

it is characteristic of his eschatological optimism (1 Thess. 2.19).⁵³ Paul's optimism in the face of judgement is not diminished by the thought of his own death: perhaps his own death will precede the eschaton (Phil. 1.21-24). But whether the risk of death is amongst the audience or is Paul's experience as well, the outcome is the same: the believer is to press on in efforts to attain their crown (Phil 3.14, 17).

It is notable that context again influences Paul's choice of words and portrayal of the Judgement event. In the more dispassionate contexts of Romans⁵⁴ and the early conflict of 1 Corinthians⁵⁵ Paul often refers to judgement by use of the verb *kri/nw*. In the more 'connected' contexts of 1 Thessalonians⁵⁶ or Philippians⁵⁷ he frequently refers to the *parousi/a* without reference to judgement. The more 'connected' contexts do not demand the shadow side of eschatological reference, and the reference can be omitted. When at 1 Cor. 15.23 Paul reminds the Corinthians of the *parousia*, it is in a passage contrasting the eschatological fate of those 'found in Christ' and those who are not, and by implication contrasting the joy of the former with the fate of the latter. Those in the Corinthian audience are reminded to maintain their 'in Christ' status (1 Cor. 15.34). The tone of Paul's references to the eschatological Day is affected by the context of connection between author and audience, by the factors of connectivity and satisfaction explored above. Where he is relatively satisfied with his audience, and is clear that their exposure to trials is confirming their fidelity to the gospel, Paul's eschatological language is confident.⁵⁸ At other times apparently confident language is

⁵³ For an account of Zoroaster's doctrine of judgement see M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 27-29.

⁵⁴ See Rom. 2.1-3, 2.12, 2.16, 3.6, 14.4, 14.10.

⁵⁵ 1 Cor. 4.5, 5.12-13, 6.2-3, 11.32.

⁵⁶ 1 Thess. 2.19, 3.13, 4.15, 5.23.

⁵⁷ Phil. 1.10.

⁵⁸ Phil. 1.6, 1.10, 2.16; 1 Thess. 5.2, 5.4.

immediately tempered by cautions.⁵⁹ In the Roman and Corinthian contexts, in which boundary maintenance is important, language of the eschatological Day is the language of warning.⁶⁰

In terms of the satisfaction ratings of Table 6 in my previous chapter, Paul speaks confidently of the eschatological day only in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, the letters revealing a high satisfaction rating (0.68% and 0.52% respectively). He speaks once of the eschatological day (2 Cor. 6.2) in the letter that rates third on a satisfaction scale (2 Cor. 1-9: 0.34% satisfaction), and then only in a cautious and balanced manner. The tone in 2 Cor. 1-9 is influenced by the good news brought to Paul by Titus (2 Cor. 7.6). This suggests that there is a degree of conditionality in Paul's writings (2 Cor. 6.11-13), by which a favourable eschatological outcome – salvation – is dependent upon obedience to Paul's instructions and his resultant satisfaction with his audience.

So, to ensure continuation in the community of Christ, the believer must obey God's will.⁶¹ Paul has a well developed sense of the correspondence between his will and God's, between obedience to his instructions and obedience to the will of God (1 Thess. 2.12, 3.7, 4.1-8). Sometimes he expresses this less proscriptively: 'this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with full insight to help you determine what is best' (Phil. 1.9-10). The expectation is the same: the audience will obey Paul's teachings in order to be found 'blameless' (Phil. 1.10, 2.15) in the eschatological judgement (1 Thess. 3.13, 5.23). Significantly these references are to letters in which Paul experiences confidence and satisfaction with his audience.

⁵⁹ Rom. 13.12. 1 Cor. 1.8, 3.13; 2 Cor. 1.14, 6.2.

⁶⁰ Rom. 2.5, 2.16, 13.12; 1 Cor. 5.5.

⁶¹ Meeks, *Origins*, 151-157.

Paul can issue calls to obedience with harsh eschatological undertones: ‘I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed’ (1 Cor. 15.1-2). In this context, moderate in terms of Paul’s audience satisfaction, the rhetoric is laboured and the sentence circular, to ensure there is no room for ambiguity. This is an environment in which the audience can and must make behavioural corrections. The context is all the more urgent in Paul’s final missive to Corinth: ‘Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with me, agree with one another, live in peace’ (2 Cor. 13.11). The implication is the same, but less hesitant in the more degenerate context: failure to set things right will be to be quite simply expelled beyond the boundaries of the grace of God, incurring God’s eschatological wrath (1 Thess. 1.10).

In the demands to exemplary behaviour Paul was prepared to offer his own Christian witness and an example to imitate.⁶² He commands that all that is done by members of the faith community be done ‘to the glory of God’ (1 Cor 10.31b), as he has done. The primary means by which the audience is to achieve this goal is by mimesis – imitation primarily of Christ (Phil. 2.5), and particularly of the *kenosis* of Christ (Phil. 2.4-8). As a secondary means to this Paul also directs his audiences to imitate his imitation of Christ; ‘be imitators of me’ (1 Cor. 4.16), or, more specifically, ‘Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ’ (1 Cor. 11.1).⁶³ In writing to

⁶² It is worth noting in passing that the *absence* of this assumption in Ephesians is a strong argument against that document’s Pauline origins. See P. Perkins, *Ephesians* (ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 17.

⁶³ Von Balthasar sees this clearly when he writes of ‘the Biblical experience of God’; he observes, with characteristic prolixity, ‘The levels of imitation appear in Paul, and here imitation at each step indicates the inviolable difference between imitating levels; but it also indicates that the imitating level always imitates the *whole* of the imitated level. Thus, Jesus’ archetypal experience of God is a ‘super-faith’ which is one with the vision of the Father. The God experience of the disciples as eye-witnesses is an imitation which, indissolubly, consists of faith in Christ (and, with Christ, in God) and of a total human vision of Christ (and, in Christ, of the Father in the Holy Spirit). The Church’s experience of God (and again, at a stage lower, the God-experience of each individual within her) is an imitating participation in this archetypal unity between faith and vision that we find in the eye-witnesses

the Philippians and the Thessalonians he is confident in the audience response: ‘Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you’ (Phil. 4.9a). He is confident, too, of the Thessalonians’ response (1 Thess. 1.5b-7), or even, at a further remove, 1 Thess. 2.14: ‘you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea’. Where the believer is appropriately obedient to the call and demands of the Spirit or of God, even to suffering and death, the witness is authentic and credible and worthy of imitation, and at that moment Paul ascribes such authenticity to the Judean Christians.

Part of establishing credible witness in Paul’s own ministry has been his refusal to accept payment for evangelism: ‘we do not like so many peddle⁶⁴ the word of God, but do so out of purity; we speak as one from God, speaking in the sight of God and in Christ’ (2 Cor. 2.17). Paul’s concern is to give no impression of exploitative or self-aggrandizing motivation in his proclamation.

Where faith communities reveal exemplary behaviour – in general terms behaviour according to the pattern Paul and others showing themselves to be authentically in Christ – then Paul remains satisfied with them, and the risk of lapsing out of the parameters of grace, of faith, or acceptability in God’s eschatological plans, is minimal.

through the apostolic and ecclesial *kerygma*’ (Seeing, 305). Von Balthasar goes on to cite 1 John 1.1-3, but despite its complexity in von Balthasar’s hands, this is precisely the principle underscoring Paul’s commands to imitate him, and is precisely the reason why Paul stresses his standing as an eye-witness to the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15.9).

⁶⁴ Translation mine. For *kaphleu/ontej* see Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 212-213, with references cited there.

2. Be Exemplary in Edifying Love

An understanding of impending judgement informs all Paul's commands to the audience. He is commanding them to perseverance in faith, always with the knowledge that lapse is a possibility. So he challenges the community of Christ to be a community of exemplary love. This challenge is based on his understanding that the encounter with God is a transformative encounter with Christ-sourced *agapē*: 'hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (Rom. 5.5) he says in his most pedagogical context. The encounter with love is 'urged on' by Christ: 'the love of Christ impels⁶⁵ us' (2 Cor. 5.14a). Continuation in exemplary love is continuation in eschatological confidence (Phil. 1.6, 9), the 'quintessential attribute of the Christian life that governs all the gifts of the Spirit'.⁶⁶

a. Romans

Paul overtly addresses the question of exemplary love only twice in the didactic and pedagogical context of Romans, and that is in the instructions of Rom. 12.9-10. There he neither affirms nor denigrates the 'love-quality' of the Romans' lives. Elsewhere in Romans his references to love are not predicated of the audience. At Rom. 5.5 and 5.8, 8.37, in the Malachi citation at Rom. 9.13 and the Hosea quotation at Rom. 9.25, Paul refers to God's love, while at Rom. 8.35 he refers to Christ's love, and at Rom. 15.30 to 'the love of the Spirit'. At Rom. 8.28 and 13.8-9 he refers to 'those who love' as an abstract not directly including the audience. At Rom. 9.13 he refers to Rebecca's love, and Rom. 14.15 refers to the failure to love, love as an abstract hypothetical, or a love that may be eradicated by any misdemeanour: 'If your brother

⁶⁵ My translation. For the complexities of

see Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 408 n. 1519.

⁶⁶ Childs, *Canonical Shaping*, 140.

or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love'. The responsibility to exercise Christlike love is easily thwarted.

In a sense he is not sure, here, whether or not he is satisfied with his audience and their exemplification of love. Instead of affirming their love he encourages the Romans to live a life of unparalleled, 'genuine' love (Rom. 12.9). At Rom. 12.9-14, Paul expounds his understanding of *agapē* so that his directive is not open to any misinterpretation. There is though no indication that the Roman audience currently exemplifies the standards to which Paul is calling them. So he provides practical instructions for exemplary love a few sentences later, concluding 'love is the fulfilling of the law' (see Rom. 13.8-10). In Romans it is clear that the command to love bears the full weight of eschatology: 'you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near' (Rom. 13.11-12a). The didactic tone of the letter betrays no deep intimacy, and, in circular response, there is no deep intimacy because Paul is not wholly sure that he can be satisfied with the behaviour of his audience.

b. 1 Corinthians

Obviously 'love' is a theme most fully developed in the Hymn to Love (1 Cor. 12.31-13.13). Earlier in 1 Corinthians Paul has established the key to the importance of love: 'love builds up' (1 Cor. 8.1d). He later returns to the theme: 'pursue love' (1 Cor. 14.1a); 'let all that you do be done in love' (1 Cor. 16.14), but neither reference affirms any love-quality exemplified by the audience. The centrality of this theme suggests that, in Paul's assessment of the Corinthians' witness, exemplary love was conspicuously absent at Corinth. The Hymn to Love, if not Pauline, was so internalized by Paul that its message has become 'the *sine qua non*

of the Christian life’,⁶⁷ or, as Fee puts it, the passage has ‘become so thoroughly adapted to the context that such questions [of authorship] seem ultimately irrelevant’.⁶⁸ The imperative of 1 Cor. 12.31 ‘begins the argument on intelligibility and order in chapter 14, which is interrupted so as to place all of these things in the context of love’.⁶⁹

It has also been noted⁷⁰ that, while reference to love – as verb or noun – is infrequent prior to chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians,⁷¹ context demands that α) γα/ρ and οἱ) κδομε/ω are synonymous. On this basis, love’s up-building action is emphatically central to the early Corinthian correspondence: even the gift of prophecy is beneficial to the faith community primarily for its edifying function (1 Cor. 14.31).⁷² Paul’s use of οἱ) κδομε/ω elsewhere demonstrates the degree to which edification is central to Paul’s gospel message. Writing to the Thessalonians he made the same connection, restated just prior to his concluding recapitulation and benediction, with the command and affirmation ‘encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing’ (1 Thess. 5.11). The Galatian meddlers’ error is summarized in a Pauline ‘if I ...’ comparison: ‘*if* I build up again the very things that I once tore down, *then* I demonstrate that I am a transgressor’ (Gal. 2.18).⁷³ The Galatian and Corinthians contexts are very different to that of Thessalonica, as the rider ‘as indeed you are doing’ makes so abundantly clear.

⁶⁷ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 471.

⁶⁸ Fee, *First Epistle*, 626.

⁶⁹ Fee, *Empowering*, 33.

⁷⁰ Sampley, “1 Corinthians”, 951.

⁷¹ As a noun at 1 Cor. 4.21, a Pauline attribute; at 8.1 as an abstract. As a verb at 1 Cor. 2.9 and 1 Cor. 8.3 as a hypothetical.

⁷² Fee, *Empowering*, 61.

⁷³ The use of οἱ) κδομε/ω at Rom. 15.20 is more functional, and akin to the use of φτεu/ω (planted), used metaphorically by Paul only at 1 Cor. 3.6-8 and in a literal sense at 1 Cor. 9.7.

If Paul's synonymous uses of *a)ga/ph* and *oi)kodome/w* are combined in 1 Corinthians then Paul refers to the theme nineteen times in that letter.⁷⁴ But it is again useful to see who it is who 'possesses' or exemplifies this edifying love. At 1 Cor. 4.21 and at 16.24 Paul refers to his own love for the Corinthians. At 1 Cor. 8.1 and throughout the Hymn to Love, love is presented as an abstract quality in its own right. Only at 1 Cor. 16.14, in his closing instructions to the Corinthians, does he suggest that love is found amongst the Corinthian Christians – and even there it remains hypothetical: 'Let all that you do be done in love'. The Corinthian community are not exemplifying the love-quality to which Paul is calling them, and are risking eschatological short-falling (1 Cor. 11.32). Clearly then exemplary love is not a hallmark of the Corinthian audience as Paul addresses them in First Corinthians, and this is reflected in a satisfaction rating that is half that of First Thessalonians.

c. 2 Corinthians 1-9, 10-13

When Paul writes the second and third extant letters to the Corinthians he omits reference to 'up-building' altogether. And, although on nine occasions he refers to love as a noun, rarely does he attribute love to his audience. At 2 Cor. 2.4, 6.6 and 8.7⁷⁵ Paul speaks of his own love. At 2 Cor. 5.14 it is Christ's love, and at 2 Cor. 13.11-13 he refers twice to God's love. Paul uses the verbal form *a)gapa/w*, predicated of God at 2 Cor. 9.7, and at 2 Cor. 11.11 and 2 Cor. 12.15 predicated of his own love for the Corinthians.

⁷⁴ *a)ga/ph*: 1 Cor. 4.21, 8.1, 13.1-14.1 (x 10), 16.14, 16.24. *oi)kodome/w*: 1 Cor. 8.1, 10.23, 14.4 (x 2), 14.17. The use of *oi)kodome/w* at 1 Cor. 8.10 is, if Paul is being characteristically attuned to his word usage, ironic, though it is more likely that he used the word inadvertently, a lapse in his precision. All other uses in the letter bear the weight of the synonymous link with *a)ga/ph*, and the characteristic Pauline irony falls short of its normal impact at this point.

⁷⁵ Arguments for the textual reading *ec h(mw~n e)n u(mi=n* are convincing: The Corinthians' love towards Paul has not been exemplary! See Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 529-530.

He refers to the Corinthians' love at 2 Cor. 2.8 ('I urge you to reaffirm your love for him'), 2 Cor. 8.8 ('I am testing the genuineness of your love'), and 2 Cor. 8.24 ('show them the proof of your love'). Yet on each of these occasions love is a hypothetical entity that he longs to see confirmed, and the language of task-completion (2 Cor. 8.11) is underscored by hints of eschatology ('become rich': 2 Cor. 8.9). Perseverance, or 'Staying In', is the subtext of Paul's references to love, and the absence of clear evidence that the audience are loving is reflected in a low degree of satisfaction.

d. Galatians

Paul strikes a similar tone when writing of love to the Galatians. Galatians rates lower than any letter except 2 Cor. 10-13 in Paul's audience satisfaction (0.22%). This divine gift of love is, to Paul's mind, absent in the Galatian community. He refers to love as a noun only three times, towards the end of the letter (although he has referred to Christ's self-sacrificial love at Gal. 2.20). At Gal. 5.6 he associates love with faith (as he did at Gal. 2.20); love is the vehicle through which faith operates. But by this he is contrasting faith, made effective through the outworkings of love, and the Galatians' new-found emphasis on circumcision, and thereby highlighting the *absence* of love in the Galatian community. Paul wants to provoke a reversal of the lovelessness that the Galatians, under the influence of the meddlers, are demonstrating.

A few sentences later, he juxtaposes 'freedom to self-indulge' with 'enslavement to love'. This stark alternative has been established earlier in the letter, at Gal. 2.4, when Paul writes of 'false siblings' who have spied on the freedom enjoyed by the faith community, 'so that they might enslave us'.⁷⁶ These 'false siblings' fail to impose circumcision on Titus (Gal. 2.3), but it

⁷⁶ See Esler, *Galatians*, 208.

is unlikely they disappeared from the Christian milieu, and they continue, in Paul's account, to influence Peter (Gal. 2.12). Passionate about their law-involved gospel, the 'false siblings' maintain an influence over the Jerusalem Church, and attempt to influence the Antiochene Church.⁷⁷ Eager to exercise corrective influence over the Pauline mission, the 'false siblings' could not fail to have been aware of disconcerting developments at Corinth, in which the aftermath of Paul's mission was a descent into freedom-celebration and moral anarchy (1 Cor. 5.1). Neither Paul's legitimate emphasis on cross-cultural table-fellowship (1 Cor. 11.17) nor the anarchic abuse of Paul's law-free gospel was palatable to the Jerusalem siblings, and the missiological gloves were off. Paul's hasty and unexpected Galatian mission left loose ends and openings for the siblings to exercise corrective missiological and pedagogical surgery, and they accepted the opportunity that arose after Paul's departure from the region. The answer to Paul's rhetorical question of Gal. 3.1b is that this nameless group (Gal. 2.12) is once again at work, and the result of their work is self-indulgence, in Paul's particular casuistic sense of observing law, rather than in love.

For despite Gal. 5.19, the Galatians' error is not the flamboyant self-indulgence of the Corinthian hedonists, but a complex form of self-indulgence, grace-denying dependence on the flesh (Gal. 4.8-11). Fear of a Corinthian or similar libertinism, or an opportunistic response to the possibility of such libertinism, has provided the Galatian opponents⁷⁸ with reasons to make inroads into the Galatian community, and they have opposed Paul's law-free kerygma. So, in order to demonstrate that the love to which he is commanding the Galatians is not libertinism, Paul anchors his command to love-enslavement in an authoritative proof text, 'You shall love

⁷⁷ Martyn, *Galatians*, 239-243.

⁷⁸ '[I]t is most unlikely that people would have been causing trouble in Galatia by arguing against Paul's message, without expressing hostility to the man himself'. Esler, *Galatians*, 71.

your neighbour as yourself' (Gal. 5.13; cf. Rom. 13.9). It is a command, not an affirmation of loving qualities visible in the audience. Its very status as command serves notice that love is absent in the audience behaviour.

Paul here has laid a basis by which to avoid Corinthian forms of libertinism by contrasting 'works of the flesh' with 'fruits of the spirit'. If the Corinthian excesses as observed by the Galatian 'bewitchers', the 'false siblings', are conspicuous works of the flesh, 'fornication, impurity, licentiousness... factions ... envy, drunkenness, carousing', so are the results of the meddlers' own divisive casuistry: 'enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions' (Gal. 5.19-21). These are already prefigured in the earlier warning 'If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another' (Gal. 5.15). At the conclusion of the contrasts, love heads the list of fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5.22). If the audience heed Paul's directives then they will have lived the demands of love. The eschatological weight of Paul's instructions finally surfaces in the closing sentences of his *exhortatio*: 'we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up' (Gal. 6.9). If Paul's commands to loving behaviour are obeyed, then the Galatians will become an exemplary community. At present they are not, and Paul is deeply dissatisfied.

e. Philippians

By contrast the letter to the Philippians has Paul in a more affirmative mood, delighting in the quality of his audience's love at Phil. 1.9, and emphatically addressing them as *agaphtoi* twice at Phil. 4.1. At Phil. 2.1-2 he puts a hypothetical equation, but in the protasis he comes down on the affirmative side: if 'there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy...'. Paul in

expansive oratory piles conditional phrases on one another as he dictates.⁷⁹ There is never any question that the audience's experience means that the response to the apodosis is 'there is'. They will therefore respond to the author's request 'make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love' (Phil. 2.2).

The extent of the quality of that love is then immediately and emphatically outlined in the kenotic *Carmen Christi* of Phil. 2.6-8. As was the case in the Hymn to Love, and at Rom. 12.9-14, Paul has turned to poetry to make his point: *a) ga/ph* and *kenosis* ('emptied himself', Phil. 2.7) are one and the same. At least one basis for Paul's confidence in the Philippians' love is that precisely such love-quality has been his prayer for them (Phil. 1.9). He is therefore confident that they will respond to his subsequent plea, summarized after the *Carmen Christi*, that they will 'be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation', thus existing and exercising their responsibility to be a beacon to the gospel of Christ (Phil. 2.15c). This celebration of the Philippians' exemplary love is reflected in the high satisfaction rating (0.52%).

f. 1 Thessalonians

Similarly, and as might be expected from the general tone of the 1 Thessalonians, Paul endorses the Thessalonians and the quality of their love. He sets this tone from the beginning, asserting in his opening thanksgivings: 'we' (probably an authorial plural) remember 'your work of faith and labour of love' (1 Thess. 1.3). Paul identifies the faith community by its characteristics as a community of faith, love, and hope. He is careful to emphasize the prior source of this love and therefore all the Godlike attributes of the Thessalonians in the following

⁷⁹ On the importance of dictation as a shaping influence on this part of the letter see Fee, *Philippians*, 178-179.

verse: ‘beloved by God’ (1 Thess. 1.4). The quality of love has been as apparent to Timothy as it is to Paul (1 Thess. 3.6). Timothy’s report confirms Paul’s expectations, but Paul recognized that there is always room for growth in faith and love (1 Thess. 3.12, 4.9-12). Love, often paired with faith, is as if a military garment (1 Thess. 5.8) in a battle of truths by which the community of faith may attain its final end, ‘to live with him’ (1 Thess. 5.10).

g. a) 11h/1wn: the Command to Mutual Love

More than love, Paul commands his audience to an ‘entwinement’ of mutual love, and the pattern or relationship between audience satisfaction and the tone of references is repeated when this ‘one another’ dimension of love is considered. In Romans 12, under the heading ‘let love be genuine’ he presents a detailed parenthesis on mutual responsibilities with and responsibilities to those beyond the faith community. ‘Love one another with tender love, outdo one another in mutual value’ summarizes the internal responsibilities of the community members, surrounded in the text by responsibilities to outsiders, including enemies (Rom. 12.20) and geographically distant Christian communities (note Rom. 15.25-26). Rom. 12.16 and 13.8 repeat the theme of mutual responsibility, and the theme is explored again in Rom. 15.5-14. The liturgical command at Rom. 16.16 is a command to symbolic re-enactment of this mutual care and responsibility. At no time does he commend the Romans for this quality.

In the Corinthian correspondence there is a similar emphasis on this theme of mutual responsibility. At 1 Cor. 7.5 the mutual responsibilities of married love are presented – ‘Do not deny one another’ – but the implication is that there are parallels between marital mutuality and mutuality of relationship within the faith community. In the context of the Lord’s Supper it is clear that a breakdown in mutual responsibility has turned the event into a parody of

community – ‘when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse’ (1 Cor. 7.17). This mocks any attempt to present as a unified ‘body’ (1 Cor. 12.25) or community of care. Once more Paul seeks to prescribe liturgical action that is an enactment of the mutuality that should be the hallmark of the faith community’s daily praxis: greet *one another* (1 Cor. 16.20). Late in 2 Corinthians, as Paul closes his increasingly frustrated appeals to Corinth, he uses a)llh/louj only once, as a liturgical command (2 Cor 13.12).⁸⁰

In keeping with the cool tone of his writing, positive encouragement and reinforcement of the Galatian audience is withheld for much of the letter. Only in closing comments does Paul remind them of their mutual responsibilities: the warning tone of Gal. 5.13-17, where a)llh/louj is repeated four times, is echoed in the conditionally conciliatory tone of the closing command: ‘My friends ... bear one another’s burdens’ (Gal. 6.1-2).

This contrasts markedly with the Thessalonian correspondence, where the mutuality of the audience’s care and love is affirmed (1 Thess. 4.9b, 5.11) and encouraged (1 Thess. 3.12, 4.18). And, although in writing to the Philippians Paul does not specifically address mutual love or responsibility, in chapters one and two there is affirmation of the love shared between Paul and his audience and between members of the audience. Koinwni/a (Phil. 1.5), with its implications of mutuality, reappears at Phil. 1.7 (as sugkoinwno/j), Phil. 2.1, 3.10, and 4.15 (as koinwne/w). These uses indicate a high degree of connection between Paul and the community and an awareness of their connection to Christ. This is a considerably higher rate of

⁸⁰ The NRSV translation of 2 Cor. 13.11 adopts ‘one another’ as a translation of to\ au) to\ fronei=te. The word a)llh/louj does not appear.

use of *koinwni/a* than in the other Pauline writings,⁸¹ and speaks of the mutual responsibilities of love without using the word ‘love’ itself.

h. Summary

Paul frequently challenges his audiences to reach higher standards of love – sometimes, as in the case of the Thessalonians, affirming the love qualities they already exemplify, while at the same time urging them to greater heights. Because in the case of the Thessalonians, Paul is able to recognize and affirm the on-going quality of the audience’s love, he feels satisfied with them (0.68%). In the Corinthian context he sees a deterioration of the love quality they exemplify. His sense of satisfaction becomes more strained, and the relationship deteriorates (from 0.30% in First Corinthians, with a slight improvement to 0.34% in 2 Cor. 1-9, to a minimal 0.03% in the final Corinthian letter).

Eschatological pressure drove the constant theme of love. Love is to Paul an evangelistic tool, but evangelism is always under the pressure of the coming Day. In the differing conflicts of Corinth and Galatia, where the audience receive Paul’s lowest satisfaction rating, the common theme is that misbehaviour, or misinterpretation of the gospel, whether hedonistic or casuistic, has marred the audience’s witness to transformative and proclamatory love. The Philippians and the Thessalonians have demonstrated exemplary love, and are commended for it with warm and ‘connected’ language and a high degree of satisfaction. So too, momentarily,

⁸¹ In Romans four uses: Rom. 11.17, 12.13 (*koinwni/a* of strangers), 16.26-27 (of the Macedonian and Achaian Christians); 1 Corinthians six uses: 1 Cor. 1.9 (‘fellowship of his son’), 1 Cor. 9.23 (of Paul’s sharing in the ‘fellowship of the gospel’), 1 Cor. 10.16 (x 2: of the fellowship of bread and wine at the Lord’s Supper), 1 Cor. 10.18 (of the fellowship of Israel), 1 Cor. 10.20 (of rejected fellowship with demons). 2 Corinthians 1-9 five uses: 2 Cor. 1.7, (of mutual sharing in suffering and consolation – the second use of the verb ‘to share’ is provided in the NRSV English but implied in the Greek). At 2 Cor. *α* is used of ‘mispartnership’ between believers and unbelievers; 2 Cor. 8.4 (of the Macedonian Christians); 2 Cor. 8.23 (of Titus); at 2 Cor. 9.13 (of mutual sharing in the faith community). In 2 Cor. 10-13 one use, the doxological formula of 2 Cor. 13.13. The word is not used in 1 Thessalonians.

are the Corinthians, when Paul receives the good news brought by Titus. But even then the tone is cautious and conditional, and by the third extant letter there is no further sign of satisfaction.

A chart of the love-quality or the various Pauline audiences is superfluous. Only the Thessalonians and the Philippians exemplify love, and these two audiences are the audiences with which Paul is most satisfied in the terms of Chapter Three above. The presence or absence of love in Paul's audience is directly related to his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with them – or *vice versa*. Always with a mind to eschatological urgency, he reminds them in one way or another of this most central tenet of Christian living. Where love is conspicuous and his satisfaction connection is high he allows the undertones of eschatological urgency a benevolent face (1 Thess. 4.15). Where this is not the case his warning is more direct (1 Cor. 11.32).

3. Be of Exemplary Subjection to Authority

To further the kerygmatic task, and to create wherever possible without compromise an environment conducive to continuation of the faith community, Paul commanded his audiences to show exemplary subjection to their civil overlords. Is Paul's focus on this matter also driven by context, and in particular by the contingent context of audience satisfaction?

Here there is an enigma. The Christian is to be subject to authority, but authority itself is subject to an authority it does not recognize, the authority of God (1 Cor. 2.6-8, 15.24). Paul is governed to a degree by simple pragmatism: there is no need for the faith community to generate isolation and alienation from the structures that surround it for as long as those structures permit it to carry out its mission. Nevertheless the victory of Christ includes a future dimension, when the authority wielded by the Empire (e.g. Rom. 8.35) will be made subject to

Christ (1 Cor. 7.31, 15.25-28). Where the state acts in opposition to the gospel it is the gospel that will have the final say.⁸²

a. Romans: Imperial Authority

At Rom. 13.1 Paul commands, emphatically,⁸³ ‘Let every person be subject to the governing authorities’.⁸⁴ It is the introductory sentence to a passage of 144 words in which Paul produces a ‘cohesive and well-organized argument’⁸⁵ that stands apparently unconnected to Paul’s surrounding concerns. It has been utilized in vastly differing ways in the history of hermeneutics and Christian praxis, not least, as Moo notes,⁸⁶ in propping up the apartheid regime of South Africa. It is not necessary to see any part of this passage as an interpolation.⁸⁷

Paul’s concern, at a time when civil unrest was a dominant theme in Rome,⁸⁸ was to generate a Christian counterculture based not on civil disobedience but on conspicuous love (Rom. 12.10, 13.8-10) and ‘theological identity’.⁸⁹ This is a call to counterculture even though the phrase ‘every soul’ (πα~σα ψυχ\η) at Rom. 13.1 is not necessarily limited to the faith community, and there is no explicit christological reference.⁹⁰ The faith community hears and responds to Paul’s dictum, and the Christian community knows that its obedience to this dictum is a part of a call to obey a judging God (Rom. 13.2b).

⁸² See N. Elliott, “The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross” in R.A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 167-183.

⁸³ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 2, 656.

⁸⁴ Variant readings do not affect the meaning. See Moo, *Romans*, 790 n. 1; Jewett however notes ‘the differences may represent intentional efforts to strengthen the command of subordination as binding in respect of “every authority”’ (*Romans*, 780).

⁸⁵ Moo, *Romans*, 790.

⁸⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 791, n. 3.

⁸⁷ For arguments see Jewett, *Romans*, 782-784.

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Theology*, 675. An ‘increasingly rapacious Roman government’. Moo, *Romans*, 793.

⁸⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 674. See also, on 1 Thess. 4.3-8, Meeks, *Origins*, 151.

⁹⁰ Käsemann, *Romans*, 352: ‘we do not find either christological or eschatological motivation or indeed any connection with *agape*’. Käsemann does not however argue for interpolation of this passage.

The theme of exemplary love provides a link in Paul's scheme to the question of civil obedience: 'you will receive ... approval' (Rom. 13.3c). He was probably writing to the Romans from Corinth, where the loveless behaviour of the Christian community had brought Christian witness into serious jeopardy. The reference to wrath at Rom. 13.5 indicates that Paul sees civil obedience as a matter of eschatological concern: disobedience to civil authorities is disobedience to the God who imposed the authorities on society.⁹¹ 'The authorities are God's servants' (leitourgoi, Rom. 13.6), writes Paul. He has at Rom. 13.4 anthropomorphized authority itself as a servant (dia/konoi) of God⁹² and sees the whole process of social order as one in which believers are to participate alongside all people. Believers are to participate in social order armed with additional knowledge that by so doing they are participating in God's purpose. This added insight to the laws of good order adds an exemplary dimension to Christian obedience: to contravene these laws may be to risk passing outside the behavioural boundaries of Christian behaviour. Paul is addressing this matter of Imperial authority in the geographical context of the Empire's seat, where the gospel of Jesus is pitted against the gospel of Caesar. He is determined to ensure unnecessary clashes are not generated between the two structures (Rom. 13.1-6). This is pragmatism on his part: unnecessary provocation of civil authority pushes the parameters of Christian propriety.

However, Paul was also locked into provision of a counterculture opposed to the Imperial structures of flattery, honour and shame. Jewett in particular has outlined the significance of the honour/shame structures as they impacted on the lives of the citizens of Rome and its milieu.⁹³

⁹¹ Cf. de Vos on 1 Thess. 4.12; *Church and Community*, 162-166.

⁹² It is not necessary to suggest too great a distinction between the two nouns: *contra* Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 2, 668.

⁹³ For honour/shame structures in Semitic cultures see S.M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and its Environment", *JBL* 115 (1996): 201-218.

Obsequious declarations of admiration and honour were at the heart of everyday life: glorification of a chosen subject ensured, or at least encouraged their patronage and protection. Significantly, since Paul seeks often to describe himself and others as ‘slaves to’ or ‘slaves of’ Christ, slaves and barbarians were largely exempt from honour/shame structures,⁹⁴ and he maintained that ‘glory’ be ascribed only to God (Rom. 16.27). The Roman context, it must be stressed again, is one of low connectivity (0.38%) and what might be termed ‘cautious’ satisfaction (0.26%) between author and audience, and Paul lays down rules for relationship with external powers.

b. 1 Corinthians: Internal Authorities

When writing to the Corinthians Paul was less concerned with obedience to civil authorities than with obedience to authorities within the faith community. His motivation primarily remained one of kerygmatic witness. Faced with potential anarchy at Corinth, not least in the exercise of glossolalia, he makes a plea for control: ‘the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets’ (1 Cor. 14.32). This enigmatic hortatory observation is a command to order and decency as in themselves vehicles of kerygmatic witness. Chaotic ecstatic utterance, glossolalic or prophetic, was not effective witness either to the outsider interacting with or observing Christian meetings, nor the insider seeking edification (οἱ) κδομη\ν, 1 Cor. 14.26c). The prophet was to stand in a prophetic tradition, speaking words that challenged the audience to review their standing with God (1 Cor. 14.25).

The silence of women was, in Paul’s mind, to achieve the same end, although the contextual basis of his command to women (1 Cor. 14.34) is now difficult to ascertain.

⁹⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 51.

Arguments for scribal interpolation⁹⁵ are unconvincing despite the apparent contradiction with 1 Cor. 11.5, presumably the cause of western scribal emendations during the fourth century.⁹⁶ As Collins notes, women were permitted to engage in domestic conversation, so it would appear that some line in the sand was drawn in Paul's mind, but understandably blurred in the Corinthian women's minds, between the home as place of domicile and the home at time of meeting.⁹⁷

Thiselton⁹⁸ refutes the view of Odell-Scott that 1 Cor. 14.34-35 is a rejected slogan,⁹⁹ and that these verses therefore demonstrate that Paul's own view, as suggested by 1 Cor. 11.5, is that women *should* speak out in church assemblies. From my point of view in this study it is Paul's emphasis on the order necessary to effective kerygmatic witness that is crucial. If in fact Paul were adopting and rebutting a Corinthian slogan, as at 1 Cor. 6.12, 7.1 and 10.23, the overall context nevertheless demands that any proclamation made by the women would need to be orderly, as stipulated in 1 Cor. 14.26-33. By this orderliness of assembly the credibility of Christian witness to the God who separates order from chaos is re-established (Gen. 1.1-4).¹⁰⁰

So important is this theme to Paul that he returns to it in his closing remarks: 'I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people,¹⁰¹ and of everyone who works and toils with them' (1 Cor. 16.15-16). By being subject to such exemplary witnesses the Corinthians can

⁹⁵ E.g. Fee, *First Epistle*, 699-708.

⁹⁶ For arguments see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1148-1150. Thiselton concludes (1150) citing J.M. Ross: 'We are bound to accept the unanimous testimony of the manuscripts, however deeply we may regret that Paul expressed this opinion'. See J.M. Ross, "Floating Words: their significance for textual criticism", *NTS* 38 (1992): 153-156 (155-156).

⁹⁶ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 513.

⁹⁷ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 513.

⁹⁸ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1150-1152.

⁹⁹ D.W. Odell-Scott, "Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b-36", *BTB* 13 (1983): 90-93. *Idem*, "In Defence of an Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:34-6", *BTB* 17 (1987): 100-103.

¹⁰⁰ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1154.

¹⁰¹ th\ n oi) ki/ an Stefana~.

regain the order that they have lost in their enthusiastic, over-inflated chaos. Not to do so is to step outside the boundaries of the Christian community, the Body of Christ.

In the Corinthian context as well as that of Rome he writes with an eye to propriety. The misbehaviour of the Christians at Corinth may attract the attention of civil overlords, and, if it is of a standard that can be interpreted as more decadent than that of the surrounding religious communities (1 Cor. 5.1) this will seriously compromise the gospel. At Rome and Corinth, contexts in which, for differing reasons, Paul is not altogether satisfied with his audience and the connectivity he has with them, he addresses questions of untoward behaviour, because these may draw avoidable destructive attention from civil authorities. These concerns are reflected in low satisfaction and connectivity indications.

c. Obedience to Paul's Authority

In other letters Paul cites authority structures, but there also exist what he considers to be authority structures within the community of faith. His own authority is God-given, and he reminds his audience of this regardless of his confidence in his relationship with them:¹⁰² 'Paul appeals to the overriding authority of the gospel, and then associates himself as closely as possible with that authority'.¹⁰³ Significantly he does generally not cite his own authority, except in greeting (Rom. 1.1),¹⁰⁴ in correspondence with a church he did not found.

At Rom. 9.21 Paul adopts the Jeremiah imagery of the potter's *eu)cousi/a* over the clay, but there he speaks of God's authority. But Paul does have a highly developed sense of

¹⁰² 1 Cor. 9.8; 2 Cor. 10.8, 13.10; Gal. 1.1; 1 Thess. 4.8.

¹⁰³ Carter, "Big Men", 58.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 1.1, 2 Cor. 1.1, Gal. 1.1. It is equally significant that he does not head his most confident letters, 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, with any naming of apostolic authority. Where there is conflict, however, he 'fights for his inclusion in the apostolic era'. Von Balthasar, *Seeing*, 348.

the importance of his own God-given authority, based unequivocally on his Damascus Road encounter with the risen Lord: '[T]here is no substantial difference between obedience to Paul and obedience to God'.¹⁰⁵ It must be said again that the 'religious reattribution' or 'reenactment' noted by Theissen,¹⁰⁶ is neither passing rhetorical ploy, but a fundamental piece of christological and soteriological understanding that underpins most of Paul's pedagogy. Obedience to Paul differs in context to the God-given authority wielded by others in the community, especially civic leaders (Rom. 13.1-7). A litmus test of his audience's obedience to God is no less than their obedience to his command, hence the differentiation of 1 Cor. 7.25 between his own opinion and that which he 'knows' to be of the Lord (though by 1 Cor 7.39 it is clear that Paul is not experiencing any crisis of doubt in his authority!).

There is no equivocation at 1 Cor. 14.37: 'Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord'. The context is the Corinthian one of conflict with the enthusiasts, who claimed status as prophets and as having super-spiritual empowerment. Here, as Collins notes, 'He confronts them in their self-inflation'.¹⁰⁷ Paul implies rather than explicitly refers to his authority, but the implication is unambivalent. He demands 'knowledge' of his authority amongst his opponents, echoing an LXX construction¹⁰⁸ denoting binding revelatory encounter with divine authority.

At 1 Cor. 15.1-11 Paul sketches the content of the authoritative gospel he has received and handed on, the truth of which is the basis of his credibility and authority: 'the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through

¹⁰⁵ Fowl, *Philippians*, 119. See also reference to von Balthasar, pp. 232-233 n. 63, above.

¹⁰⁶ Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 36. See above, p. 131.

¹⁰⁷ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 517.

¹⁰⁸ See Gen. 3.22, Ezek. 20.20, Jer. 9.24.

which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you' (1 Cor. 15.1-2). The proviso of this last clause is important. Later, writing again to the Corinthians, he will explain once more why his written instructions carry so much authority: 'I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down' (2 Cor. 13.10).

Paul is forced by the Corinthians' doubts about his apostolic authority to establish his credentials.¹⁰⁹ He does so by creating an impasse: either the message he has brought to Corinth is directly from God, or the Corinthians' claims to salvation (the basis of the libertine behaviour which they have celebrated with the catch phrase of 2 Cor. 5.19b: 'not counting their trespasses against them') is erroneous. In the context of this conundrum, he presents himself, using the authoritative authorial plural, as an 'ambassador for Christ' (2 Cor. 5.20). Obedience to Christ will be in this context obedience to Paul, and obedience to Paul is obedience to Christ. His authorial plurals are rarely without rhetorical intent,¹¹⁰ and he implicates his audience in his ambassadorial role, though not his apostolic authority, and its responsibilities. He reserves to himself the apostolic authority to chastise his audience, urging them first 'be reconciled to God'¹¹¹ (2 Cor. 5.20d) and then 'not to accept the grace of God in vain' (2 Cor. 6.1). He then, in a long and poetic passage (2 Cor. 6.2c-10) heavy with eschatological urgency, outlines the appropriate and kerygmatic ambassadorial behaviour that he demands of the Corinthians, so

¹⁰⁹ P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 309.

¹¹⁰ *Contra* Best, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 26.

¹¹¹ For an alternative translation, 'Reconcile yourselves to God', see R. Bieringer, " 'Reconcile Yourselves to God.' An Unusual Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:20 in its Context", in R. Buitenwerf, H.W. Hollander and J. Tromp, eds., *Jesus, Paul and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan de Jonge* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 11-38.

that they might, as he has written earlier, stand out in witness to Christ: ‘who sees anything different in you?’ (1 Cor. 4.7a).

The expectation and demand of audience obedience to Paul’s command is established in writing to the Galatians from the moment of the initial terse salutation. Paul’s authority is the commissioning he has received from God (Gal. 1.1), and his word is incontrovertible (Gal. 1.8, emphatically repeated in the following verse). The exordium¹¹² of the letter re-emphasises the opening salvo: Paul received the kerygma directly from Christ (Gal. 1.12), and its content is incontestable. Additions to the kerygma are as fallacious as deletions (Gal. 2.18), and are nothing less than desertion (Gal. 1.6, c.f. 3.3).

To ignore God-given authority structures within the body of Christ is to move perilously close to the boundaries of the faith community. Paul is frequently willing to remind his audience that his own authority is his primary concern in writing. To reject his authority is to reject the authority of God, and in doing so to pass beyond the boundaries of the faith community. This is primarily an issue in the conflictual contexts of Galatians and the last Corinthian correspondence, where Paul’s satisfaction with his audience is at its lowest ebb. Obedience to Paul’s God given authority is assurance of close connection with Paul and with the gospel he proclaims, and the way to maintain his satisfaction. Where relations between Paul and his audience are strained by the latter’s failure to obey his directions – which are, in Paul’s understanding, directions from God – relations are inevitably strained and relational indicators low. There is no need to remind the Thessalonian or Philippian audiences of these matters.

¹¹² The terminology is that of Betz, although the NRSV editors are right to extend the exordium to include Gal. 1.12, and to create the beginning of the narratio from 1.13. See Betz, *Galatians*, 16. Betz’s treatment of Galatians as an epistolary *tupos* is not above criticism, however. See especially S. Porter, “The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature”, in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbicht, eds, *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTsUP 90. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 100-122 (102-104).

4. Be Exemplary in Obedience to Conscience

There is also an internal and God-given, though easily silenced, dispenser of authority. The question of conscience is not addressed in the Galatian context, where moral propriety, and particularly outsiders' observations of that propriety, is not at stake. It is an issue in the remaining contexts in which Paul is uncertain of or dissatisfied with his connections with the audience. Once more it is in contexts of low satisfaction between Paul and audience that these matters are raised.

In a painful and easily misconstrued discussion of the fate of Israel (discussion to which the hermeneutical key is 'mercy' – Rom. 9.14-18, 11.28-32), Paul notes the pain this subject causes him. The inertia caused by that pain is overcome only by the promptings of *sunei/dhsij* and Paul makes solemn declaration of that motivation: I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie (Rom. 9.1).¹¹³ Paul is unable to do other than that which his awareness of his own integrity permits him (c.f. 2 Cor. 1.12). He is concerned to demonstrate that the credibility of his witness must be as great as or greater than that of the surrounding community, who may succeed by conscience in doing 'instinctively what the law demands'. His obedience to universally accepted¹¹⁴ promptings of conscience takes on the solemnity of an oath made 'in the Holy Spirit'.

The Romans are reminded of the universal action of conscience, and of the extra dimension of eschatological judgment (for which the wrath of God is shorthand), to which they

¹¹³ My translation. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 2, 451, argues that by the word order 'Alh/qeian le/gw e)n Xristw~| Paul is emphasizing Christ as guarantor of this solemn declaration.

¹¹⁴ '[T]he predominant use of this phrase and its dependents is neither philosophic nor technical, while the N.T. usage is emphatically popular'. C.A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament* (SBT 15. London: SCM, 1955), 22.

as believers are responsible. Paul has argued that ordered submission is a matter of conscience; ‘one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience’ (Rom. 13.5).

Paul is concerned about the believer’s exemplary submission to conscience’s directives towards management of personal life and ethics. Yet in the Corinthian context where obedience to conscience has been ignored, Paul countenances overriding conscience: ‘Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience’ (1 Cor. 10.25). This seems to contradict Paul’s understanding of *sunei/dhsij* as a God-given guide for human behaviour.¹¹⁵ Thiselton¹¹⁶ outlines the complexities surrounding interpretation of this command to avoid awkward questions. Paul appears to be applying a higher authority than conscience, arguing in 1 Cor. 10.26 (based on Psalm 24.1),¹¹⁷ and in verse 30 (on the basis of *berakot*’ offered over meals), that God’s grace-filled provision outweighs scruples over the offering of meat to powerless gods. But if the ‘weak’ believer (Paul identifies himself as such: 1 Cor. 4.10b) is made aware of the prior religious use of the meat, then Paul’s subsequent directive at 1 Cor. 10. 28 should apply. The previous verse, 1 Cor. 10.27, then becomes the exception to the rule: ‘If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience’. This presupposes that the believer will simply accept the hospitality on offer, and, because Paul’s emphasis is always evangelical, presumably utilize the opportunity to bear witness to the power of the gospel, including the power of the Spirit to neutralize pagan sacrificial rites. As Hays has noted,¹¹⁸ the over-riding maxim is to be found back at 1 Cor. 6.20: ‘Glorify God in your body’.

¹¹⁵ But see G. Lüdemann, *sunei/dhsij*, *EDNT*, volume 3, 302: ‘*sunei/dhsij* does not play a central role in Pauline anthropology ... Neither is it central to Paul in ethical thinking, since he never invokes it as a moral principle and is far removed from any idealistic understanding of *sunei/dhsij* as the voice of God’.

¹¹⁶ Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 782-5.

¹¹⁷ LXX 23.1: Tou~ kuri/ou h(gh~ kai\ to\ plh/rwma au)th~j.

¹¹⁸ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 179.

This passage is about the mutuality of love and responsibility that we have addressed above: ‘we can infer that the glory of God is served when God’s people serve one another and live in loving unity’.¹¹⁹

Awareness of prior sacrificial use of the meat was inevitable in the market place, for most meat available in the market was widely known to have been offered in religious ceremonies.¹²⁰ If this is the case, rather than finding internal inconsistency within one small Pauline passage, or finding here a Pauline ‘if you don’t ask you won’t know’ instruction,¹²¹ it may be warranted to read 1 Cor. 10.25 as a further Corinthian slogan, sequential to those in 1 Cor. 10.23 (cf. 1 Cor. 6.12), now repeated with irony by Paul. In this case, Paul’s emphasis is on avoiding the *appearance* of sin. As Thiselton notes, ‘freedom must be qualified by love’.¹²² It is also the responsibility of the believer to protect the conscience of the vulnerable, stressed by Paul at 1 Cor. 8.12: ‘when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ’ (see also Rom. 14.1-12).

Conscience is a gift of God, and obedience to its voice is a sure way of maintaining fidelity to the gospel Paul has proclaimed. To deaden the voice of conscience is to risk border transgression and ‘Lapsing Out’, and the threat of that transgression stretches the connectivity between Paul and his audience and his sense of satisfaction with them. Disobedience to the warning signs of conscience is a deteriorating element in the worsening connectivity between Paul and his Corinthian audience.

¹¹⁹ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 179.

¹²⁰ So, e.g. J. Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), 32-3.

¹²¹ See, for example, A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Second edition. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), 220.

¹²² A. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth”, *NTS* 24 (1977-1978): 510-526 (520).

Being aware of the evangelistic benefits of exemplary response to the universal voice of conscience, Paul tells the Corinthians that it is ‘by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God’ (2 Cor. 4.2b). Renunciation of all things shameful is as powerful a kerygmatic witness as any Paul can construe (2 Cor. 4.2a), and the conspicuous and repeated failures of the Corinthians to live up to the vocation of renouncing the shameful is the basis of Paul’s on-going passionate remonstrance with them; they have failed to be conspicuous by their values, ‘so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh’ (2 Cor. 4.11). The consistency of these values in Paul’s own life underscores his written appeals to his audience (2 Cor. 5.11c).

If the Corinthians cauterize the voice of conscience then they sever the common ground between author, audience, and the work of the gospel, tensions between Paul and audience are introduced and then exacerbated, and the warmth of connection is stretched to severance point.

5. Be Exemplary by Living ‘to Christ’

The *raison d’être* of the faith communities addressed by Paul is proclamation of the gospel, to be an ambassadorial presence of Christ (2 Cor. 5.20). To ensure that believers’ lives are as proclamatory as their words they must know themselves to be answerable to Christ (Rom. 2.14). Failure to demonstrate that being answerable to Christ is a priority in the lives of the believers begins to drive a wedge of suspicion between Paul and his audience: ‘It is actually reported ...’ he says with incredulity (1 Cor. 5.1), or ‘it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people’ (1 Cor. 1.11). Not all reports are cause of negative concern: ‘he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me’ (2 Cor. 7.7). Paul relies on reports back to him regarding the behaviour of his pastoral charges (Gal. 4.19-20). It is though notable that, whereas in the

previous contexts in which Paul has called to the audience's mind their responsibility to exemplary living he has done so out of a sense of dissatisfaction with their behaviour, the matter of exemplary 'ambassadorial behaviour' arises in both a 'dissatisfied' (Romans) and a 'satisfied' (Philippians) relationship. The question for this study is whether bad reports that reach Paul destroy the sense of connection he has with the audience and contribute to changes in the way he addresses them.

a. Romans

The basis of all Paul's pastoral concern is the belief that those who are 'in Christ' are no longer answerable only to themselves, nor even to an independently discernible court such as 'conscience', however important a guide that may be, but to the external judge and Lord: 'If we live, we live to the Lord' (Rom. 14.8a). This answerability extends even to death (Rom. 14.8b). Living to the benefit of others is not in itself an exceptional value in classical thought. In the comedy *Adelphoi*, Terence has Demea soliloquise about his brother, observing 'He has always led a life of leisure, sociable, easy-going, and tolerant, with never a black look for anyone and a smile for all. He's lived for himself and spent on himself, and he's won praise and affection from everyone'.¹²³ But Plutarch draws a contrast between his idealized character, Cleomenes,¹²⁴ and the public, who were a community in which 'citizens had been lulled by inactivity and indulgence'.¹²⁵ Plutarch, like Paul, believes his writing to be didactic,¹²⁶ but Paul

¹²³ Terence, *The Comedies*, edited and translated by B. Radice (Third edition; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 379.

¹²⁴ 'Cleomenes, too, was ambitious and idealistic in addition to being as well endowed as Agis with self-discipline and restraint ... his character contained an active and forceful element, and an extremely strong impulse to aim for any worthwhile goal'. Plutarch, *On Sparta: Cleomenes*, translated and revised R.J.A. Talbert (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005), 98.

¹²⁵ Plutarch, *On Sparta: Cleomenes*, 99.

understands that it is only as a life is lived to Christ that it can be life lived for the benefit of the believer's neighbour. The encounter with Christ is the sole basis of love for neighbour. For that reason Paul writes primarily of living 'to the Lord' (Rom. 14.7-9) and adds the eschatological scriptural imagery of Isa. 49.18¹²⁷ and Isa. 45.23 before he engages in an extended hortatory section encouraging his audience to live to the benefit of those around them (Rom. 14.13-15.2). If they fail to live in such a manner then they are failing in their gospel imperative and falling short of Paul's – and God's – demands. In such a case the emotional distance between author and audience increases.

b. Philippians

In a less conflict-ridden yet no less eschatologically urgent context Paul makes a similar demand of the Philippian community: 'live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ' (Phil. 1.27). K. Barth notes that the verb used, *politeu/esqe*, is 'largely synonymous' with *peripatei=n*,¹²⁸ and describes the whole action of living (c.f. Rom. 14.15) in a single (*mo/non*, 'only', 'one thing') exhortation.¹²⁹ This is a summary of Paul's entire kerygmatic ethos, underscoring all his calls to exemplary living. The sentence 'stands as a rubric to the whole section [Phil.] 1.27-2.18',¹³⁰ and *politeu/esqe* 'draws attention to the idea of mutual and corporate responsibility'.¹³¹ Paul's concepts of ambassadorial and

¹²⁶ 'Both the ethical philosophers and the tragic poets ... understood themselves to be engaging in forms of educational and communicative activity, in what the Greeks call *psuchagōgia*, (leading of the soul)'. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 16.

¹²⁷ And 21 other OT uses of this construction. See Moo, *Romans*, 847 n. 108.

¹²⁸ Barth, *Philippians*, 45.

¹²⁹ See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 145.

¹³⁰ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 146.

¹³¹ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 147.

citizenship roles unite in a single kerygmatic purpose.¹³² If this is fulfilled, as he believes it has been at Philippi (Phil. 1.3-11) then Paul remains confident and connected in communication with the audience.

Paul's caution revealed in raising these matters when writing to the obedient and exemplary Philippian audience represents another glimpse of a shift in his perspective driven by experience during the epistolary ministry. This phenomenon is noted above in the context of Paul's affirmation of *pisteu/w*;¹³³ here, while not a theological shift in Paul, we are seeing the result of battle-scarring, and the sad recognition that, no matter how loyal an audience can be, it can be seduced from the truth.

6. Renouncing the Shameful

While the command 'renounce the shameful' (2 Cor. 4.2) alluded to above is used only once by Paul, it testifies to a bond that should unite a family group in his honour/shame society. There are other ways in which Paul demands that his audience be conspicuous and counter-cultural. Not all of these can be tracked as belonging to any one degree of connectivity or satisfaction between Paul and audience. For example, in a context of grave dissatisfaction Paul warns the Galatians that they are to maintain a childlike faith. This imagery, while introduced in the stern context of the Galatian correspondence (0.22% satisfaction), has earlier been used by Paul in the warmth of the Thessalonian correspondence (0.68% satisfaction). Renunciation of shame may however provide a common theme.

¹³² Note the use of *sumpoli=tai* at Eph. 2.19, which, while not Pauline, stands close to the heart of Pauline anthropology.

¹³³ See pp. 201-203, above.

Common fatherhood or ancestry is a shared assumption in a family, and a bond between absent siblings who whether together or apart are ‘remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and the patient hope of our Lord Jesus Christ’. This faintly liturgical and solemn mnhmoneu/ontej (remembering) of 1 Thess. 1.3, in correlation with eu)xaristou~men tw~| qew| of the previous verse, places the family connection of great warmth and mutual enrichment into a solemn, quasi-liturgical context.¹³⁴ This is accentuated by Paul’s authorial plural, linking a)na/mnhsij (or mnhmoneu/ontej) and eu)xaristi/a as the bedrock of the kinship that is enjoyed by Paul and the Thessalonians. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that not only his claim to kinship with them, but his entire parenetic approach to them has been based on tender love (‘like a father with his children’ – 1 Thess. 2.11; cf. ‘like a nurse tenderly caring’ – 1 Thess. 2.7). As he stresses the eschatological urgency of watchfulness, he adopts the metonymy of shared childhood once more: ‘you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness’ (1 Thess. 5.5), the second clause a collusive plural incorporating author and audience alike. Paul returns to this theme towards the end of the letter, reminding the Thessalonians that they are to be a parousia-expectant people, as befits children of light, unafraid that they will be unprepared and therefore exposed in shameful deeds. Eschatological readiness is to Paul a primary responsibility of believers. By his familial love and by his instruction, then, ideally he leads them away from shameful behaviour.

But as Aasgaard has demonstrated, siblinghood is not always enriching or psychologically edifying. Loyalties and expectations of loyalty were strong, but family images of warmth and harmony were as mythical to Paul’s world as they are to our own. In the Thessalonian context

¹³⁴ See Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 76.

‘family’ is an edifying concept, indicating warmth and harmony in relationship. In other contexts such as that of Galatia or Corinth this is less the case: elements of duty replace elements of desire. Here there is a hidden shame in a family context. In a passage late in the Corinthian correspondence Paul, having reminded the Corinthian audience of their responsibility to ‘renounce the shameful’ (2 Cor. 4.2), and reminded them of the eschatological urgency of this directive (2 Cor. 4.14: ‘the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence’), challenges them to develop a level of vision that raises above the ordinary and considers instead the eternal. By this Paul is reminding the Corinthians of their previous awareness of the fragile nature of their existence (‘our outer nature is wasting away’ – 2 Cor. 4.16; ‘if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed’ – 2 Cor. 5.1) and contrasting that memory of fragility with the timelessness of divine vision: ‘that which cannot be seen is eternal’ (2 Cor. 4.18). The Corinthians are challenged to see the unseen, and to rule their own lives according to unseen but abiding values. This contrasts with the libertinism Paul has so far observed and heard reported in the Corinthians’ lifestyle. Management of daily personal life is always to be a matter of faith rather than sight (2 Cor. 5.7), faith that the standards of a divine ethic are ultimately more rewarding than their personal and visible-egotistic¹³⁵ satisfaction. The former, not the latter, are gift and sign of God: this is the implication of 2 Cor. 5.5.

7. Boasting

Clearly an area of instruction that looms large in Paul’s thought is that of boasting. In Paul’s world ‘open boasting (kau/xhma), if done in an honourable way, was a positive

¹³⁵ e) /cw h(mw~n a) /nqrwpoj – our outward self (2 Cor. 4.16).

quality, as was to be praised by others'.¹³⁶ But Paul radicalizes boasting, so that it is acceptable only 'in Christ', and only from God is praise permissible (Phil. 3.14). The community therefore are called to be a non-boasting people, though they may legitimately boast in or of Christ.

To speak of 'boasting' in Pauline terms is to engage with the heart of the debate between 'New Perspective' and 'Old Perspective' advocates of Paul. To the former, originally represented by Sanders, the Jewish milieu out of which Paul emerged did not arrogantly rely on possession and maintenance of Torah as a basis for confidence in relationship to God, but saw Torah as a grace and a responsibility. To this school of thought Paul is unfair in his representation of his people of origin, especially in the anthropomorphic dialogue of Rom. 2.17 – 3.8.

To the traditional Lutheran/Calvinist interpreter Torah was an impediment to reliance *sola gratiae*, and Paul's is an accurate rendition of Second Temple Judaism. Arguments such as that between Dunn on the one hand and Käsemann, Cranfield and Hübner on the other¹³⁷ are unnecessary when it is emphasized that *all* bases for boasting that are not ἐν κυρίῳ/ω| are invalid. In Romans the entire Hebrew tradition of reliance on and pride in Torah is excluded. Bultmann is correct to assert '“faith” is the absolute contrary of “boasting”'.¹³⁸

For us, in the context of a discussion of the believer's responsibilities in faith, it is possible to some extent to avoid the New/Old Perspective debate. Paul's major concern *within the Christian community* is to establish criteria by which Christians may avoid reliance on any basis for arrogance in their relationship with God. There is no basis for arrogance in the

¹³⁶ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 51-52.

¹³⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 363 n. 120. See Käsemann, *Romans*, 102. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 165, 170, 219. H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (SNTW. Trans. J.C.G. Grieg. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 115-117.

¹³⁸ *Theology of the New Testament*, volume 1, 281. Italics in original. See also *ibid.*, 242-246.

experience of the salvation offered by God because the preliminary move is made by God in Christ. At 1 Cor. 1.29 Paul stipulates ‘no flesh’ may boast before God,¹³⁹ and at 1 Cor. 5.6 the prohibition is universal: ‘your boasting is not good’. At 1 Cor. 9.16 the reason for this is given: ‘for if I should proclaim the gospel, it is not for me to boast, for I am compelled to do so’. Paul remains faithful to Psalm 5.5 ‘The boastful will not stand before your eyes’. Proclamation of the gospel is no more than a dutiful response to the encounter with Christ.

Boasting in the actions of God is particularly emphasized in the later Corinthian correspondence, especially in the Fool’s Speech, but boasting itself is sufficiently central to Paul’s theology to be mentioned in every uncontested letter (except Philemon). Paul categorically precludes ‘boasting’ (Rom. 3.27). The Christian has no basis to boast over and above the Jew (Rom. 11.18; 1 Cor. 1.29) any more than the Jew may boast (Rom. 2.17b). In all of this argument the underlying surmise is that ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Rom. 3.23). There is no human basis for boasting (1 Cor. 3.21). If either law or gospel is a divine gift, then boasting in oneself is unwarranted and equally invalid (1 Cor. 4.7). The test of any proclamation is its content, and for Paul only ‘Christ crucified’ (1 Cor. 1.23) is authentic proclamation. Where the Corinthian miscreants have begun to boast in their libertine behaviour, it is neither more nor less an ill-formed basis for boasting than that of the Jews boasting in Torah or the sectarians boasting in the prestige of their founder (1 Cor. 1.12). Paul is consistent and applies the same measure to his own life: ‘on my own behalf I will not boast’ (2 Cor. 12.5b).¹⁴⁰ The response to all boasting is hypothetically the same: your boasting is not good (1

¹³⁹ mh\ kauxh/shtai pa~sa sa/rc.

¹⁴⁰ On two occasions in 2 Corinthians Paul uses a construction of ‘they boast [inappropriately] ... but I boast [appropriately]’. 2 Cor. 12.5a presents the antithesis: u(pe\r tou~ toiou/tou kauxh/somai (‘of these things I shall boast’). At 2 Cor. 11.8 the antithesis of the acceptable boasting of Paul is the lapsing insider’s ‘vacuous boast’, e)pei/ polloi\ kauxw~ntai kata\ sa/rka (‘the many boast according to the flesh’).

Cor. 5.6). Even the work of gospel proclamation cannot be a basis for boasting, for it is a divine imperative (1 Cor. 9.16).

There is room for an exception to the prohibition of boasting: where boasting is of the achievements of God-in-Christ, and therefore of the action of Christ, or of the Spirit of God/Christ, in and through the believer. It is important to express this as the achievement of Christ through the believer rather than as the believer through Christ in order to emphasize the divine source of achievement. To Paul the obedient servant of Christ is little more than a conduit of divine action (1 Cor. 2.1-2; 9.16). To emphasize this Paul adapts Jer. 9.23-24 as a proof text, rendering it as ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord’¹⁴¹ (1 Cor. 1.31, 2 Cor. 10.17).

After the early Corinthian conflict, in part against arrogant libertinism, boasting becomes a major theme of the correspondence, and the statistics of Paul’s references to it are revealing. In 1 Corinthians the kau/x- group of words appears 10 times.¹⁴² Seven of these are as a prohibition. At 1 Cor. 9.15 and 1 Cor. 15.31 Paul is attesting to permissible forms of boasting, boasting of the work of Christ. 1 Corinthians 13.3 is a corrupted text. In terms of the percentage ratings considered in my previous chapter, the responsibility to refrain from boasting in the early Corinthian correspondence is not as important an issue as many others addressed by Paul.

¹⁴¹ mh\\ kauxa/sqw o(plou/sioj e)n tw~| plou/tw| au)tou~ (‘Thus says the Lord: let not the wise person boast in their wisdom’). Cf. 2 Cor. 10.17. ‘A free quotation from Jer. 9.22’ (Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 195). The LXX of Jer. 9.22 reads: Ta/de le/gei ku/rioj mh\\ kauxa/sqw o(sofo\\j e)n th~| sofi/a| au)tou~, kai\\ mh\\ kauxa/sqw o(i)sxuro\\j e)n th~| i)sxu/| au)tou~, (‘the strong person boasts in their strength, and the rich person boast in their riches’). Verse 23 (LXX) continues: a)ll’h(\\ e)n tou/tw| kauxa/sqw o(kauxw/menoi, suni/ein kai\\ ginw/skein o(/ti e)nw ei)mi ku/rioj poiw~n e)/leoj kai\\ kri/ma kai\\ dikaosu/nhn e)pi\\ th~j gh~j, o(/ti e)n tou/toij to\\ qe/lma mou, le/gei ku/rioj (‘but in this let the boaster boast: in understanding and knowing that I am the Lord, having mercy and judgement and righteousness upon the earth, because in this is my will, says the Lord’). See also 1 Clem. 13.1.

¹⁴² 1 Cor. 1.29, 1.31 (x 2 – in allusion to Jeremiah), 3.21, 4.7, 5.6, 9.15, 9.16, 13.3 (the variant kauqh/swmai – in order to be burnt – is also strongly attested), 15.31.

Because being ‘in the Lord’ is the basis for and imprimatur of boasting, it is a gift that cannot be removed from its possessor: ‘no one shall void my boasting’ (1 Cor. 9.15). The Corinthians are finding their own bases for boasting, an anathema to Paul. These, it should be said, differ in content to the bases for boasting of either the Roman or the Galatian faith communities, but the content is of no importance to Paul: boasting is anathema. His addressing of the subject of boasting gains impetus as the Corinthian correspondence develops. In the earlier section of 2 Corinthians, chapters 1-9, the word appears nine times,¹⁴³ while in chapters 10-13 it appears 20 times.¹⁴⁴ Chapters 1-9 contain 3001 words, compared to chapter 10-13 which contain 1459. Paul’s alarm at the Corinthians’ inauthentic boasting grows to the extent that he uses the word more than ten times more frequently in his final letter than in his first, though this of course includes Paul’s own boasting as a demonstrative and corrective rhetorical device in 2 Cor. 10-13, where Paul effectively adopts a rhetorical construction ‘they boast *inappropriately* ... but I boast *appropriately*’. Paul’s use of the word group leads Furnish to comment, with some degree of understatement, ‘The extraordinary frequency of the word-group in 2 Cor ... suggests that the matter of legitimate versus illegitimate boasting was an important part of the dispute between Paul and his Corinthian rivals (*those who are boasting of what is outward*)’.¹⁴⁵ At 2 Cor. 12.5 Paul presents his antithesis: ‘On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weakness’. The antithesis of the acceptable boasting of Paul that he demonstrates at 2 Cor. 10.13, 15 (boasting ‘within limits’) and at 11.30 (boasting of weakness) is the lapsing insider’s ‘vacuous boast’: ‘many boast according to the flesh’ (2 Cor. 11.18).

¹⁴³ 2 Cor. 1.12, 1.14, 5.12a, 7.4, 7.14 (x 2), 8.24, 9.2, 9.3.

¹⁴⁴ This tally includes 2 Cor. 11.21, in which boasting is implied rather than stated. The remaining references are: 2 Cor. 10.8, 10.13, 10.15, 10.16, 10.17(x 2, quoted), 11.10, 11.12, 11.16, 11.17, 11.18 (x 2), 11.30 (x 2), 12.1, 12.5 (x 2), 12.6, 12.9.

¹⁴⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 307. Italics in original. See also Sumney, *Identifying*, 129.

There is a substantial surge in Paul's treatment of boasting in Corinthians, then, because Paul launches into 'a little foolishness' (2 Cor. 11.1). Repeatedly, in 2 Cor. 11-12, Paul contrasts his own boasting in the Lord as a counter to the claims of the pseudo-apostles. Yet even his own boasting in the Lord is rendered obsolete – even foolish – by his final boasting observations of 2 Cor. 12.9 ('I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me') and 2 Cor. 12.10b: 'whenever I am weak, then I am strong'.

In Galatians, where the behavioural issues are different, Paul mentions boasting only once (Gal. 6.14). There he sees it as an abstract possibility rather than a practice that he will engage in to further his argument. In Galatia 'flesh' and 'works of the law' (σαρκ, and ε)ργων νόμου), rather than the enthusiastic boasting of the Corinthian super-apostles, demand a different approach. Boasting is a sign of reliance on flesh, but the Galatians have reintroduced circumcision as a sign of fleshliness. That action, not boasting, betrays their 'other gospel'.

By contrast the Philippians are encouraged to boast in Paul (Phil. 1.26) as indeed Paul does in them (Phil. 2.16). There is on the other hand no ambivalence about the Christological basis of such boasting: 'it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh' (Phil. 3.3). O'Brien observes that this verse suggests the Philippians were tempted to boast,¹⁴⁶ yet it is precisely because they are not tempted to boast that Paul chances this approach of mutual affirmation. This is the case also with the Thessalonians: in their trials it is worth the risk of a boast in Christ (1 Thess. 2.19).

The community must maintain belief in the righteousness and fidelity of God. It is the believer's and the believing community's responsibility to maintain faith in the righteousness

¹⁴⁶ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 141.

of God: ‘But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in [/of] Jesus Christ for all who believe’ (Rom. 3.21-22a). In the access to God gained for humankind in Christ the demands of Torah are fulfilled (Rom. 8.3b-4a). Nevertheless the responsibility remains on believer and community to maintain a mindset focused on the Spirit, in contradistinction to ‘the things of the flesh’ (Rom. 8.5). The demands of Torah are strengthened by ‘right-mindedness’ (Rom. 3.31), but the impetus for such strengthening, whether in the prototypical life of the patriarch Abraham (Rom. 4.1-4, 20-25) or in Paul’s audience, is divine. The archetypal Abraham was ‘empowered¹⁴⁷ by faith, giving glory to God’ (Rom. 4.20b, my translation),¹⁴⁸ and by that the reckoning as righteousness is imparted (Rom. 4.22, see also Rom. 4.4). As it is for the patriarch, so it must be for Paul’s audience (Rom. 4.23-4).

The onus remains on those who benefit from the divine initiative: ‘Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off’ (Rom. 11.22). Paul may appear inconsistent as to whether the calling of God is irrevocable, yet in the call to sustained trust and belief in the faithfulness of God there remains potential to fall away. Compare Rom. 11.29 (‘the gifts and the calling of God are not to be regretted’)¹⁴⁹ with 1 Cor. 9.27: (‘I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified’). The indications demonstrate Paul’s belief that apostasy is not only possible but highly likely, and so the believer is urged to maintain constant vigilance (Phil. 2.16, ‘It is by

¹⁴⁷ e) nedunamw/qh: third person singular aorist passive indicative.

¹⁴⁸ ‘The opposite of giving glory to oneself’. Jewett, *Romans*, 338. Again it should be noted this is powerfully countercultural in an honour/shame society.

¹⁴⁹ Translation mine. In translating a) metame/lhta as ‘irrevocable’, many scholars are claiming more than Paul does at this point. Elsewhere Paul differentiates between metame/lesqai and metanoei=n (2 Cor. 7.8-10), and it is meta/noia that is the more powerful – not necessarily irrevocable – state.

your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast'). Boasting in Christ is good, and is a motif that emerges where Paul has a high degree of satisfaction with his audience. Boasting in the self is not, and the opposite is true in terms of authorial connection and satisfaction.

8. To Live by the Spirit

To be in or live by the Spirit is to live by contrast; it is to be countercultural, living no longer according to the flesh. The term *kata\ pneu~ma* is applicable not only to the activities of the appropriately active community of faith, for it is used to describe descent of Jesus from David (Rom. 1.3). This term in this context indicates not that which is *ipso facto* evil – for Torah and the descent of Christ according to the flesh from David are plainly within the purposes of God – but that which is not *self-consciously* executed in the Spirit. When the dweller in the Spirit, the *pneumatikoi*/, self-consciously reorients her or his life to serve divine purpose, then he or she both receives and becomes a sign of the activity of God. He or she becomes a recipient and practitioner of divine love (Rom. 5.5), and experiences freedom – freedom *to* rather than a freedom *from*: 'now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit' (Rom. 7.6).

Paul believes that his audience needs constantly to be aware of their being in the Spirit. Consciousness of the Christian's existence as existence lived *en pneu/mati* is revealed by the verbs Paul uses to depict spiritual life. In Romans 8 he emphasizes believers' duty to 'walk' (*peripate/w*, Rom. 8.4¹⁵⁰) in the Spirit and to 'be minded' (*frone/w*, Rom. 8.5) of the Spirit; these two verbs of conscious action are used before he addresses the audience as being

¹⁵⁰ See Meeks, *Origins*, 95.

simply ‘in the Spirit’ (Rom. 8.9). Paul used *peripate/w* earlier, at Rom. 6.4, and the verb reappears, describing moral failure, at Rom. 14.15.

Being in the Spirit is a state of new awareness made possible by access to the purposes of God. In the Spirit the believer gains otherwise inaccessible insight into both world and divinity, together with gifts or ‘graces’ to enhance that insight. Being in the Spirit, the believer experiences new vision made possible by *a) ga/ph* (Rom. 5.5). This new loving vision and action can be reversed (Rom. 14.15).¹⁵¹ The believer is living life as a person liberated from the demand of the law (Rom. 7.6, Gal. 5.18), and from other, unspecific restrictions (2 Cor. 3.17). They are therefore experiencing a wholly new way of living or ‘walking’ (Rom. 8.4). ‘In the Spirit’ is a recurring depiction of a new realm of existence (Gal. 5.16), where the believer exists with a new mindset (Rom. 8.5b, 1 Cor. 2.13, Gal. 5.25).

The Spirit is a new realm of existence, but is also the agent of a previously unattainable access and approach to God (Rom. 8.14-16) and way of relating to God (Gal. 4.6), and even makes the believer a dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 3.16, 6.19). There is a sense in which the Spirit breathes a future, post-parousia existence into the experience of the believers’ present (Rom. 8.10-11,¹⁵² Gal. 5.5, Gal. 6.8b), and is a down-payment on that future (Rom. 8.23, 2 Cor. 1.22, 2 Cor. 5.5, Gal. 3.14). Through the Spirit the believer has a new identity (2 Cor. 3.3, 3.6) and lifestyle (Rom. 8.13, 8.26, Gal. 6.1). The Spirit provides new access to the depths of God (1

¹⁵¹ Gundry Volf notes that this passage contrasts appropriate (i.e. Christlike) and inappropriate (i.e. un-Christlike) behaviour towards the ‘weak’ brother or sister, a ‘comparison of divine love with human neglect of love’. If there were to be any hint of ‘falling away’, which Gundry Volf wants to exclude from interpretation of this passage, it would be apostasy by the ‘strong’ and not the ‘weak’. See Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 88-89.

¹⁵² ‘The believer escapes neither this body of death nor the death of this body, but God’s acceptance, life and power are not subject to sin or death, and when sin plays death as its last card God’s Spirit will trump it’. Dunn, *Romans*, volume 1, 445.

Cor. 2.10, 14.2), new discernment and insight (1 Cor 2.12-13, 1 Thess. 1.5), and provides gifts (1 Cor. 12.4-13).

The Spirit sets right, or ‘justifies’ the relationship between believer and God (1 Cor. 6.11,¹⁵³ Gal. 3.2, 3.5, 5.22-23, 5.25). It is by the Spirit that the believer is united with, and thereafter unable to oppose the Lord (1 Cor. 6.17, 12.3). By the Spirit believers are united with one another in one Body (1 Cor. 12.13) and therefore commissioned to mutual edification (1 Cor 14.12, Phil. 2.1-2). Being in the Spirit is to contrast with all that is fleshly (Gal. 3.3b, 5.17 Phil. 3.3).

All these expressions of the life lived *en pneu/mati* are summarized in the benediction of 2 Cor. 13.13: ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you’. Paul’s benediction is a theological statement spoken as a conclusion to his most desperate struggle for the hearts and minds of any his audiences. He uses the benediction to express his deepest longing for the Corinthian audience, a longing that, if realized, would re-establish the connectivity and satisfaction so desperately damaged in relationship between this author and his audience. The relationship between expressions of the life lived *en pneu/mati* and Paul’s mindset towards his audience could also be explored by tracing connections between use of the vocative and dative in each letter and the number of pneumatological references.

The sense of connection between Paul and his Thessalonian and Philippian audiences is high, and there is little need for pneumatological correction. It is worth noting once more that

¹⁵³ Variant readings do not impact on being *en tw~| pneu/mati*. See Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 453, Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 552.

satisfaction ratings in the early Corinthian correspondence remain relatively high,¹⁵⁴ he is concerned precisely at their pneumatological behaviour – it could be termed ‘pneumatological misappropriation’. The subsequent indications fluctuate: 2 Cor. 1-9 is a relieved and by Pauline standards almost ecstatic response to good news of the Corinthians’ behavioural re-orientation, and therefore, once again, there is no need for further pneumatological instruction. By 2 Cor. 10-13 pneumatology simply doesn’t picture: the audience have passed beyond the pale and are ‘as if outside’ the realm of the Spirit.

In writing Romans Paul is confident of his theological and pneumatological grounding, but as he is writing predominately to strangers, he is less confident in his assumptions of a kinship relationship with his intended audience. Not least perhaps because of his growing caution with the Corinthians’ behaviour he is concerned to lay down clear pneumatological boundaries: ‘Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him’ (Rom. 8.9). Jewett notes the extent to which this verse indicates an existence countercultural to that of the surrounding Roman milieu: ‘Their very being is shaped by Spirit rather than flesh, because their conversion set them free from the compulsion to conform to the world’s method of gaining honor through competition with others’.¹⁵⁵

9. Conclusion

The audiences of Paul are called to be walking, talking, whole-of-life advertisement to the communities around them, testifying to the Jesus event, to the gospel. This is the predominant theme of Paul’s correspondence: is his audience a counterculture? Where squabbling and factionalism, boasting and reliance on forms of religion other than the Christ-event are the

¹⁵⁴ Aasgaard indicates 1 Corinthians to be a ‘close, positive but strained’ relationship. *Beloved*, 294.

¹⁵⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 489.

dominant ethos in the faith community, then they are slipping away from the demands of the gospel. They are beginning, as shall be explored in the next chapter, to ‘lapse out’. When there are signs of this happening it has an immediate impact on Paul’s sense of connection with his audience. The worse the signs – as is the case with the Galatian and the last Corinthian letters – the greater the disconnection Paul feels. Such contexts are furious and desperate efforts to persuade a wayward community to navigate away from spiritual shipwreck, and only the bare bones either of information or nicety are offered as Paul writes. In such a context his language is the language of desperate discourse, and far from a context in which reasoned theological debate might emanate.

Chapter 5: Lapsing Out – The Warning Signs

Introduction

Paul is primarily a ‘proclaimer’ and a pastor. He proclaims, his audiences hear and respond, become a people ‘in Christ’, but there the story of his relationship with them does not end. As the Corinthian correspondence above all makes abundantly clear, he is constantly advising, correcting and cajoling those whom he has brought to faith in Christ. Uniquely, in the case of the Roman faith community, he seeks to correct and encourage those brought to Christ by other missionaries, though not, he emphasizes, in order to ‘re-proclaim’ the gospel (Rom. 15.20).

In this section I will look at the warning signs sent off by those who are ‘Lapsing Out’ of the parameters of acceptable faith (Gal. 1.6), or who are under pressures, external or internal, that might cause them to lapse out of faith and the faith community. In terms of Paul’s marathon metaphor, we are looking at those who are hitting the Wall, and for whatever reason running the risk of giving up their faith. In this exercise the main purpose is to notice the relationship between the growing potential for outward boundary crossing – lapsing out – and the language used by Paul, betraying his sense of ease or otherwise with the audience community.

Again I shall look at the terms Paul uses to illustrate and depict lapsing out, look at their meaning, look at the frequency with which and the context in which he uses them, and try to make some extrapolations for an understanding of Paul’s language of insider and outsider, and the possibility of transition between the two states. The clearest indications of transition might

well be considered to be behavioural, moral actions and ethical behaviours that betray expectations of those in Christ – or indeed which effectively betray Christ (1 Cor. 6.15). I will begin this survey by noting these behaviours as addressed by Paul. But I will argue that these are surface symptoms of a deeper cause, and that it is the cause, rather than the effect or symptom, that is Paul's greatest concern.

In this section therefore I will inevitably touch on issues raised by Marshall¹ and Gundry Volf.² They have written on the quality that they, following Augustine, call 'perseverance'. I will also be aware of the influential contrary view, stated tangentially by Sanders, who maintains that Paul's soteriology is one of 'participationist eschatology',³ that 'Staying In' is dependent on continuing right participation or maintenance of unions (that is behaviour) 'compatible with union with Christ'.⁴ Departure from such right behaviour could in theory, be measured against a primary Pauline rhetorical tool, the vice lists. Do these, where the behaviour they outline is adopted by an audience, provide quantifiable evidence of lapsing out, effectively a boundary marker?

It could be predicted that the audience communities most prone to 'lapsarian behaviour', that is to behaviour that demonstrates the believer's (or believers') departure from the acceptable behavioural parameters of those 'in Christ', would be those with which Paul is least satisfied and emotionally connected. To test that prediction I will outline the specific matters addressed in what might be termed 'order of dissatisfaction', that is from those issues that arise

¹ Marshall, *Kept*.

² Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*.

³ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 550.

⁴ Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 503.

in the audience with which Paul is least dissatisfied, to any unsatisfactory behavioural activities that arise in the communities with which Paul is most satisfied.

1. Behavioural Issues

a. 2 Corinthians 10-13

In this last extant correspondence with the Corinthian community the presenting issues are not archetypically ‘moral’ or ethical’, not the stuff of vice lists. In 2 Cor 10.1-6 Paul establishes a contrast between ‘the meekness and gentleness of Christ’, with which Paul is to be associated as an example, and ‘arguments’ and ‘proud obstacles’ (2 Cor. 10.4-5). He contrasts ‘building up’ with ‘tearing down’ (2 Cor. 10.8), and what might be called ‘Christ-focussed boasting’ (2 Cor. 10.13-18, several times) with ‘self-commendation’ and ‘self-comparison’ (2 Cor. 10.12). These attributes on the negative side of the equation are not at first sight the stuff of vice lists, but they are clearly hugely important to Paul. It is out of these concerns that Paul explodes into his vehemently rhetorical Fool’s Speech, in which he begins by contrasting ‘the [gospel] we proclaimed’ with proclamation of ‘another Jesus’ (2 Cor. 11.4), and goes on to contrast his ineloquent gospel proclamation but satisfactory knowledge (2 Cor. 11.6-7) and his lack of sponsorship (2 Cor. 11.8-9) on the one hand with, on the other, the attributes of an undefined group who are enemies of the gospel. They are variously defined in this most polemical letter without reference to traditional vice characteristics. He calls them ‘super-apostles’ (2 Cor. 11.5), ‘boasters ... false apostles, deceitful workers’ merely masquerading as apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 11.15). They are, in Paul’s reality, ‘Satan’s ministers’ (2 Cor. 11.15).

If this is the primary concern in the most ‘dissatisfied’ of letters, then clearly both proclamation of and belief in a false gospel are as great an error as Paul has to deal with in his

epistolary war of truths. In 2 Cor. 11.15 Paul despatches these errant-proclaimers with as strong an epitaph as he can muster, 'their end will match their deeds'. He then engages in rhetoric contrasting his authentic and their counterfeit proclamation (2 Cor. 11.16 – 12.11). He dismisses the super-apostles and shows no further interest in them, bar a passing mention at 2 Cor. 12.11. Only at the end of this rhetoric of contrast does he raise, in passing, his concern that some of the behaviour the audience may exhibit under the influence of the false apostles matches that of traditional degeneracy. Only then does he produce a vice list, following (as Thrall notes)⁵ traditional form:

I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced (2 Cor. 12.20-21).

This potential destructive and 'lapsing' behaviour is once more contrasted with the edifying (2 Cor. 12.19) behaviour Paul believes he has exhibited.

b. Galatians

The second most 'dissatisfied' context is Galatians. What are the errant behaviours Paul observes in his audience there? The first issue he addresses, and so, seemingly the matter of paramount importance, is 'desertion' (Gal. 1.6), and resultant adoption of a contrary gospel (Gal. 1.9). But are there behavioural indications or results of this lapse? Paul establishes a rule of thumb in Gal. 1.10, contrasting 'human approval' with 'God's approval'. Laspsarian behaviour focuses on the former: Christ-oriented and acceptable behaviour focuses on the

⁵ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 865: 'following the diatribal style exemplified in Epictetus'.

latter. Paul then uses autobiographical material to contrast his earlier ‘people pleasing’ life (Gal. 1.13-14, expressed, significantly in the active voice) with his passive obedience to God’s call in Gal. 1.15, and his outworking of that call in the verses that follow.

Paul then moves to establish a further contrast. ‘Works of the law’ are contrasted with the ‘faith of/in Jesus Christ’, and Paul’s death (to the law: Gal. 2.19) is contrasted with Christ’s life within him. Flesh and Spirit are contrasted, and law and faith. At this stage Paul is not establishing audience-behavioural indications of lapse, but a contrast between two outlooks, ‘Torah-centric’ and Christocentric (Gal. 3.24). At Gal. 4.8 Paul begins to produce the ramifications of his argument in terms of the life of his audience: to be ‘in Christ’ is to be set free from calendrical observances (Gal. 4.8-11) and physical manifestations of belonging (Gal. 5.2-3).

Until this late point in the letter Paul has still not defined the Galatians’ aberrance in terms of the stuff of traditional vice. Only after contrasting his pre-conversion life and behaviour, hardly the stuff of vice list according to his subsequent letter to the Philippians (Phil. 3.6b), and highlighting the risks of Torah-centricity and calendrical fascination, again neither the stuff of traditional vice, does Paul at last turn to potential secondary outcomes of departure from the gospel. Subjection to Torah-centric and calendrical observances is a primary indication of lapsing, the result of which is finally depicted by the terminology of a vice list:

the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, *strife*, *jealousy*, *anger*, *quarrels*,⁶ dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5.19b-21)

⁶e/)rij, zh~loj qumoi/ e0riqei~ai.

There is in fact no indication that any person in the audience is exhibiting such behaviour. The list is an alternative and longer form of that which appears in 2 Cor. 12, and the vices common to both lists, italicized above, appear in the same order. Paul's implication is that these stereotypical forms of behaviour are possible if his audiences continue to demonstrate the primary lapsarian behaviour of submission to an alternative and false gospel.

c. Romans

In the somewhat disconnected and effectively neither satisfied nor dissatisfied climate of Paul's writing space when writing to the Roman Christians, indications that there are specific instances of aberrant behaviour are few and far between. Paul is, after all, only 'longing' to come to the Romans (Rom. 1.11) and any genuine experience of the community *en masse* and *in situ* remains an abstract possibility, even if Rom. 16 makes it clear that many individuals are personally known from Paul's travels elsewhere.

Consequently behavioural matters are addressed in a largely abstract tone. In Rom. 1.18-32, to be addressed more closely in Chapter Seven below, Paul delivers a stylistic diatribe depicting the behaviour of the outsider, and includes again a vice list (Rom. 1.29-31). This is again in stereotypical form caricaturing outsider behaviour. There is no suggestion that this outsider behaviour is as yet apparent within the faith community, and the perpetrators are referred to in the third person. This changes to direct second person address at Rom. 2.1, but the tone remains theoretical: the 'whoever you are' of Rom. 2.1 is a symbolic abstraction, not an identifiable member of the wider or the faith community. The same is true of the 'if you call yourself a Jew' of Rom. 2.17, or the hypothetical hypocrite of the passage in Rom. 2.17-24. Nevertheless, Paul is approaching more concrete detail here: hypocrisy is a lapsarian practice,

and if there are members of the faith community slipping into such a double standard, then they risk enumeration amongst the outsiders.

Paul returns to a hypothetical failure at Rom. 6.1: ‘should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?’ There is no suggestion here that any specific sinful behaviour or sinning individuals are in focus. But, as a warning in a hypothetical tone, the audience are reminded to avoid allowing ‘sin [to] exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions’ and to avoid ‘present[ing] your members to sin as instruments of wickedness’ (Rom. 6.12-13). There is no indication that *me/lh*⁷ at this point indicates any specific bodily part or function, and Cranfield’s indication ‘it is perhaps used in an even wider sense to include any natural capacity’⁸ is a helpful hermeneutical key. The use of *me/lh* in 1 Cor. 6.15, with reference to use of a prostitute, should not be read into Romans any more than the frequent occurrence of the word in the extended metaphor of 1 Cor. 12. It can be deduced from the similarities between 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12.3-8 that the body metaphor was a familiar tool in Paul’s proclamation.

Paul’s exploration of the question of ‘allowing sin’ leads to a dissertation not on patterns of inappropriate behaviour, except in broad terms such as ‘falling back into fear’ (Rom. 8.15), but on the recalcitrance of his people, his ‘kindred according to the flesh’ (Rom. 9.3). This issue will be addressed in my next chapter. Only after that question is addressed at length does Paul return, in Romans 12, to possible behavioural considerations within the faith community. But these are broad behavioural brushstrokes, with no direct indication that the audience is failing the tenets of ‘genuine love’, ‘mutual affection’, ‘showing honour’ (Rom. 12.9-10),

⁷ NRSV: ‘members’; also Rom. 6.19, 7.5 etc.

⁸ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 317.

failing in zeal, ardency of spirit, or service (Rom. 12.11), or the cycle-breaking behaviours of Rom. 12.14-21, addressed later in this chapter. Much of chapters 12-14 suggests that Paul is offering warnings to the Romans that are as much based on his observation of behaviour elsewhere in the Christian community as on reports that he may have received of the Romans.

There are, though, some specifics. Rom. 14.13-23 may indicate that there are some in the Roman community behaving destructively in their eating habits: the ‘strong’ (Rom. 15.1) who have shunned ritual food observances. If this is upsetting the faith of the ‘weak’ then behavioural modification is necessary, and Paul provides guidelines. There is no clear indication though that the ‘strong’ are, so far, risking Corinthian-style slippage beyond the acceptable boundaries of practice.

d. 1 Corinthians

This is not the case in 1 Corinthians. There some specific actions are, in Paul’s view, beyond the pale. Yet the foremost of these, in terms of the urgency and attention to detail with which Paul addresses them, are not stereotypical moral actions but social matters of factionalism (1 Cor. 1.10-17, 3.1-9) and elitism (1 Cor. 1.18 – 2.16).

I will return to these deeper issues presented at Corinth below, but there is a handful of presenting moral matters to be addressed. These matters are symptomatic of a general malaise in the faith community following Paul’s departure. They are, by and large, matters that have reached Paul by verbal report (1 Cor. 5.1) or written enquiry (1 Cor. 7.1). Not all of the matters brought to his attention are addressed (1 Cor. 11.34).

The verbally reported matters include reports of factionalism, but include more dramatic matters as well. A man is living with his father's wife. This is dealt with summarily: the man is to be expelled (1 Cor. 5.5). The greater concern is the boasting that has accompanied the man's actions (1 Cor. 5.6): this aberrant behaviour is of at least equal abhorrence in Paul's eyes and indicates that the observers are as guilty as the perpetrator of the deed (1 Cor. 5.9). It may be that it is the boasters revelling in this man's conspicuous immorality who are the implied subject of 1 Cor. 5.13.

Presentation of lawsuits to civil courts (1 Cor. 6.1-8) is both a symptom of the deeper malaise of factionalism and an undesirable testimony to those called on to try the cases. Paul hints, too at a deeper internal corruption unbecoming of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 6.8): exploitative behaviour is an anathema no less than the generalized behaviour stylistically represented in the vice list of 1 Cor. 6.9-11. Both the exploitative use of legal bullying – for that is the implication of 1 Cor. 6.8 – and the immoral practice of using prostitutes are likely to have been practices of which Paul has been made aware. He does not differentiate between the two in terms of moral rectitude: both legal and sexual chicaneries are 'lapsarian' behaviour.

Paul then turns to the matters of which the Corinthians have written. Appropriate treatment of widows, fiancées: these are moral and ethical questions dealt with under the greater umbrella of propriety (1 Cor. 7.15b, 17) that governs all ethical directives that Paul delivers to the Corinthians. The inappropriate eating of food, an issue that resurfaces in Romans, is likewise dealt with under the aegis of Christ-like propriety (1 Cor. 8.10-13): the faith of weak believers might be destroyed by the behaviour (1 Cor. 8.11). The presenting matter of idol-offered meat (1 Cor 8) leads to a diatribe based on the issue of the use of freedom

(1 Cor. 9.1 – 11.1): this question, rather than surface level matters of idol-offered meat or pre-marital sexual tension, is the real narrative issue with which Paul is concerned.

e. 2 Corinthians 1-9

As noted previously, though a lot less affectionate than the two most connected letters, 2 Cor. 1-9 shows manifestations of connection and satisfaction between author and audience. Paul has received good news of their behaviour, and his mood is lifted considerably above that of 1 Corinthians. There are still niggling issues marring Paul's relationship with the Corinthians: the accusation of inconsistency is foremost (2 Cor. 1.15 – 2.4), and many words are used to address it. But it is hardly a moral matter. There is some unidentified matter concerning a person who has caused pain (2 Cor. 2.5-11), but that is over. After a lengthy celebration contrasting 'Christless life' with life in Christ (2 Cor. 3.1 – 6.10) Paul finally turns to some outstanding ethical matters: 'Do not be mismatched with unbelievers' (2 Cor. 6.14). The reference is not altogether clear, but interpolation theories need not be introduced.⁹ It is possible that he had in mind the marriage of believers and unbelievers, but, as Thrall notes, 'he might also be thinking of business partnerships.'¹⁰ In fact he may be thinking of any close relationship, as the following verses make clear. This is a call to a Christian existence uncontaminated by outside influence, and as separatist a demand as Paul ever makes.

Paul's remaining issue in 2 Cor. 1-9 is the matter of the 'generous undertaking' that is the focus of 2 Cor. 8.1 – 9.15, clearly not a moral, though perhaps an ethical and missiological matter.

⁹ *Contra* J.A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17", *CBQ* 23 (1961): 271-280.

¹⁰ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 473.

f. Philippians

Matters of behaviour are not greatly on Paul's mind as he writes to his much loved Philippians. He is concerned that they do not 'murmur' or 'argue', an echo, no doubt of his experience of other faith communities exacerbated perhaps by his awareness of tension between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4.2), but there is no indication of great divisive tendencies within the audience. He warns against 'confidence in the flesh' (Phil. 3.4b-6), perhaps again because of his experiences from other communities. He urges against 'worrying' (Phil. 4.6), but only by way of contrast with the appropriate joy-filled demeanour of those who are in Christ (Phil. 4.4-5, 4.7). The Philippians are in good moral and ethical shape.

g. 1 Thessalonians

This was true, too, of the Thessalonians, to whom Paul had written at the outset of his epistolary ministry. Between 1 Thessalonians and Philippians Paul runs epistolary extremes! But at the outset he was concerned only to cement the Thessalonian Christians in behaviour that ensured they remained a countercultural society, as the Corinthians in particular were to fail to do. There appears to have been some matter of 'idleness' (1 Thess. 5.14), and perhaps eschatological speculations (1 Thess. 5.1), but the first is soon dealt with, and the second a theological rather than moral or ethical concern. 1 Thessalonians is a letter primarily of exhortation and encouragement, not of discipline and correction.

2. Lapsing Out as 'Losing Counterculturality'

There are then many instances in Paul's letters of Paul addressing of moral or ethical matters; in the corrective tone of 1 Corinthians and the precautionary tone of Romans these

approach the surface of Paul's narrative. But Paul's concern operates at a far deeper level of counterculturality, and it is establishing countercultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that is his main literary aim. Where individuals or even whole communities are lapsing out of appropriate attitude, belief or behaviour, Paul attempts to rein them back, contrasting the Body of Christ with the society out of which it has been called. Sometimes he summarizes the contrasts with symbolic or caricatured vice lists, product of the Jewish moral rhetoric in which he was well schooled. These are dire warnings (Gal. 5.21), and warning is clearly a part of Paul's kerygmatic technique (2 Cor. 13.2, 1 Thess. 4.6). It is a more general state of departure from 'in Christ' state that concerns Paul.

So I will now address the key terms that are used by Paul to depict the process of falling away or 'lapsing' from the faith in broader terms. It would be possible at this point to separate Paul's depiction of those lapsing from the faith into two further categories: those actually within his intended audience and those from beyond, who are affecting them. On some occasions this distinction is quite clear. The unexpected outburst of Phil. 3.2, for example, is speaking about someone external to the audience. The circumcisers of Gal. 5.12 or the 'super-apostles' of 2 Cor. 10-13 are believing outsiders who have infiltrated the thinking and the lives of the audience. But such a clear distinction is less possible than at first appears to be the case. At 2 Cor. 13.5 Paul instructs his audience to apply to themselves a litmus test of belonging: 'Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!' The final clause demonstrates that Paul recognizes that there are some within the audience who may fail this test.

It is more complex still, for Paul has loaded this instruction with ironic manipulation: to fail the test is *ipso facto* to demonstrate that the believer has shifted from within to outside the faith community: no believer will be expected to admit to that! Paul has already set ground rules at 2 Cor. 11.7: ‘as you belong to Christ, so also do we’. If that then is the case, even external missionaries who have come to Corinth and interfered with the Paul’s faith community must, according to his argument, alter their behaviour and submit to the authority of Paul’s kerygma.

Some of the meddlers remain outside the Pauline community but within a wider Christian community. Paul has not developed an ecclesiology of a ‘church universal’; he is however inevitably aware of the work of Christian missionaries beyond his sphere of influence. These even include the ‘acknowledged pillars’ James, Cephas and John. For as long as they leave his mission alone he has no theological, let alone soteriological, interest in them. Inevitably, as the missionary networks of the Christian community cross and re-cross, he encounters them, as the Jerusalem Conference makes clear. When they interfere in his mission they are ‘Servants of Satan’ (2 Cor. 11.13).¹¹ Sometimes, as in Galatia, they appear to cut and run, for there is no implication at Gal. 3.1 or 5.7 that the ‘bewitchers’ have remained in the community to see the fruits of their labour. In the final phase of the Corinthian conflict the opponents do appear to have remained *in situ* (2 Cor. 13.2, 10-11).

It is not therefore possible, for the purpose of analyzing Paul’s treatment of the ‘lapsing insider’, always to differentiate between the residential insider and the passing or ‘external’ insider, and they will be treated as one for the purposes of this chapter.

¹¹ Sumney, *Servants*, *passim*.

a. **sofo/j, fro/nimoj and dialogismo/j: the Errors of the Pseudo-wise**

Sofo/j appears several times in the Pauline canon, but not always in contexts germane to this study. In addressing the Romans, where Paul is demonstrating a fairly low degree of satisfaction with his audience,¹² he uses sofo/j-language sparingly, predicated primarily of outsiders in the broad brush-strokes of caricature. At Rom. 1.14 he refers to his obligation to proclaim the gospel to all humanity;¹³ the parallelism of ‘the wise’ and ‘the foolish’ there and at Rom. 1.22 is a stylistic Hellenism¹⁴ not referring to ‘lapsing insiders’ but to those beyond the boundaries, who have not yet heard of Christ. At Rom. 16.19, consistent with his reversal of standards of wisdom in 1 Cor. 1, Paul stands sofo/j wisdom on its head, cautioning his audience to be ‘wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil’. There is no sense at this point that they are failing to do this, and the saying appears to echo a Jesus saying (Mt. 10.16).¹⁵ For Paul wisdom that is not anchored in the wisdom of God (Rom. 16.27) is *pseudo-wisdom*.¹⁶ Intellectual wisdom that is not directed to reception of the gospel is not wisdom, but wisdom’s opposite.

Paul will therefore from time to time refer ironically to ‘those outside’ as ‘wise’.¹⁷ At 1 Cor. 1.19, where the audience-satisfaction indication is not vastly greater than that of the Roman audience,¹⁸ he takes a proof text from Isaiah (Isa. 29.14) and, as is the case with the Romans, applies it to those primarily outside the faith community, who reject or scoff at the

¹² Satisfaction of 0.26%; see Table 6 (p. 212, above).

¹³ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 83-84.

¹⁴ Byrne, *Romans*, 56.

¹⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, volume 2, 904-905. Byrne, *Romans*, 458.

¹⁶ Irrespective of whether the doxology of Rom. 16.25-27 is a scribal insertion, the theology and doxology of the text is fundamentally Pauline. See Beker, *Paul*, 26.

¹⁷ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 84, warns that the word is sometimes used with objective neutrality.

¹⁸ Satisfaction of 0.30%; see Table 6 (p. 212, above).

‘foolish’ gospel of the Cross (1 Cor. 1.23). He is not pointing his finger at the outsider in order to create a contrast between those outside and those inside the community of faith, but in order to introduce to his argument the stark reality that some *within* are imitating the foolish wisdom of those *without* (1 Cor. 1.26 – 2.13). Paul is establishing an internal contrast between negatively valued ‘words of human wisdom’ and positively valued ‘words taught by the Spirit’ (1 Cor. 2.13). At 1 Cor. 1.20, 25, 26, 27 and at 3.18-19, as well as in the further proof texts from Job (Job. 5.13) and the Psalms (Ps. 93.11 LXX) Paul exposes any wisdom that is not divinely sourced as moronic.¹⁹ He revisits this theme with heavy irony at 1 Cor. 6.5.

Fro/nimōj, which can be translated as ‘thoughtfulness’ as well as ‘wisdom’ and ‘mindedness’,²⁰ could be expressed in English by coining a hybrid word ‘think-ability’, with its literal undertones of ‘ability to think’. It appears twice in Romans, at 11.25 and at 12.16, and three times, heavily loaded with irony,²¹ in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 4.10, 10.15, and 2 Cor. 11.19). At 1 Cor. 4.10 Paul sarcastically contrasts the audience’s thoughtfulness with his and his companions’ foolishness. At 1 Cor. 10.15 Paul, perhaps with mock respect,²² addresses the audience in this way again: ‘I speak as to sensible people’. In the acerbic context of the rhetorically loaded Fool’s Speech in his final letter to the Corinthians, Paul returns again to the contrast, with subtleties such as mock respect notably absent: ‘For you gladly put up with fools, being wise yourselves! For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or

¹⁹ See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 103-104.

²⁰ See p. 109, above.

²¹ ‘[P]aradoxical irony’, Collins, *First Corinthians*, 182.

²² On the possibility or otherwise of irony here see Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 755. Robertson and Plummer are adamant ‘there is no sarcasm’. *I Corinthians*, 211.

preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!’ (2 Cor. 11.19-21).²³

Paul is using the noun in the same way, if less polemically, when he warns his audience in Rome, ‘So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery’ (Rom. 11.25), or, more literally, ‘I do not want you to be ignorant, siblings, of this mystery, so that you might not be [reaching] beyond your own thought-ability’. He returns to then warning later: ‘do not claim to be wiser than you are’ (Rom. 12.16).²⁴

The list of Paul’s ironic derogatory use of either *sofo/j* or *fro/nimoi* to illustrate the attitudes and behaviour of those lapsing from faith is therefore limited to Romans and the Corinthian correspondence:²⁵ including proof texts, the list of occurrences is:

As *sofo/j* or derivatives

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1 Cor. 1.19 | the wisdom of the wise (quoting Isa. 29.14) |
| 1 Cor. 1.20 | Where is the one who is wise ? |
| 1 Cor. 1.25 | God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom (as comparative adjective) |
| 1 Cor. 1.26 | not many of you were wise |
| 1 Cor. 1.27 | God chose what is foolish ... to shame the wise |
| 1 Cor. 3.10 | like a wise ²⁶ master builder I laid a foundation |
| 1 Cor. 3.18 | If you think that you are wise in this age you should become fools so that you may become wise |

²³ For an analysis of this passage reference should be made to the paper of L. Welborn, “*Euangelistes Parasitos*: Paul’s Caricature of his Chief Rival as a Pompous Parasite in 2 Corinthians 11:20” (paper presented at the International Congress of the Society of Biblical Literature, Auckland, NZ, 07 July, 2008). In L. Welborn, *Paul’s Enemy, Paul’s Friend: The “Wrongdoer” in Second Corinthians*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming.

²⁴ Jewett offers ‘wise-minded’ for *fro/nimoi*, and notes a ‘three-fold play on the word’ at Rom. 12.3. He also notes that Paul’s derogatory use of the word is unusual (*Romans*, 768).

²⁵ Other, positive treatments of the root are considered below.

²⁶ NRSV ‘skilled master builder’ ... however Paul’s intention is to contrast the *wisdom* he has in Christ in all facets of his life with the foolishness of those who seek to undermine him and his gospel.

- 1 Cor. 3.19 He catches the **wise** in their craftiness (quoting Job. 5.13)
 1 Cor. 3.20 The Lord knows the thoughts of the **wise** (quoting Ps 93.11 LXX)

Wisdom, sophistry even, appears to be a significant element in the opposition to Paul that arises after his departure. The use of the word diminishes later in the correspondence, suggesting that this round of struggles at least is settled in Paul's favour. After the shaming retort of 1 Cor. 6.5 Paul allows the issue to lapse, and the new concerns of the boasting super-apostles take over in the later correspondence

as fro/nimój

- Rom. 11.25 So that you may not claim to be **wiser** than you are
 Rom. 12.16 do not claim to be **wiser** than you are
 1 Cor. 4.10 you are **wise** in Christ (with heavy sarcasm)
 1 Cor. 10.15 I speak as to sensible (**wise**) people (with some sarcasm?)
 2 Cor. 11.19 being **wise** yourselves! (with heavy sarcasm)

While the context at Corinth, perhaps including his opponents' preference for the proof texts used by Paul, generates more frequent use of the word sofo/j and its derivatives than at Rome, the two terms are used interchangeably to signify false intellectual values that are leading astray those lapsing from the Pauline kerygma. Fro/nimój remains an issue in correspondence to and from Corinth.

Gundry Volf sees Paul's use of a proof text such as Isa. 29.14 as used at 1 Cor. 1.18-19, and the verb 'to destroy' in this context, as hyperbolic, and not an indication that 'the wise' are lapsing from Paul's gospel.²⁷ There is by this analysis no more than a threat in the use of the Isaian text, and a hermeneutic that adheres to the impossibility of apostasy is protected. By this

²⁷Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 86.

interpretation the misapplication of wisdom envisaged by Paul is robbed of its significance: to Paul the suggestion of misapplied ‘mere human wisdom’ is a departure from the gospel and is subversion of the Christian community. His application of the Isaian text is a genuine, dire, and not hyperbolic warning to a subversive element within the faith community: they are destroying their hope of salvation. This Isaian text governs Paul’s use of wisdom/foolishness throughout the remaining Corinthian correspondence.²⁸

Significantly, Gundry Volf does not consider any of the remaining Corinthian texts dealing with pseudo-wisdom in her study of perseverance. Having removed the Isaian threat of destruction from the equation, pseudo-wisdom is no longer a key to inclusion or exclusion within Pauline ecclesiology. In fact with no fewer than eighteen mentions – admittedly in this form across only two of the letters – false wisdom is a fundamental indication of deviation from the gospel, of lapsing from true Pauline kerygma.

Three further uses of the noun *fro/nhma* confirm and further explain the seriousness of this concept. At Rom. 8.5-8 Paul issues a solemn warning to the Romans, rendered in the NRSV by the nominal phrase ‘set the mind’:

those who live according to the flesh **set their minds** (*frou~sin*) on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit **set their minds**²⁹ on the things of the Spirit. **To set the mind** (*fro/nhma*) on the flesh is death, but **to set the mind** (*fro/nhma*) on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason **the mind that is set**) on the flesh is hostile to God

²⁸ See L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (EEiC. London: T&T Clark International, 2005).

²⁹ A noun is used, and the verb is implied only, to make sense in English of the verb carried over from the first clause of the sentence.

fro/nhma, translated in the NRSV with this nominal phrase ‘to set the mind’, could be better translated with the archaic ‘be minded’, though here too the Greek noun is converted to a verb. It describes an applied psychological faculty for planning, and is directly related to *fro/nimoi* and to the verb *frone/w*. At Rom. 8.27 Paul again contrasts human thought with divine thought: ‘God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit’. The divine ‘pneumatic mind’ is the only acceptable source of wisdom or of ‘right-mindedness’.

This means that Paul’s frequent use of the verb *frone/w*, ‘be minded’, must also be considered here. My observations of the *fron*-root have so far only focused on Romans and Corinthians, but the verb is widely used also in Philippians and once in Galatians, as well as being used several more times in Romans and in the Corinthian correspondence. In Rom. 8.5-6 the verb and the noun appear three times.³⁰ It appears also at several other strategic moments in the correspondence, often lost in translation. Here then is a list of further relevant uses of the *fron*-root throughout Paul’s letters (including Rom. 8.5-7). These are mainly verbal forms, where the root is used to represent a warning against behaviour that may entail lapsing from the Pauline path.

Rom. 8.5a	those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh
Rom. 8.5b	those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
Rom. 8.6	To set the mind on the flesh is death
Rom. 12.3a	I say to everyone among you do not consider yourself ³¹
Rom. 12.3b	more considerably-minded (<i>u(perfronei=nete)</i>)
Rom. 12.3c	than you ought to be considered

³⁰ The noun form *fro/nhma* appears again at Rom. 8.27, where ‘the mind of the Spirit’ is by implication contrasted with mere human mindedness.

³¹ The translations of this verse and of 12.16 are my own to emphasize the *fron*-root usage.

Rom. 12.3d	but be cautiously-minded (swfronei=n)
Rom. 12.16a	be minded (fronou~ntej) of one another
Rom. 12.16b	not thinking highly of yourselves
Rom. 12.16d	do not claim weighty-mindedness
Rom. 14.6	those who are highly-minded of the day ³²
Rom. 15.5	think in unison according to Christ Jesus ³³
1 Cor. 13.11	I thought like a child ³⁴
2 Cor. 13.11	agree with one another
Gal. 5.10	you will not think otherwise
Phil. 1.7	It is right for me to think this way ³⁵
Phil. 2.2b	be of the same mind
Phil. 2.2d	be like-minded
Phil. 2.5	let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus
Phil. 3.15a	be of the same mind
Phil. 3.15b	and if some think otherwise ³⁶ (third person)
Phil. 3.19	their minds are set on earthly things (third person)
Phil. 4.2	be of the same mind
Phil. 4.10a	you have revived your thinking of me ³⁷
Phil. 4.10b	you were thinking of me

Paul's use of the *fron*-root is spread across most of his writings, although not evenly and not in correspondence with the Thessalonians. There is no apparent correlation between his sense of satisfaction with an audience and his use of 'mindedness' as an instruction, except that in relating to the Thessalonians, where he has little fear of any ideological separation, the

³² My own literal translation.

³³ To\ au)to\ fronei=n e)n a)llh/loi j kata\ Xristo\n 'Ihsou~n. The NRSV translates 'live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus'.

³⁴ This otherwise innocuous phrase needs to be included in the light of the concluding phrase of the sentence: 'I put an end to childish ways', which is to be taken as an example to be imitated by the audience.

³⁵ Although Paul is here speaking of himself he does so with the intention of establishing himself as an example, and with the understanding he is effectively no longer self but Christ – Gal. 2.20 – because he is 'like-minded with Christ'.

³⁶ Translation mine.

³⁷ Translation mine.

construction is unnecessary. In his cautious dealing with the Romans, and in his cautious early epistolary dealings with the Corinthians, the *fron-* word group is useful. It is useful likewise as a warning in the conflict-fired contexts of Galatia and the last Corinthian letter, although the single use of the root in each of these contexts makes it hard to be statistically confident.

The *fron*-root is important to Paul, and the letter to the Philippians provides some idea as to why this is so. The ‘mind’ is the place of transformation into Christlikeness (Phil. 2.5), a transformation Paul has undergone (this is the significance of Gal. 2.20) and that Paul expects of his audience. To succumb to any other form of mindedness is to slide towards the outsider’s unthinking (a) *fro/nwn*: Rom. 2.20) attitudes and behaviour.³⁸

One further construction needs to be added to this study of Paul’s use of the *fron*-root, for misapplication of the mind can also be revealed in ‘futile thinking’ (Rom. 1.21). Here the specialist *dialogismo/j* is used, as it is also at Rom. 14.1, where it is translated ‘opinions’, in the NRSV, at 1 Cor. 3.20, in quotation from Ps. 93.11 (LXX), and at Phil. 2.14, rendered ‘arguing’ in the NRSV. The internal ‘dialogues’ of the mind are worthless if they are not ‘minded’ on Christ.

These uses of wisdom and thought-ability, the *sof-* and *fron-* roots, and the *diale/gomai* group, generate contrast between the inscrutable wisdom of God and the poor imitation that is human thought and wisdom. Where poor imitation wisdom infiltrates the faith community and becomes a basis on which the gospel is thwarted or marred the process is that of falling away, ‘Lapsing Out’, and is such until minds that are applied to the thought, wisdom or reasoning are minds transformed into ‘Christmindedness’ (Phil. 2.5).

³⁸ ‘...many Gentiles could indeed be described as a) *fro/nej*, as far as moral standards were concerned’. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 167.

This Philippian context warrants closer investigation. The tone Paul uses is different to the more bellicose tone used in his first letter to the Corinthians or the reserved but cautious reflections addressed to the Romans. Of ten mentions of ‘mindedness’ in his letter to the Philippians,³⁹ seven⁴⁰ are more introspective and conciliatory than bellicose. It is likely Paul is writing to the Philippians from captivity (Phil. 1.13) at a time when he is reconciled to the closure of his life and ministry (Phil. 1.21). A note of strident urgency familiar to his audience in Corinth is absent in Philippians, for there is there no concrete opposition to his ministry. Still, he is not without some concerns, for he has seen how quickly his opponents in Galatia and Corinth have overthrown his mission, and warnings must be issued (Phil. 3.2). Consequently Phil. 2.2b and d, and Phil. 2.5 should be read as precautionary rather than corrective. Philippians 4.10 is an affirmation of the Philippians’ behaviour, and Phil. 1.7 is justification or ratification of Paul’s own behaviour. This leaves only Phil. 4.2 as a serious concern, as some degree of rivalry develops between Euodia and Syntyche, rivalry between parties that Paul knows need to be reconciled before Corinthian-style factions develop. This is the only reference to mindset problems in the Philippians context.

If Paul feels deeply connected to and satisfied with his audience (1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and the more optimistic, early part of 2 Corinthians) then he does not feel the need to address questions of ‘mindedness’. Nevertheless, where an audience has sharply betrayed Paul’s gospel, and slipped towards the boundaries of belonging, this issue of ‘mindedness’ becomes less important than the immediate demand of obedience to Paul. In the more

³⁹ Phil. 1.7, 2.2 (x 2), 2.5, 3.15 (x 2), 3.19, 4.2, 4.10 (x 2).

⁴⁰ Phil. 1.7, 2.2 (x 2), 2.5, 3.15a, 4.10 (x 2). This means 3.15b, 3.19 and 4.2 have more negative connotations. Phil. 3.19 however refers to a third party, the ‘enemies of the cross of Christ’. At Phil. 3.19 Paul refers to a third party.

discursive contexts of Romans and 1 Corinthians Paul sees ‘right mindedness’ as an issue that can be raised for reflection and correction.

b. kauxa/omai, kau/xhma, kau/xhsij: Boasting Errantly

In the section ‘Getting In’ above I claimed that life lived according to the flesh is life lived inappropriately and unacceptably to God. For Paul one indication that an individual or a group is living according to the flesh and therefore not living according to the Spirit (in whom Christmindedness is made available) is errant or inappropriate boasting. Boasting is an important word for Paul, and a key indication that his audience or members of it are lapsing from his kerygma. Boasting appears no fewer than 51 times in his undisputed letters, but can be either a positive or a negative attribute, depending on the context. In this respect he echoes the Psalms, which can contrast positive boasting⁴¹ in the Lord with destructive empty boasting, boasting based on false premises.⁴²

In classical Greek and in the Septuagint the word usually has negative connotations, especially prevalent in Second Temple Judaism (see, e.g. 3 Macc. 2:17). As is the case with Paul there is a place for appropriate boasting, as for example at Ps. 5:11, where the cultic community is exhorted to exult in God. Paul therefore stands in a well established tradition when he boasts in all that God has done for him (Rom. 5.2) and in another established tradition when he condemns the boasting of those who rely on sources of strength other than God, and especially in self-glorification. Yet self-glorification is intrinsic to the advancement of citizens in an honour/shame society. Paul’s key to boasting authentically is Jer. 9.22-23, quoted at both 1 Cor. 1.31 and 2 Cor. 10.17: ‘For Paul boasting about the Lord clearly contrasts with boasting

⁴¹ Ps. 34.2, 38.16.

⁴² Ps. 5.5, 10.3, 12.3, 49.6, 75.4, 94.4, 97.7. See also, e.g., Judith 9.7.

about human beings, which Paul clearly eschews ([1 Cor.] 3.21)'.⁴³ Ever countercultural, Paul offers a form of legitimate boasting 'consistent with the realm of grace', where boasting in the self is abhorrent, but boasting in 'the glory of God' and boasting 'in our sufferings' are a celebration of authentic faith and of existence dependent on God.⁴⁴

The boasting word-group is most common in 2 Corinthians, where it dominates the Fool's Speech, but it appears in all the major letters, if only rarely in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, and there only as a positive claim made 'in the Lord'.

Rom. 2.17	if you call ... rely on the law and boast of your relation to God
Rom. 2.23	You that boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law?
Rom. 3.27	what becomes of boasting?
Rom. 4.2	if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God
1 Cor. 1.29	so that no one might boast
1 Cor. 3.21	let no one boast about human leaders
1 Cor. 4.7	why do you boast
1 Cor. 5.6	Your boasting is not a good thing
1 Cor. 9.16	If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting , for an obligation is laid on me
1 Cor. 13.3	if I hand over my body so that I may boast , but do not have love, I gain nothing
2 Cor. 10.16	boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action
2 Cor. 11.12	to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about

⁴³ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 99.

⁴⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 351. 2 Cor. 5.12b and 2 Cor. 9.3, for example, fall into the category of references to authentic boasting.

2 Cor. 11.17 in regard to this **boastful** confidence⁴⁵

2 Cor. 11.18 since many **boast** according to human standards, I will also boast.⁴⁶

Gal. 6.13⁴⁷ they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh.

These are the references to boasts and boasting imbued with negative connotations. They are not always directed at the audience (Rom. 4.2, for example, refers to the boasting of Abraham) but do always have implications regarding the behaviour of the audience. It is worth noting that there are nearly twice as many positive references in the Pauline canon to boasting as there are negative.⁴⁸ These figures are skewed by the Fool's Speech of 2 Corinthians, and the context of that speech is a rhetorical celebration of divine grace operating on Paul's existence (2 Cor. 12.9): 'I will not boast, except of my weakness' (2 Cor. 12.5). Paul adopts a mock pose of self-aggrandizement, but turns it upside-down⁴⁹ so it is no longer a celebration of one's own glory,⁵⁰ or an advancement of Paul's 'dyadic group',⁵¹ but a countercultural confession of weakness and utter dependence on God.

While the figures involved are not statistically large it can be said in general terms that where Paul is content with an audience (1 Thessalonians, Philippians and 2 Corinthians 1-9) he has no need to address the behavioural issue of boasting. In the context of 2 Corinthians 1-9 Paul does bring a narrative to the letter, awareness that boasting has been an issue in earlier exchanges. For that reason he speaks at 2 Cor. 9.3 and 2 Cor. 10.16 of his own *appropriate*

⁴⁵ At this point Paul is neither accepting nor rejecting the fool's boast into which he now launches himself, but because he parodies the boasting process it is useful to treat this verse and those that follow as negative uses of the root word.

⁴⁶ Although in the NRSV the English verb 'to boast' is used at 2 Cor. 11.21, it is not present in the Greek.

⁴⁷ Gal. 6.4 refers to legitimate boasting.

⁴⁸ Positive: Rom. 5.2, 5.3, 5.11, 15.17; 1 Cor. 1.31, 9.15, 15.31; 2 Cor. 1.12, 1.14, 5.12, 7.4, 7.14 (x 2), 8.24, 9.2, 10.8, 10.13, 10.15, 10.17, 11.10, 11.16, 11.30, 12.1, 12.5, 12.6, 12.9; Gal. 6.4, 6.14; Phil. 1.26, 2.16, 3.3; 1 Thess. 2.19.

⁴⁹ Turning standard wisdom upside-down has been a key rhetorical ploy in all Paul's writing to the Corinthians. See deSilva, "Honor Discourse", 64-65.

⁵⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 351.

⁵¹ Jewett, *Romans*, 351.

boasting. In a neutral or disconnected context boasting does become a behavioural issue. In the context of Corinthians deSilva notes that problems with boasting are related to ‘the believers’ failure to comprehend that the gospel of the crucified Messiah also involves ‘a transvaluation of dominant cultural norms of evaluating honor and understanding divine giftedness’,⁵² a failure, in other words, in vocation to counterculturality. Surprisingly, ‘boasting’ is not a major issue in the Galatian context, and the word is used twice⁵³ with a positive nuance. The specific language of the opponents in the Galatian context does not appear to have included ‘boasting’ as such. Gal. 1.10 is a context which cries out for use of the word, but the use of *pei/qw* and *a) re/skw* (twice) in particular serve as a reminder that context will sometimes dictate word choice – and serves as a reminder to that a statistical method such as that used here can serve only as a guide to rather than a definitive statement of Paul’s linguistic style.

c. ***fusio/w* and Derivatives – Puffed Up, Inflated**

Early in the context of the Corinthians Paul refers to members of the audience as becoming ‘puffed up’. The word appears only in the Corinthian correspondence, and appears six times. It is absent in 2 Cor. 10-13, suggesting that issues other than ‘enthusiasm’ take over as Paul’s prior concern at Corinth. At the risk of mirror reading it is probably fair to say that some form of spiritual arrogance or enthusiasm has overcome the Corinthians. Biblically, apart from the generally recognized Pauline letters, it appears only in the disputed letter to the Colossians, but it is not a rare word in ancient rhetoric.⁵⁴ It is closely, but not etymologically, related to Paul’s attacks on the pseudo-wisdom of the audiences, and it is no coincidence that the references to enthusiasm occur in a letter in which *sofo/j* appears frequently. Reliance on

⁵² deSilva, “Honor Discourse”, 64.

⁵³ Gal. 6.4, 6.14.

⁵⁴ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 177.

sofo/j is, in Paul's lexicon, a sin of reliance on sub-divine intelligence and reason. To be 'puffed up' or conceited is to rely on human values and reason, rather than the values of God.⁵⁵

The root appears in verbal form six times,⁵⁶ and only in 1 Corinthians. There it was clearly a sign of failure to live up to Paul's standards of faith and praxis, but it was not totally destructive in the relation Paul shared with the audience. Nevertheless it is a warning sign of lapsing from Paul's behavioural orthopraxy, and receives attention in a context where, indicators suggest, all is not completely well in relations between author and audience.⁵⁷

d. e) /rij, sxi/smata, zh~loj: Strife, Factionalism, Jealousy

On eight occasions Paul refers to e) /rij, strife, in the faith community. In canonical order it appears first in a catalogue of vice at Rom. 1.29, where it is one of a series of all-embracing terms used to illustrate the depravity of fallen humankind,⁵⁸ of humanity without the invasion of grace. These terms in the vice list are stylized terms far from peculiar to Christianity,⁵⁹ and as such cannot provide a great deal of insight into Paul's thought. They are predicated of those outside the faith community, and though they indicate Paul's assessment of pre-Christ-encounter humanity, they are hardly accurate sociological observations of community behaviour.

The word e) /rij features not only in the representative vice list of Rom. 1.29, in which the elements listed are descriptors of the outsider as a class, but elsewhere.⁶⁰ By Rom.

⁵⁵ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 177.

⁵⁶ 1 Cor. 4.6, 4.18, 4.19, 5.2, 8.1, 13.4 (and in the post-Paulines at Col. 2.18).

⁵⁷ A combined Satisfaction Rating for 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9 is 0.32%, low enough to indicate that all is not well in the relationship.

⁵⁸ See also Sir. 28.11.

⁵⁹ Meeks, *Origins*, 66-71, 212.

⁶⁰ The word e) riqei/a, at Rom. 2.6, is not etymologically related to e) /rij. Jewett, *Romans*, 206.

13.13 it is clear that Paul is well aware that the insider, too, must resist the temptation, especially in the ‘eschatological hour’, to slide back into behaviour marked by quarrelling and disharmony. Rom. 13.13, too, is a representative vice list and too much specificity should not be read into each characteristic.

In earlier writings to the Corinthians Paul is being more specific in his use of *e)/rij*, though by the time the acerbic passage 2 Cor. 12.20 is written the use has reverted to the caricatured vice list. At 1 Cor. 1.11 he is referring to actual factions⁶¹ whose quarrels have been reported to him by Chloe’s people (1 Cor. 1.11a). The term is one ‘borrowed from classic political usage’⁶² but it describes a reality emerging in the Corinthian faith community, reiterated at 1 Cor. 3.3. In fact, while the word is not repeated (*sxi/smata* is used instead)⁶³ the behaviour of the Corinthians at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11.17-22) makes it clear that the political factions within the community are damaging the central activities of the community as it gathers in prayer, fellowship and worship. It would appear that *e)/rij*, particularly as revealed in schisms or factions, is a focal issue in the Corinthian church.

This *e)/rij*, not only at Rom. 1.29 but arguably at Gal. 5.20 as well, is characteristic of the outsider community into which the audience runs the risk of lapsing. Romans 13.13, 2 Cor. 12.20, and Phil. 1.15, the last a part of the enigmatic passage Phil. 1.15-18, demonstrate that boundaries are porous,⁶⁴ and this outsider behaviour can become insider behaviour too. But in the context of Phil. 1.15 there has been a change. Previously *e)/rij* has been a sign of

⁶¹ ‘Paul indicates that he cannot address the Corinthians as spiritual because of the jealousy and strife that is present within the community; since he goes on immediately to refer to the way in which each of them declares that they belong to Paul or Apollos, it is evident that it was the allegiance to the different apostles that was causing rivalry between the factions’. Carter, “‘Big Men’”, 54.

⁶² Collins, *First Corinthians*, 79.

⁶³ Also at 1 Cor. 1.10, 12.25.

⁶⁴ Carter, “‘Big Men’”, 50.

insiders becoming ‘as if outsiders’. It has been a destructive force within the community. In the context of the Philippian correspondence this has changed: ‘Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice’ (Phil. 1.18a). Paul in this highly satisfied and connected context⁶⁵ mellows in his sense of cause and effect. Although ‘their proclamation is for all the wrong motives and thus presumably self-serving rather than in the service of Christ’⁶⁶ he, in his authorial context or ‘writing site’ of imprisonment, allows the possibility that good emerges from circumstances beyond his control. At Phil. 2.21, a seemingly parenthetical verse, he is even more aggressive in his dismissal of the alternative evangelists, but his opinion remains the same: ‘Christ is proclaimed in every way’.

What has changed? Once again the charts of author/audience connection provide a useful tool by which to understand this shift in language. In writing to the Romans, the Galatians and at the last recorded instance of his correspondence with the Corinthians, Paul is writing out of a low sense of connection with his audience. As a result he writes in caricatures of the outsider, or, in the case of the Roman audience, largely unknown to him, of the insider behaving ‘as if’ an outsider. In writing to the Philippians Paul is confident of their fidelity to his mission and his cause; nevertheless, with a genuine sense of connection to their circumstances, he writes with feeling about the potential for strife and division to destroy their fragile faith community. He gives his own explanation of his tone: ‘To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard’ (Phil. 3.1b). He is, from experience of other faith communities, aware of the audience’s vulnerability to divisive elements (Phil. 3.2), but confident that despite trials their well-being is in the hands of God (Phil. 4.19).

⁶⁵ Satisfaction Indication 0.52%, Connectivity 0.98%.

⁶⁶ Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 77.

On several occasions Paul also mentions *zh=loj*, most often predicated of God or of the gospel as a positive attribute⁶⁷ but on occasions as a negative (Rom. 13.13). At 1 Cor. 3.3 and elsewhere *zh=loj* is used in tandem with *e)/rij*, and it is used with other negatives to describe the world of ‘flesh’ in the vice lists of Gal. 5.20 and 2 Cor. 12.20. At Phil. 3.6 it also has a negative connotation as Paul describes his past life as one once ‘confident in the flesh’ (Phil. 3.4b). In none of these contexts does it add to a discussion of the characteristics of those lapsing from the gospel beyond what can be gleaned from a consideration of the word *e)/rij*. The linking of the two in a pairing or a vice list of contra-gospel characteristics demonstrates Paul’s tendency to speak in formulaic or stereotypical caricatures of the outsider or of those becoming as if outsiders.

e. *pseuda/delfoj*⁶⁸ and *a)delfo/j o)nomazo/menoi*

The specific term ‘false brothers’ is used on two occasions by Paul, at 2 Cor. 11.26 and at Gal. 2.4. On a further occasion Paul refers to ‘false apostles’ (2 Cor. 11.13, where he adds the epithet ‘deceitful workers’),⁶⁹ while early in the Corinthian correspondence Paul has referred to ‘so-called siblings’ (1 Cor. 5.11). This term perhaps more than any other raises a question of Pauline soteriology: is the ostensible insider who is antagonistic to Paul’s theology, his kerygma and his mission an insider or an outsider in terms of his soteriological world-view? There is no evidence that any of those referred to by the derogatory terms were converts as an outcome of Paul’s ministry, but the point remains that they represent figures potentially

⁶⁷ Rom. 10.2; 2 Cor. 7.7, 7.11, 9.2, 11.2.

⁶⁸ See also *yeudapo/stoloi*, 2 Cor. 11.13. ‘The word *yeuda/delfoj* is a Pauline creation’. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 744, n. 624. Note also ‘sham Christians’, as used by Fung, *Galatians*, 93.

⁶⁹ *e)rga/tai do/lioi*.

crossing boundaries in the wrong direction, ‘Lapsing Out’ of faith. References to them do not appear in contexts of close connection or high satisfaction.

At Gal. 2.4 Paul refers to his encounter with such people as those at the Jerusalem Conference. Paul treats them as ‘lapsing believers’, members of the faith community who, by their opposition to the law-free Pauline gospel, demonstrated their reckless willingness to slip from truth to deception. Gundry Volf does not see in this verse a reference to the antagonistic believers’ ‘falling away’ or ‘lapsing out’ from the faith community, and refers to the verse only in discussions of freedom⁷⁰ or of the audience response to Paul’s letter.⁷¹ Yet Paul is referring to some *within* the Christian community at Jerusalem who ostensibly bear the name of sibling, but whose behaviour in ‘secretly spying’ marks them out as lapsing beyond the parameters of Christian faith. The fact that they are in a position, as Paul sees it, ‘to spy’ on the freedoms of the Pauline group, indicates that they are familiar to and accepted as a part of the gathered community by the Jerusalem leadership: they are not originally outsiders, but they are becoming as such. As Aasgaard notes, not only does Paul retrospectively reject ‘their status as siblings on the basis of theological disagreements’,⁷² he recounts the events as a warning to the Galatian audience that, should they deviate from the Torah-free Pauline gospel they too will lapse from insider to outsider status.

Thrall has noted that, in Paul’s catalogue of woes written to the Corinthians, these ‘pseudo-Christians’ are placed last as a form of emphasis, and are therefore one of the most significant dangers or woes faced by Paul in his apostolic missions.⁷³ He has already

⁷⁰ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 146 n. 94, 204, n. 5.

⁷¹ Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 214.

⁷² Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 300.

⁷³ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 744.

established this by flagging his crusade to continue to ‘deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about’, those who claim equality to Paul and to the Paul’s kerygma (2 Cor. 11.13). Because these interferers are ‘false apostles, deceitful workers’, they are outsiders, despite their claims to provide an encounter with Christ. They are counterfeit, and as such are agents of Satan (2 Cor. 11.14-15). In the context of the Galatian battle there is no room for ambiguity regarding their eschatological fate in Paul’s eyes, and he delivers the unveiled threat ‘their end will match their deeds’ (2 Cor. 11.15).

On each of the occasions on which Paul uses these terms he is emotionally disconnected from any warmth – not any feeling but any *warm* feeling – for his audience. Again these usages are from Paul’s letters of disconnection. He is writing in passionate and furious mode, in which theological nuances are the least of his concern. In the desperate rhetorical context of the Fool’s Speech Paul lists ‘danger from false siblings’ as one of a series of dangers that include ‘rivers... bandits ... my own people’. The ‘false siblings’ are objectified – perhaps as Thrall says *emphasized*⁷⁴ but nevertheless objectified – as hindrances to the gospel. The context is not soteriological reflection but rhetorical debate with all the tools of rhetoric to hand, including caricature. The opponents, and the audience if they submit to the deceptions of the opponents in both Galatia and Corinth, are demonized as lapsing from insider to outsider status. To allow anything else is to lose the battle for the souls of the audience.

⁷⁴ ‘Placed last for emphasis’. Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 744.

f. Other Terms

Paul uses an arsenal of terms to describe those lapsing or risking lapsing from the community of faith. A quick survey of the remaining terms reveals that they are as might be expected predominately from the heated exchanges of Galatians and the Corinthian correspondence. They tend to be locationally specific. Indeed, the terms he uses of the audience are more descriptive of and specific to their behaviour than those he uses of interfering third parties.

Hypocrites

Rom. 2.1-11. The person, perhaps hypothetical, addressed in Rom. 2.1 as being ‘without excuse’ would appear to be a person within the faith community who has adopted a critical attitude unacceptable to Paul. For this reason ‘everyone who does evil’ of Rom. 2.9 indicates ‘lapsing insiders’ rather than outsiders. Nevertheless they have adopted characteristics of ‘outsideness’ that Paul has adumbrated in the previous passage; again the lapsing insider is to Paul ‘at least as if’ an outsider.

Gal. 2.11-14. Paul labels Peter as a hypocrite. The hard question arises does Paul therefore consider Peter to be lapsing outside the parameters of the gospel? In the volatile rhetorical context of Galatians the answer is ‘yes’. P. Koptak expresses this with more subtlety: ‘The community of Christ and his circumcision-free gospel is inclusive and egalitarian; the community of circumcision is no community at all’.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ P.E. Koptak, “Rhetorical Identification in Paul’s Narrative”, in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 157-168 (167).

Slogan abusers and fornicators

1 Cor. 6.12-20. Paul cites a series of reported slogans from the Corinthians' faith community in order to exemplify their failings. The use of slogans and the behaviour that is attached to the slogans demonstrates a 'fleshly' or 'sarkik' existence. The crescendo of the litany of slogans is the union between believers and prostitutes which to Paul is effectively the opposite of union to Christ, and has been an explicit concern since 1 Cor. 3.1-4,⁷⁶ when jealousy and strife were outlined as the Corinthians' primary sign of falling.

Carousing and bickering in the assembly

1 Cor. 11.17-22. Paul attacks those in the Corinthian faith community who have formed factions, *sxi/smata*. He depicts these factions as carousing and bickering in the assembly, and understands this behaviour to be a sign of falling from 'genuine' (*oi (do/kimoi)*) to counterfeit faith (1 Cor. 11.19). Nonetheless this specific assessment of the Corinthians' behaviour is made early in the correspondence with the Corinthians, when Paul is engaging with actual reported ('I hear', 1 Cor. 11.18) behaviour. In the later correspondence Paul relies increasingly on rhetorical caricatures and stereotypes (2 Cor. 12.20: 'I fear that there may be ...').

Not believing in resurrection

1 Cor. 15.12-17. Some of the Corinthians' failings have stemmed from failure to uphold the centrality of a doctrine of resurrection, with implications firstly of liberation from sin (1

⁷⁶ I am unwilling to differentiate too finely between the adjectival forms *sa/rkinoj* and *sarkiko/j*. See Robertson and Plummer, *I Corinthians*, 52; Fee, *First Epistle*, 124-127 for a more nuanced interpretation.

Cor. 15.17), and secondly of judgement. Judgement is the subtext of the warning of 1 Cor. 15.32-33 and the ironic citation there of Isa. 22.13.

Super-apostles

2 Cor. 11.5 and 2 Cor. 12.11. In the second section of 2 Corinthians Paul caricatures the new opponents at Corinth as ‘super-apostles’. It is a label heavily laden with irony and depicts someone who has, in Paul’s scheme, lapsed from Christ-centred ministry (that this has been their self-understanding is clear from 2 Cor. 11.13 and 23) to opposition to the gospel (2 Cor. 11.3-4).

There are several more signs indicative of lapsing, statistically insignificant but important to consider as an indication of the degree to which Paul is concerned about lapsing out:

1 Cor. 1.18	a) pollume/noij (lapsing)
1 Cor. 2.14 ⁷⁷	yuxiko\j (base, natural)
1 Cor. 4.10b	strong (with heavy irony) splendid (with heavy irony)
1 Cor. 5.1	sexually immoral
1 Cor. 6.8	litigious
1 Cor. 6.11	you were washed ... you were sanctified ... you were justified: (the implication of the context is that this achievement of holiness attained ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God’ is being undone by the Corinthians’ behaviour) ⁷⁸
1 Cor. 10.5	descendants of those ‘struck down’ in the wilderness
1 Cor. 14.37-38	failing to recognize Paul’s apostolic authority
1 Cor. 16.22	no longer ‘loving the Lord’

⁷⁷ See also 1 Cor. 15.44.

⁷⁸ *Contra* Gundry Volf, *Perseverance*, 125 n. 120.

- 2 Cor. 4.12 those in whom ‘living to self’ rather than the desired ‘dying to self’ is operating
- 2 Cor. 6.12 ‘restricted in feeling’: (Paul accuses the Corinthian audience of having no ‘space within’ to reciprocate [by obedience!] his love for them)

When Paul moves into the ‘least connected’ and most stringently rhetorical phase of his correspondence, he shifts away once more from specific details of his audience’s misdemeanours to broad caricatures of their behaviour. They become in the last phase of the Corinthian correspondence ‘false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as workers of Christ’ (2 Cor. 11.13), ministers of Satan masquerading as angels (messengers) of light (2 Cor. 11.14a-15). In this context of caricature Paul reintroduces a vice list of potential Corinthian behaviour: ‘I fear that there may perhaps be quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder’ (2 Cor. 12.20). Paul’s fear, in other words, is that his audience may have become outsiders, as displayed by their behaviour.

This caricaturing is similarly present in his portrayal of the Galatians. With some specific understanding he labels his audience ‘deserters’ (Gal. 1.6) The outsiders, who are interfering with the Galatians’ faith, are ‘confusers’ and ‘perverters of the gospel’ (Gal. 1.7), and therefore accursed (Gal. 1.8-9). The Galatian audience have ‘set out in the Spirit’ but are now ‘becoming fleshly’ (Gal. 3.3b) as they are led from liberation to enslavement (Gal. 4.8-9). They are becoming enslaved to seasonal rituals and observances (Gal. 4.10),⁷⁹ and are thereby making themselves unaffected by Christ: ‘You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace (Gal. 5.4). These attacks on the audience are specific to their circumstances and behaviour, but the attacks on the meddling third party are

⁷⁹ Behaviour demonstrating *deili/a pro\j to\ daim/onion*: ‘fearful cowardice with regard to the divine’. Betz, *Galatians*, 218.

generalized caricatures: they are ‘unsettlers’ who should castrate themselves (Gal. 5.12), and as such are dealt with an ‘emotional intensity’ that is not only sarcastic, but when combined with the pun on ‘cut off’ (Gal. 5.2,4) are darkly comic.⁸⁰

Briefly, in Philippians, and despite the irenic tone of most of the letter, Paul engages in a vitriolic caricature of potential opponents: ‘Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh’ (Phil. 3.2). Philippians, in terms of the ratings of satisfaction and connection with the audience, is a connected and benevolent letter. The tone of the central section is so out of character with the remainder of the letter that there is a preponderance of interpolation theories, but, as I have stated several times previously, such theories are not necessary. Paul, by the time he writes to the Philippians, has undergone great and bitter disappointment at the infiltration of his missionary efforts by opponents at Corinth and in Galatia. With these events in minds he bursts momentarily into vitriolic warning. As a stand-alone passage it rates poorly on a satisfaction and connection scale. But it does not stand alone, and the overall tone of the letter remains one of warmth and encouragement. Comparison could be made with 1 Thess. 2.14-16, another passage often suspected of being an interpolation, but in reality one where Paul’s stream of thought is broken by a momentary outburst of antagonistic passion directed at his Hebrew people of origin.

Despite all the outpourings of angst directed at opponents and those within the faith communities who are appearing to be seduced from the Pauline gospel, Paul nevertheless expresses, at least early in the Corinthian context, his great love for the people he has nurtured and pastured in faith (1 Cor. 4.14-15). While this love is tested, and is conditional on their

⁸⁰ See M. Cosby, “Red-Hot Rhetoric”, 307.

attempts to stay true to his kerygma, it is this love that is the reason that an indicator of connection between Paul and audience is a useful hermeneutical instrument.

One further observation needs to be made. At Gal. 2.11-14, in the second most 'disconnected' of Paul's letter, he relates an occasion on which he turned his rage on Peter:

[W]hen Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, 'If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?' (Gal. 2.11-14).

The question needs to be asked whether Paul, by marking Peter as amongst the hypocrites, is really making a serious soteriological statement. I have said above that the answer is 'yes'. That answer needs to be nuanced. The answer is 'yes' in the cut and thrust of rhetoric in the life of a faith community that is risking separation from Paul's gospel, in Paul's perspective the only gospel for the Gentiles. If Paul were writing a nuanced systematic theology it is possible he might speak of Peter in another manner, as a Petrine author later does of Paul (2 Pet. 3.15b-16). But Paul is not writing in a context in which nuance is rhetorically effective, and he feels that the fate of the Galatian Christians is in his hands and the hands of his rhetoric. There can be in this context little room for subtlety or nuance.

3. Forms of Lapsing

Does the form of lapsing that Paul addresses differ from context to context? Is there, in the Pauline canon, a form of ‘situational soteriology’, or situational ethics? Where Paul is content that his audience are staying true to the gospel that he proclaimed (1 Thessalonians, Philippians), or is relieved that they have returned to his values (2 Cor. 1-9), he has no need to dwell on issues of apostasy.

a. 1 Thessalonians

If there is a threat of lapsing out amongst the Thessalonians, it is one of succumbing to external pressure (1 Thess. 3.3). Paul is deeply satisfied with the Thessalonians,⁸¹ so that he can affirm confidently ‘in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it’ (1 Thess. 1.8b). Having made such a pronouncement in his opening thanksgiving it is unlikely that Paul will find too much that is destructive to dismantle this cause for joy! Paul confesses that in the absence of news from Thessalonica he wavers in his certainty (1 Thess. 3.5), but the wavering is short lived, a completed phase by the time Paul writes, as the emphatic opening *’a/rti* of 1 Thess. 3.6 makes clear.

The parenetic tone of 1 Thess. 4 is one of an author fully expecting his instruction to be upheld, and effectively for the instructions themselves to be superfluous. They are an exhortation,⁸² but exhortation expecting to be met. They are written with a sense of apocalyptic urgency,⁸³ in a process of boundary maintenance,⁸⁴ but the tone is never anything but one of confident expectation that the audience will rise to adhere to the instructions (1 Thess. 5.11).

⁸¹ Satisfaction of 0.68%; see Table 6, (p. 212, above).

⁸² Smith, “Thessalonians”, 716.

⁸³ Smith, “Thessalonians”, 716.

⁸⁴ Smith, “Thessalonians”, 721.

Paul is emotionally close and satisfied with the Thessalonian audience, who risk lapse only under the rigours of external persecution.

b. Philippians

The context of Philippi is a little different. Paul has no great cause to be dissatisfied with his audience (Phil. 1.7) and is emotionally close to and satisfied with them. But he is less confident about the wider Christian community, hence the outburst of Phil. 3.2. He is therefore more aware of the presence of opponents within his communities; though there are not necessarily any immediate opponents at Philippi, the risk of infiltration and of lapse is now known to be an ever-present one (Phil. 4.1, 4.2). Mention of tension between Euodia and Syntyche is telling: Paul knows how quickly division can shatter a community (1 Cor. 1.10-11). Temptation to lapse at Thessalonica was temptation to succumb to an external threat. Temptation to lapse at Philippi could involve succumbing to external pressures, but external threats are an opportunity for evangelism (Phil. 1.12-14). A more destructive pressure is that of internal subversion (Phil. 3.2, 3.18-19).

At this point a corrective must be issued to Beker's contingency hermeneutic. There is a shift in contingency between Paul's first and last letters that could be described as chronological, representing not an either/or but a both/and, to fine tune Beker's method. For, during the time of Paul's epistolary ministry, there has been a shift precisely in the way that ministry achieved or failed to achieve Paul's intentions. Prior to the beginnings of that ministry Paul had many years of reflection to hone his theology, but was not necessarily aware of the risks implicit in the hermeneutical space between authorial intention and audience outcome. By the time he writes Philippians he is aware of the risks in a way he was not when he first wrote

to the Thessalonians, risks that are clearly apparent in the glimpses that we have of deteriorating relationships between author and audience in the Corinthian correspondence. Ultimately the outcome is that Paul is more cautious as he writes to the Philippians, some years after that first epistolary ministry directed to the Thessalonians. Nevertheless emotional connection rather than chronology is the clearest explanation of the changes in the overall context of Paul's letters.

c. 2 Corinthians 1-9

The early part of the second extant letter to the Corinthians is different in circumstances to either Philippians or 1 Thessalonians. Paul is hugely relieved at news he has received (2 Cor. 7.6) – as was the case with both Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. But there have been many ups and downs in Paul's relations with the Corinthians, and Paul's optimism is tarnished: 'There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours' (2 Cor. 6.12). The language of the letter is language of cautious joy (2 Cor. 1.12), but the moments of great caution predominate (2 Cor. 9.3). The subsequent tone of 2 Cor. 10-13 indicates that Paul's caution was well founded. The shift suggests that the transition in attitude between 1 Thessalonians and Philippians is well under way as 2 Cor. 1-9 leaves Paul's quill.

4. Conclusion

Experience tempers and shapes the way Paul understands his audience's ability to lapse from faith. But there are some surprises, were we to be approaching Paul's writings without a history of ecclesiastical hermeneutics. The presenting signs of lapsarian behaviour are not moral or ethical archetypes, but departure from the gospel as received and transmitted by Paul – and received by him initially directly from the Risen Lord. The contrast drawn in Phil. 3.4b-11

makes this point in the context of a ‘friendly’ audience. The contrast drawn in Galatians, with its unsubtle emphasis on non-conference with other humans (Gal. 1.16c), is made in a hostile epistolary context: ‘In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!’ To disobey Paul is to disobey the gospel. To disobey the gospel, even by adding ‘works’, be they ethical, moral, calendrical or some other form, is to risk inclusion amongst those who are loosely defined by the caricatured, formulaic or stereotypical brushstrokes of moral vice lists. It is to be ‘as if’ as much as to be ‘actually in practice’ a slanderer, sexual predator, or some other stereotypical form of ‘outsider’.

Lapsing can be a result of persecution (1 Thessalonians), in which case it might be exhibited simply as desertion of the in-Christ qualities of ‘being an example’ (1 Thess. 1.7) or failure to toil for the gospel and becoming a financial hindrance (1 Thess. 2.9, 5.14). It may also be exhibited in more traditional behaviour, such as ‘fornication’ (1 Thess. 4.3), but such behaviour is generally depicted loosely as dwelling in darkness (1 Thess. 5.4-5). In Paul’s experience it is the enemies within the community that pose the greatest danger, and they and their behaviour incur the deepest wrath (Phil. 3.2, 2 Cor. 5.12b). This is reflected in the language that he uses: his language simply becomes less ‘satisfied’ as the risk particularly of internal threat to the integrity of witness of his audience communities increases. Traditional vices are scattered amongst his writings as a caricature: to behave thus is to behave ‘as the Gentiles’ (1 Thess. 4.5). Observation of calendrical patterns is at least as symptomatic of lapsing as fornication. The reference to a specific symptom of lapse such as this encapsulates Paul’s rhetorical method: he offers general and stereotypical warnings except where he sees specific patterns of miscreant behaviour. These specifics may not be the traditional stuff of vice, but are a precursor to degeneracy.

Chapter 6: My Kindred According to the Flesh – a Jewish Salvation

On a number of occasions, predominantly in Romans, but twice in Galatians and once in the Corinthian correspondence, Paul refers in contexts of soteriological reflection to his Jewish ‘people of origin’. These reflections are significant in an analysis of the relationship between context and kerygma, and are a valuable factor by which to evaluate the contextual nature of Paul’s kerygma.¹

Paul’s reflections on the salvation of his hereditary people are significant because they show him addressing an objectively unchanging circumstance – the refusal of his people of origin to ‘come in’ – in the subjectively differing circumstances of his writing ‘site’. We can, by looking at Paul’s treatment of the question, see how *context* affects *content* of Paul’s soteriology as he addresses this area that has, as Byrne notes, ‘moved from the periphery to the center of theological concern’.² We can ask the question ‘has changed connectivity between author and audience affected Paul’s understanding of his people of origin?’

It is first necessary to recognize the issue as seen by Paul. There are strong indications throughout the New Testament that this is the case, that the Jewish community, in the main, continued to be unmoved by the life, death and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Christian literature responds with the same broad brushstrokes of caricature that are a pattern of Paul’s depiction of the outsider. D.C. Sim notes, for example, their depiction in Christian writing as ‘blind’ (John 15.39-41), as ‘blind and hard-hearted’ (John 12.37-41), as ‘continually disobedient to the will of God’ (Mk. 12.1-12), or as ‘weak’, and ‘led astray’ apparently with

¹ Byrne, *Romans*, 282.

² Byrne, *Romans*, 281.

some ease by their own leaders (Mt. 15.14; 23.13-1).³ These are later writings than Paul's, but, in passing, Paul's emotional turmoil over the state of his people is clear in his letters to the Galatians, and a major concern in writing to the Romans. At the very least Paul dismantles any sense of hereditary Jewish rights or 'special status'⁴ in the purposes of God (Rom. 10.12, 1 Cor. 12.13, Gal. 3.28). While the Jewish community could, despite its splintered forms, more or less recognize itself as a separate entity in the Mediterranean world,⁵ Paul would not accept Judaism's terms of reference, and imposed his own criterion, being 'in Christ'.

Does Paul disassociate himself from his people of origin? He is certainly considered by many to have dismantled the centrality of Torah in the salvific purposes of God. Dunn has, largely on the basis of Gal. 2.16, suggested that Paul sought new attitude to the law rather than radical departure from it.⁶ Paul disassociates himself from the demanding centrality of Torah (1 Cor. 9.21), and in so doing 'signals such a change of values that it is hardly too much to speak of a break'.⁷ This is a far cry from the Torah-centric demands of, for example Deut. 11:1, 12:1, and 29:29. Yet by the time Paul is writing Romans there appears to have been a change, a softening of attitude, so that he can 'uphold the law', at least in some way (Rom. 3.31), and eventually voice, however ambivalently, the eschatological hope 'so all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11.26). What shift, if any has taken place? Even at the beginning of his reflection on the Jews in Romans he begins with a degree of favourable outlook: 'what is the value of circumcision? Much, in every way' (Rom. 3.1-2). By the end of the Romans argument, as I

³ D.C. Sim, "The Failed Christian Mission to the Jews: A Historical and Theological Defence of the Jewish Position", in W. Mayer, P. Allen and L. Cross, eds., *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church. Volume 4. The Spiritual Life* (Strathfield, NSW: St Paul, 2006), 38-48 (38).

⁴ D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* (SNTW. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 12.

⁵ G.F. Moore, *Judaism*, volume 1, 110-121.

⁶ J.D.G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul", *BJRL* 65 (1983): 95-122. See also Dunn, *Theology*, 359-60.

⁷ H. Räisänen, "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism", in H. Räisänen, *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays* (JSNTSup 43. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 112-126 (125).

have noted, ‘all Israel shall be saved’. In the midrash on Abraham of Rom. 4 Abraham becomes an icon, in contemporary terms, of right faith. At the very least Paul appears to reach a point in his argument that affirms the salvation of faithful Jews, ‘all Israel’, even if their faith appears not yet to be Christocentric, but effectively theocentric. It is possible that, by the end of his dictation of the reflection on the Jews his puzzlement at their non-acceptance of Christ is approaching resolution, and he awaits a collective Damascus Road experience for his people, the ‘full inclusion’ of Rom. 11.12. They will once more be ‘grafted on’ to the tree (Rom. 11.23-34). It is possible that Paul is identifying himself with Elijah in his own midrash: while Paul’s mission is categorically to the Gentiles, he has hinted at Rom. 11.2 that he continues to pray for his people.

To understand this it is necessary to explore some of the most convoluted Pauline arguments. Most of the following references cannot be treated as individual verses or sentences as they form part of that argument.

1. The Salvation of the Jews

a. Romans

In Romans Paul writes of the Hebrews in the third person. He is not addressing his comments directly to a predominantly Hebrew audience, though there are some Jewish Christians in Rome (Prisca and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia, Mary), but they are in a minority amongst the representatives Paul greets, and likely to have been a minority in the audience. Nevertheless their presence weighs on his mind, and some of those named may have been party to or aware of criticisms that Paul had in some way betrayed his ethnic people. These criticisms affect Paul, and lead him to address the question of the salvation of the Jews.

We shall see below that at surface level he finds a soteriological solution, albeit one that was unlikely to satisfy Jewish Christians who maintained concerns for unconverted Jews. It is a solution fundamentally unsatisfactory to post-Auschwitz readers struggling with post-Pauline Christianity's adherence to a displacement soteriology. The simple and surface level perspective of Paul is that converts to Christ are 'in', while the unconverted remain 'out'. It has been argued that this is not a hermeneutical final word (with all the chilling historical implications of 'final' in this context). L. Gaston in particular has suggested that a superficial reading of Paul's attitude to his 'kindred of the flesh' is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Gaston observes 'By attacking the law as such, Paul appears to attack not abuses and personal failings but the very existence of Israel, and he does so from a position of knowledge'.⁸ Gaston sees an important sub-text in Paul's thought: noting Gal. 3.28, Gaston observes 'Just as women do not need to become men nor men women to attain their full humanity, so Jews do not need to become Gentiles nor do Gentiles need to become Jews'.⁹ In a post-Auschwitz world, Gaston adds, 'All of the positive things Paul has to say about the righteousness of God effecting salvation for Gentiles in Christ need not at all imply anything negative about Israel and the Torah'.¹⁰ Paul is not addressing a world in which parallel faiths co-exist, but one in which he dearly wished his people would join him on his Christological journey. Significantly, Gaston notes,¹¹ Paul omits overt christological reference in Romans 11 or even 1 Cor. 15.28. The soteriological heart of Paul entrusts his people of origin to the 'all in all' of God.

On six occasions Paul refers to the Hebrew people as 'children of the promise', meaning the Abrahamic promise. For example at Rom. 9.8 he separates 'the children of the flesh', not in

⁸ Gaston, *Torah*, 16.

⁹ Gaston, *Torah*, 33-34.

¹⁰ Gaston, *Torah*, 34.

¹¹ Gaston, *Torah*, 33.

his terms ‘the children of God’, from ‘the children of the promise’ who ‘are counted as descendants’. But in looking at each passage in which Paul builds his proof texts and theological rhetoric towards a soteriological conclusion, it is important to bear in mind Byrne’s caution:

Modern readers who look to this section of Romans to find some positive reflection upon the fate of the Jewish people have to wait a long time before receiving satisfaction and even then the relevant passage ([Rom.]11:25-32) is not altogether without ambiguities of its own. Only in the context of the whole does Paul’s basically “eirenic” vision emerge; on the way to this complete vision several passages, taken by themselves, appear to cast Jews in a far from favorable light.¹²

When Paul raises the question of the unbelief of the Jewish people he does so with passion, apparent from his initial avowal (Rom. 9.1) and the ‘impermissible’¹³ prayer-wish of Rom. 9.3. Paul makes this passionate avowal only because he is certain of the fate of Israel: ‘[I]f Israel does not finally embrace the Christ, then *his own* gospel is flawed at its heart’.¹⁴ He is writing of the Jewish people as a third party, so the passionate feelings are not easily recognized by the connectivity indicators used in this study: Romans produces a mid to low rating on our chart of connectivity. But the language that Paul applies to this ‘third party’ in Romans 9-11, as he asks the questions of the soteriological fate and place of his people, betrays his passion. They are ‘my’¹⁵ own people’ and ‘my kindred according to the flesh’ (Rom. 9.3), subject of his heart’s desire for their salvation (Rom. 10.1), and ‘my flesh’ (Rom. 11.14). On these occasions, while Paul still uses ‘flesh’ as a theologically weighted term, in

¹² Byrne, *Romans*, 284. Gaston speaks of ‘both continuity and discontinuity between the end of Romans 9 and the beginning of Romans 11, continuity in concept and discontinuity in language’. *Torah*, 141.

¹³ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 2, 455-457.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, volume 2, 532. Dunn’s italics.

¹⁵ The textual variations omitting the possessive are best ascribed to anti-Semitic feeling (B) and scribal omission (p 46).

contradistinction to ‘spirit’, he does so without the depiction of sin and degradation that is often attached to his use of the term (Rom. 7.5).

Paul at Rom. 9.8 uses scriptural proof texts to divide children of the flesh from children of the promise. The sentence falls in a passage whose dominant theme is ‘filiation’ (ἐκ(δοθε/σία), translated as ‘by adoption’ in the NRSV.¹⁶ Paul is alluding to God’s adoption of the Hebrew people.¹⁷ The passage protects the unquestionable purposes of God, emphasized by Paul in the preceding doxological outburst (Rom. 9.5), and restated at Rom. 9.21. The context allows Paul to anchor in scripture two co-existent ‘Israels’, described by Cranfield as an ‘Israel within Israel’¹⁸ and by Byrne¹⁹ as ‘coextensive’ Israels, before dismantling the filiation claim that ‘the children of the flesh’ (that is by biological descent) are the Children of Israel. Paul dismantles what might be termed the *ipso facto* or the *necessity* of this claim, but does not dismantle the *possibility* that the descendants-by-flesh *may* continue to experience filiation in God’s eschatological future. The wedge of Rom 9.8 is a wedge in which the present interrupts Paul’s prophetic narrative, dismantling ethnic claims on the soteriological will of God. Paul wants to preserve the freedom of God: to do so he turns to the LXX of Exod. 33.19²⁰ (Rom. 9.15).

Although Paul can see objections to his case (Rom. 9.19), the centrepiece of this first section of his argument is that the ‘mercy’ and the ‘compassion’ of the Exodus quotation, restated in Paul’s own words at Rom. 9.16, are expressions of the free will of God. If God’s freedom ‘to choose whom God will choose’ is preserved, then emotional bases by which to

¹⁶ See also Rom. 8.15, 23, Gal. 4.5, and Eph. 1.5.

¹⁷ Exod. 4.22: ‘Israel is my firstborn son’. See also Jer. 31.9, Hos. 11.1.

¹⁸ Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 2, 474.

¹⁹ Byrne, *Romans*, 293.

²⁰ Byrne, *Romans*, 296.

argue for the soteriological inclusion of the Jewish people are ruled out of the argument. Romans 9.16 is only a mid-point in the argument of chapters 9-11: to see it as a conclusion is to be open to charges of anti-Semitism of the darkest form, as well as a basis for brutal doctrines of so-called double predestination.²¹

Paul then shifts his argument with a series of ‘what if’ propositions (Rom. 9. 22-23) that develop the theme of divine freedom. He continues the radical division of Rom. 9.8 by presenting the image of ‘objects of wrath made for destruction’ (Rom. 9. 22) and ‘objects of mercy’ to whom the riches of divine glory are to be made known (Rom. 9.23). He is building up to his use of the Hosean proof texts²² which he uses to provide links between the promised embrace²³ or restoration of the northern Kingdom, Israel, and the soteriological inclusion of receptive Gentiles into the Christ-event. He is again carefully preserving the freedom of God (Rom. 9.25-26). He adds an Isaian warning of exclusion, by which only a remnant are embraced. By this he has accounted scripturally for the phenomenon obvious to author and audience alike: the Roman and wider community of believers is predominantly Gentile, and Judaism has predominantly ignored the Way of Jesus. Paul is also paving a way to break within his audience the cycles of replacement of one dominant culture by another, cycles in which the relationship between a dominant and oppressed culture is replaced only by ‘injustice-with-role-reversal’.²⁴

Paul and his Roman audience are aware that while a great number of those who were previously ‘Gentiles outside’ have now been ‘filiated’ in their acceptance of and adherence to

²¹ See Byrne, *Romans*, 299, and sources cited there.

²² A misrepresentation of Hos. 2.23 (LXX 2.25) blended with a faithful rendition of Hos. 1.10 (LXX 2.1).

²³ For a full treatment of the terminology see M. Volf, *Exclusion*, esp. 99-165.

²⁴ Volf, *Exclusion*, 109.

the gospel, ‘the vast bulk of Israel, by not responding positively to the gospel, appear to have been excluded’.²⁵ The ‘what if’ propositions of Rom. 9.22-23 open a new possibility. Paul proposes that those who relied on the promises of their ethnicity for inclusion in God’s embrace may be ‘left out’ of the new community of grace, for a season. Paul, as Byrne emphasises,²⁶ does not close off on the ripeness for destruction (Rom. 9.22) of the Jewish people (Paul’s kindred according to the flesh) who are having nothing to do with the Christ-event that is the content of his kerygma.

Paul explores the problems of bad news further. Throughout Romans and throughout his mission Paul has emphasized the bad news of a collective and universal (Rom. 3.22) human experience of alienation from ‘the glory of God’ (Rom. 3.23). The good news of his kerygma is that in Christ there is a place of filiation (Rom. 8.14) that provides re-connection with God. But if Israel sidesteps the divine act of grace made known in Christ, and does so by boasting a birthright, then the universality of fallenness and the need for the grace made known in the Christ-event (1 Cor. 16.23) is removed, and Israel is effectively claiming control of God.

Paul then begins to introduce good news, a theme of hope. From Rom. 9.30 - 10.21 Paul focuses on the question of the inclusion of the Gentiles, using the negative vehicle of explaining Israel’s ‘failure’ to fulfil the law (Rom. 9.31). This ‘failure’ is at one level the result of misconception: ‘they have not submitted to God’s righteousness’ (Rom. 10.3). Nevertheless, at another level it has been *an action of God* to ‘harden’ Israel’s collective heart (Rom. 9.18, 11.7-10). By that sclerosis the Gentiles have been given opportunity of inclusion, a remnant of Israel has been included (Rom. 9.27), and, *eschatologically*, the hardened bulk of Israel is to be

²⁵ Byrne, *Romans*, 282.

²⁶ Byrne, *Romans*, 302.

re-included (Rom. 11.12). Paul has preserved the fidelity of God to the scriptural promise (Rom. 9.6a; see 15.8).²⁷ Since Rom 11.1 Paul has reintroduced his argument that God has excluded the Hebrews in order to provoke jealousy. ‘Has God rejected his people?’ This question, raised but not put at Rom. 9.23, remains unstated for some five hundred words. Nevertheless, Paul’s answer when the question is finally put is his characteristic and emphatic ‘by no means!’ (Rom. 11.1). He confirms this exclamation by his introduction of the eschatological embrace of ‘all Israel’ (Rom. 11.26). The implication is the inclusion of both ‘Gentile Israel’, being the Christian community, and ‘Hebrew Israel’, in the salvation event. An inclusive salvation can now be completed, illustrated not least through the extended metaphor of the olive tree (Rom. 11.17-24). Once Gentile Israel is complete then Hebrew Israel may receive mercy and inclusion (Rom. 11.28-31). This final embrace is prayed for by Paul at 10.1 in a prayer designed to contrast with the unutterable prayer of Rom. 9.3.²⁸

So, as he turns his attention to his former people, the Jews, Paul has affirmed, ‘even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in’ (to the soteriological Christ-event, Rom. 11.23). Moments later he states: ‘all Israel will be saved’ (Rom. 11.26a). It may be argued that ‘Israel’ is no other than theological shorthand, a soteriological term for those of the Jewish lineage who have not persisted in unbelief and have opted for Christ,²⁹ but the context

²⁷ Byrne, *Romans*, 305.

²⁸ ‘The final doxology [Rom. 11.33] is not a cry of despair that only God and not Paul can understand such things, but on the contrary a prayer of deep thanksgiving that Paul *has* been given understanding and that his prayers of intercession in 9.1-3 and 10.1 have been answered’. Gaston, *Torah*, 144-145. Italics in original.

²⁹ This is a disputed interpretation of Rom. 11.26, a ‘Christological’ interpretation by which the Jewish believer and/or community must accept the Messiah-claims of Jesus of Nazareth as a soteriological prerequisite. The alternative ‘theological’ interpretation argues that the absence of reference to Christ from Rom. 10.17 - 12.5 indicates that membership of ‘Israel’ represents a ‘special way’ (*Sonderweg*) to salvation. For the arguments see Byrne, “Universal Need of Salvation and Universal Salvation by Faith in the Letter to the Romans”, *Pacifica* 8 (1995): 123-139. Byrne emphasizes that the ‘theological’ interpretation, despite widespread support, also receives serious criticism, and notes that Paul himself ends the argument inconclusively, in a doxology celebrating ‘the unsearchable wisdom of God’ (Rom. 11.33-36).

suggests otherwise. Paul's (mis-?)³⁰ quotation from Isaiah 59.20 collectively gathers all 'ungodliness' into banishment from 'Jacob', expressing a collective, and certainly non-existentialist or individualist, redemption of the temporarily wayward people Israel. In the interim a new 'Israel' has emerged, the $\alpha(\gamma)\iota\omicron\iota$ (Rom. 1.7), whose title represents a transfer of the relationship, honour and responsibility of the Old Testament people to a new community, those 'in Christ'.³¹

Context has influenced Paul's approach to his letter. He is aware of the mixed Jewish-Gentile ethnicity of the Roman audience. Because of this, or possibly because of direct accusations of betrayal levelled at him by members of the Jewish group of Christians, Paul is forced to revisit his Abramic midrash. He does so now conscious of how his claims will sound to the people who share his ethnic heritage, but avoids any sense that ethnicity exercises a claim over the purposes of God. God remains sovereign.

b. Galatians

I have argued above that Galatians is an earlier document than Romans. I have also, following Beker, maintained that contingencies rather than chronology shape the content of Paul's letters. The parallel use of the Abraham Promise narrative in Galatians and Romans provides an opportunity to see how contingencies affect Paul's use of proof texts.

A major contingent difference is that Paul in Galatians has not been constrained by accusations that his soteriology condemns his people of origin. In writing to the Romans it is apparent that at least two complaints about his ministry have reached his ears and need his

³⁰ See W. Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 12-18.

³¹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 15-16.

attention if he is to build a western mission. At the beginning of Romans it appears that Paul is defending himself against the accusation that he has neglected to visit the Roman faith community (Rom. 1.13). At the beginning of the Abraham *midrash* in Romans he is again on the defensive, warding off accusations that he is lying about his compassion for his ethnic forebears (Rom. 9.1).³² He faces no such constraint in Galatia – but is on the back foot against those who, from his perspective, are over-emphasizing matters of Jewish heritage. His reading of the Abraham narrative is therefore quite different.

The opponents have set the agenda in the Galatian conflict. Perhaps in an act of revenge for their defeat at the Jerusalem Conference, they have infiltrated the Galatian faith community with a call to circumcision based primarily on the Abraham-saga. They have persuaded the Galatian converts that they must follow Abraham in undergoing circumcision and thus ‘enter the already-existent people of God, the seed of Abraham, Israel’.³³

Paul uses the same narrative to contrast law and law-free ‘righteousing’, and to assure the Galatians that they need no painful external signs to authenticate their belonging to Christ. He does so without mentioning Abraham’s circumcision at all, thus rendering circumcision to the peripheries of his narrative. He takes the Abraham-saga reference to ‘seed of Abraham’ and applies it exclusively to Christ (Gal. 3.16). The believer, incorporated into Christ by faith in him, is beneficiary of the inheritance promised to the (singular) seed of Abraham, the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 3.14), and has access to that inheritance only in Christ. The promise given to

³² Byrne, *Romans*, 285.

³³ Martyn, *Galatians*, 344.

Abraham has remained in limbo³⁴ until the Christ-event, and there is no continuing biological line of promise from Abraham to first century Judaism.

In this context Paul is not interested in theologizing Judaism. His opponents, by turning circumcision into a soteriological *sine qua non*, have done just that. It is in Paul's interests to leap – to take a 'punctiliar'³⁵ step from Abraham to the Christ event and the community 'in Christ'. The fate of Israel, in this context, is a red herring: 'If, then, we had only Paul's letter to the Galatians, we would have no reason to credit the apostle with a belief in the divine election of the ancient people of Israel'.³⁶

The references to the Abraham-saga in Galatians draw a stark and irrevocable contrast between the children of the promise, who are 'as if Isaac' (Gal. 4.28) and the children of the slave-girl, the outsider in soteriological terms. The latter is what the Galatians risk becoming if they succumb to the opponents' gospel of circumcision (Gal. 4.30-5.1). If the audience make the wrong decision and succumb literally to a mark in the flesh of the penis, then they are succumbing theologically and soteriologically to a state of being 'fleshly' and therefore counter-gospel. Significantly there is little room for a biological (as against soteriological) use of *sa/rc*: even the seemingly innocuous 'flesh and blood' of Gal. 1.16³⁷ is a loaded theological (or, more technically, harmartiological) term. At Gal. 2.16, though this is lost in translation, the reason for Paul's avoidance of a neutral use of *sa/rc* is clear: in a verse pivotal to his argument he stresses 'no flesh will be justified'.³⁸ At Gal. 3.3 the contrast is continued – 'Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?' In the

³⁴ '[I]n a docetic state'. Martyn, *Galatians*, 348.

³⁵ As against 'linear'. Martyn, *Galatians*, 342, 348.

³⁶ 'Indeed, precisely the opposite'. Martyn, *Galatians*, 350.

³⁷ NRSV: 'any human being'.

³⁸ NRSV: 'no one'.

Abraham midrash *sa/rc* is a loaded word,³⁹ and from Gal. 5.13-24 the word is used in an harmartiological sense no fewer than five times.⁴⁰ At Gal. 6.8, 6.12 and 6.13, as Paul brings his argument to a close, the word carries all the connotations of opposition to the Spirit of Christ.

Paul is not a linguistic machine; Hays⁴¹ has noted (*contra* Dunn)⁴² that there are ‘multi-valencies’ in Paul’s use particularly of the word *pi/stij*, and the same is true in his use of *sa/rc*. While it is possible that Paul sees illness as harmartiological, this seems unlikely when, at Gal. 4.13-14 he uses *sa/rc* to explain his deviation to the Galatian region. Paul cannot be locked into a univocal hermeneutic, and each use of a key word must always be analyzed in context.⁴³

Paul’s careful choice of words in each context means it is all the more surprising that he concludes his rhetorical monologue to the Galatians with the ambivalent ‘peace be ... upon the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6.16). Immediately before this benediction he has identified the People of God as those who are a new creation: ‘neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!’ (Gal. 6.15), and there are some hermeneutical difficulties with the Greek of Gal. 6.16.⁴⁴ The *kai/* that connects Paul’s benediction can be read either as copulative, joining the ‘Israel of God’ in 16b to ‘those who follow this rule’ in 16a, or as an explicative, defining ‘those who follow this rule’ in 16a as the ‘Israel of God’.⁴⁵ Martyn, whose definitions I have followed here, opts for an explicative or epexegetical reading of *kai/*,

³⁹ Gal. 4.23, 4.29.

⁴⁰ Gal. 5.13, 5.16, 5.17, 5.19, 5.24.

⁴¹ R.B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1 – 4:11* (Second edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 297.

⁴² Paradoxically, Dunn stresses that ‘any attempt to harmonize the diversity of Paul’s imagery and to resolve the inconsistencies of different images straining against each other would be to our loss rather than our gain’. *Theology*, 410.

⁴³ Hays, *Faith*, 297.

⁴⁴ *ei)rh/nh e)p’ au) tou\j kai\ e)/leoj kai e)pi\ to\n ’Israh\l tou~ qeou.*

⁴⁵ Martyn, *Galatians*, 567, 574-577.

emphasizing that the use of similar phrases at 1 Cor. 10:18 and Rom. 9:6 must not be read into the letter to the Galatians. Referring to the Galatian audience Martyn observes

Those original interpreters do not know that Paul will later refer to Israel and to Israelites in 1 Cor. 10:18 (“Israel that had its identity as a result of the flesh”), in 2 Cor. 3:7, 13 (“the people of Israel”), and in Romans 9-11 (“Israel” eleven times; “Israelite” twice). They do know that in their own letter Paul has several times taken serious account of the Teachers’ discourses, by referring in his own way to God’s people as the blessed descendants of Abraham (3:6-29; 4:21-5:1).⁴⁶

In the context of the agenda of the group referred to by Martyn as ‘the Teachers’, Paul’s opponents in the Galatian faith community, Paul is unlikely at that moment to expand his soteriology to include those whose are altering his kerygma. In other contexts, such as Rome, he can be more inclusive: in Galatia this is not possible if he is to win the hearts and souls of his audience.

The copulative translation preferred by many modern translators may be ideologically preferable post-Auschwitz, and is feasible in the light of Paul’s apparent subsequent reprimand from the Jewish Christians of Rome (see Rom. 3.1), but it is not likely to have been Paul’s intention in writing to the Galatians. There it was his concern to dismantle any soteriological claims of his people of origin. Again Paul is not an automaton. He writes with a critical ear tuned carefully to the nuances of his language. Is it possible that he wrote this benediction without awareness of its ambiguity? It is clear from Gal. 6.11 that Paul has taken over in person the writing of his concluding statements, though Gal. 6.11 does not make clear whether the ‘large letters’ were apparent throughout the letter or merely in the concluding statements. From our hermeneutical perspective it does not matter. Paul himself is concluding a letter for urgent

⁴⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, 575.

despatch. He would be superhuman to be aware of every nuance at every time in every context. As he wrote the explicative ‘*who are* the Israel of God’ he failed to hear the copulative ‘*and* the people of God’. The preceding arguments make his meaning clear: the peace and mercy of Gal. 6.16 is conditional on the recipients’ acceptance of Paul’s kerygma.⁴⁷

2. The Exclusion of the Jews

If at times Paul appears to refer to an *inclusion* into the salvific plans of God of his ‘people according to the flesh’, he also frequently appears to refer to their *exclusion* from these plans. He is even able to make contradictory claims within the same letter.⁴⁸

a. Romans

On two occasions in Romans Paul expresses frustration that his people have failed to uphold the demands of the law, of Torah. At Rom. 3.20, which represents a later development than Gal. 3.19,⁴⁹ Paul understands the role of the law to be to provoke awareness of sin. In accordance with the greater sensitivity forced on Paul’s rhetoric by those at Rome who have accused him of deserting his people of origin, he picks up the phrase ‘the works of the law’,⁵⁰ introduced in the singular at Rom. 2.15, and uses the phrase as part of a summary restatement of his liberal citation of Psalm 143.2 (LXX 142.2).⁵¹

⁴⁷ At 1 Cor. 10.1-13 Paul refers to shared kinship between himself, his audience and the ancient people of Israel. The examples he uses do not indicate any sense of the salvation of the Jewish people, an issue that is outside the themes Paul is considering in the Corinthian correspondence. The passage does however include an implicit warning that it is possible to lapse out of the eschatological community of salvation (1 Cor. 10.12). For Gundry Volf’s treatment of this passage see *Perseverance*, 120-130.

⁴⁸ This is attributed by some scholars to Paul’s proclivity for operating theologically and pastorally from both a ‘convictional’ and an ‘argumentative’ logic structure. See Boring, “Language”, esp. 273-274. Paul is not above ‘blatant non sequitur’: H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 99.

⁴⁹ ‘[P]recisely the same wording is found in Gal. 2:16, written years earlier than Romans’. Jewett, *Romans*, 266.

⁵⁰ το\ ε)/ργον του~ νο/μου is lost in many translations, but see the NASB.

⁵¹ ‘[N]o one living is righteous before you’. See also 1 Enoch 81.5, Isa. 66.23. Jewett, *Romans*, 265.

The point Paul is emphasizing is not specifically about the Jewish people, but about the universality of sin (Rom. 3.9). He illustrates that assessment by exploring the failings of his biological people, using a catena of proof texts (Rom. 3. 10b-18). In the Galatian context (Gal. 2.16) Paul is opposing any implication stemming from the Judaizers' teachings that *sa/rc* can be accepted as righteous to God.⁵² By no means! Rom. 3.20 is a statement summarizing a litany of proof texts. At Rom. 9.31 Paul revisits the idea: Israel strived for, but did not attain righteousness, while the Gentiles, who did not seek righteousness, have in Christ received it in an act of grace. By this parallelism Paul is protecting the place of both strands of humankind in the salvation plans of God. This understanding informs the entire letter to the Romans. For this reason references to the relationship between Jewish people and the law throughout Romans are laden with a duality not apparent in similar references in Galatians, where the law is a destructive force.

b. Galatians

References to the law in Galatians are to a negative force. At Gal. 3.2 Paul creates a rhetorical dichotomy: 'Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?' The Galatians are left with no middle ground, and Paul builds on this dichotomy with a further one: 'does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?' (Gal. 3.5). In the context of the opponents' subversion of his gospel he is building to the conclusion 'whoever is under the workings of the law is under a curse' (Gal. 3.10). He uses Deut. 27.26, a proof text probably used by the opponents, to clinch his argument. In this conflictual Galatian context there is no place for a positive reading of the salvation-historical place of the law.

⁵² Jewett, *Romans*, 266.

3. Romans and Galatians in Relation to Other References

There are numerous other negative references to the place of the Jewish people in Paul's rhetoric. At Rom. 2.17-29 he criticizes specifically *Jewish* boasting as part of a universal critique of boasting, relying on sources of security other than God, by contrasting Jewish and Gentile boasting and finding both indicative of human short-falling (Rom. 2.12). He finds boasting by those who are 'under the law' an extra abhorrent practice because by boasting those who should be under Torah are engaging in blasphemy (Rom. 2.23-24). To highlight the same point Paul re-expresses it in terms of circumcision (Rom. 2.25-29), summarizing his perspective with the catch phrase 'and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal' (Rom. 2.29). In this context the Jewish people have 'betrayed' their privileged position as recipients of Torah (Rom. 3.1-3).

Over-riding all these harsh assessments is the observation that those within the Christian community who adopt judgemental attitudes to others are living with the same errors that he claims the Jewish people have lived with. In the context of a criticism of his alleged desertion of his Jewish heritage he emphasizes that Jew and Christian alike, when they surrender the values of a circumcision of the heart, are adopting an attitude by which they are condemned (Rom. 2.1).

Paul will not permit anything other than the action of God to dictate the terms of salvation. It is this that he means when he stresses 'not all who are Israelites are of Israel, and not all Abraham's children are his true descendants' (Rom. 9.6b-7, translation mine). In 'Hebrew Israel' as in the new faith community it is those who lay hold of and adhere to 'promise' and divine fulfilment of promise that are Israel and are true descendants. But these

harsh divisions are made, as seen above, with provisos: a ‘hardening’ or sclerosis comes upon Israel so that ‘the full number’ may come in, and with the rider, unthinkable in the context of the Galatian conflict, ‘all Israel be saved’ (Rom. 11.25). Or, put another way, Paul allows the possibility that those who stumbled (Rom. 9.32) may be saved (Rom. 10.1), that those who are ‘stubborn and unenlightened’ (Rom. 10.2) or, quoting Isaiah, a ‘stubborn and contrary people’ (Rom. 10.21) may be redeemed.

Another passage ostracizing the Jewish outsider, 1 Thess. 2.13-16, is widely regarded to be an interpolation, but this conclusion is not necessary. As noted above,⁵³ this passage testifies to the depth of sorrow felt by Paul at the failures of his people to share the vision entrusted to the Christ-following community. In the light of Gal. 5.12 it can be affirmed that Paul is capable of moments of impassioned vitriol.

Where does the Jewish community stand in Paul’s soteriology? The answer is contextual. Paul alters his beliefs on this subject according to the context in which he and his audience find themselves. He is not writing predominately for a Jewish audience, though he is aware of a Jewish Christian presence in Rome. The primary factor affecting his attitude to his people of origin is the simple conviction that they are not his missiological concern. This is not to suggest that Paul the Jew does not feel a deep personal grief at the failure of his people to recognize as Messiah the one who was revealed to him (Gal. 1.12, 16). This personal grief informs his theology to a great, though not consistent, degree when he writes to the Roman faith community. But the Jerusalem conference has affirmed him in his sense of mission to the Gentiles (Gal. 2.9); that is his priority, and that priority will dictate the content and emphases of his missiological and pastoral letters.

⁵³ See above, p. 74.

Does Paul expect the conversion of his people? As he reaches the conclusion of his reflections on the salvation of his people he looks ahead to ‘their full inclusion’ (Rom. 11.12). Is there a hint here that Paul expects that the original covenant with his people will be ratified by, as it were, the salvation of all ethnic Jews? The words he chooses demand close attention.

One key word in the argument of Rom. 11.12 is *para/ptwma* (offence, failure, often ‘trespass’), a word used eleven times in the undisputed Paulines.⁵⁴ Because context is the crucial hermeneutic key, uses in other letters may not be of much help in teasing out Paul’s meaning in Romans. In Galatians (6.1) the word in that context is translatable as a reversible or reparable wrong-doing, while in 2 Cor. 5.19 it bears close to the full weight of collective human ‘sin’.⁵⁵ In Romans the nine uses are closely linked in an interwoven argument, most of which appears in chapter 5. Paul has reintroduced the word at the enthymematic Rom. 11.11, and there it can be established whether he intends the word to bear the load he invests in *a(marti/a*. The word is carried over from Rom 4.25, and is a recurrent motif in chapter 5. There the NRSV renders it as ‘trespass(es)’,⁵⁶ but, as Rom. 5.15 makes clear, no passing errant moment is implied. The trespasses carry all the implications of *a(marti/a*: perhaps the argument of Rom. 11.11 can best be represented as ‘through the participation of Israel in sin and in resultant sinful acts⁵⁷ salvation has come to the Gentiles’.

While the previous catena of quotations indicates (Rom. 11.7-10) a permanent curse on the head of Paul’s people, the verses also indicate a degree of differentiation between ‘the elect’ and ‘the rest’ (Rom. 11.7). The collective curse and the differentiation need to be held together,

⁵⁴ Rom. 4.25, 5.15 (x 2), 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.20, 11.11, 12; 2 Cor. 5.19, Gal. 6.1.

⁵⁵ Rendering dubious the assertion of Michael Wolter that ‘In Pauline usage *para/ptwma*, as a specific sinful act, is clearly distinguished from *a(marti/a*, which is understood as a controlling power’. “*para/ptwma*, *atoj, to/*”. *EDNT*, volume 3, 33.

⁵⁶ So Mt. 6.14.

⁵⁷ ‘[T]he dreadful catena of scriptural accusations in Rom. 11.7-10’. Jewett, *Romans*, 672.

their implications carried over into Rom. 11.11-12. A curse or condemnation hangs over the head of Israel, but ‘full inclusion’ awaits them. Does it await all ethnic Israel? The division between ‘the elect’ and ‘the rest’ maintains its influence on the passage. N.T. Wright observes ‘There is no reason to suppose that “the fullness” of Israel will mean anything more than this: the complete number of Jews, many more than at present, who likewise come to faith in the gospel’.⁵⁸ The phrase ‘the full number’ represents, in context, not ‘all who existed’, but ‘the ordained number’.

There is need for caution when a twenty-first century reader approaches Paul’s first century perspective on his ethnic people. De Vos warns against finding twenty-first century individualism in first century texts,⁵⁹ while Fee’s warning is timeless:

One can hardly, nor should one be expected to, come to these letters with a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate that has no presuppositions. The difficulty lies in recognizing one’s own presuppositions (another’s presuppositions being more obvious!) and asking in every case whether our reading of Paul is based on what Paul himself believed or on what we have long assumed he believed’.⁶⁰

Attempts to find a doctrine of salvation of or for Jews *qua* individual beings in Paul’s thought is no more credible than finding individualistic salvation for Gentiles. Paul’s world is dyadic,⁶¹ and salvation is about networks and peoples rather than individuals.⁶² The emphasis in Paul’s thought is consistently on the universality of sin. This is what he means by excluding ‘boasting’. Rom. 3.1-20 makes it clear that neither a law-observant Jew nor a Gentile can

⁵⁸ Wright, “Romans”, 681.

⁵⁹ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 16.

⁶⁰ G.D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 4.

⁶¹ De Vos, *Church and Community*, 16. Myers, *Binding*, 46.

⁶² The place of ‘households’ in the sacramental and missiological language of the early church in itself renders modernity’s and post-modernity’s emphasis on the individual anachronistic as a hermeneutical tool. See Jeremias, *Infant Baptism*, 12-32.

expect their ethnic state or religious observance to be a means to redemption in the eyes of God: ‘all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin’ (Rom. 3.9). The language and the concept are universal, and the soteriological fate of individuals is not at issue.

Paul expects no less of his people of origin, in terms of Christ-adherence, than he does of the Gentiles. He does revisit the Abramic narrative because he recognizes that the hard-line approach taken in the cut and thrust of the Galatian debate is open to pastoral and missiological abuse in the Roman context. He is after all writing to Rome to seek endorsement of further mission: alienating an audience is one thing, but perpetuating unnecessary misunderstandings is counterproductive. To this extent he modifies his approach: in Galatia he is facing the destructive anti-gospel of Judaizers. In Rome he is seeking to enlist the cooperation of Jewish and Gentile Christians alike. Reconciliation with God is an intensely Pauline theme,⁶³ and especially so in Romans (Rom. 5.10), but reconciliation (*katallagh* /) has both ‘vertical’ (human – God) and ‘horizontal’ (human – human) dimensions. Human beings are reconciled to God in the Christ-event (Rom. 5.10-11), but there is a horizontal dimension crossing ethnic (Rom. 11.15) and even other (1 Cor. 7.11) divisions too. The vertical must be worked out in horizontal dimensions, as the author of Ephesians sees clearly (Eph. 2.16). There is though much about that verse that is not characteristically Pauline,⁶⁴ and its horizontal dimensions cannot be read back into Paul’s texts. For Paul reconciliation was a past action of God revealed in Christ (2 Cor. 5.18), to be seized by the believer.

⁶³ V. Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Study in New Testament Theology* (Second edition; London: Macmillan, 1960), 73.

⁶⁴ ‘In Col 1:20, 22 and Eph 2:16 a novel composite variant of the same verb [*a*] *pokatallassō* makes its appearance – a form that is not found outside Christian literature’. M. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, 265.

Paul's revisitation of the question of the salvation of his people, brought about by adverse reaction to the implications of his handling of the Galatian crisis, leads him to a partially new position. In the Galatian context he affirms that he did not receive the gospel from a human, but directly from a divine source. This privilege has not yet been offered to his people. But is there a future dimension to the Jews' relationship with God? Paul is forced to re-address the issue by the minimal Jewish response to the gospel, and in doing so sees another possibility; Sim has noted, while discussing Rom. 11:25-32 and with reference to 1 Thess. 1.10, 'Paul expects the future conversion of Israel to happen in exactly the same way as his own conversion experience in the past. At the parousia the people of Israel as a whole will experience a christophany which will prove conclusively that Jesus is indeed the messiah; in response to this event, the Jews will acknowledge Jesus as such'.⁶⁵ On this occasion then there is room for a hermeneutic that proposes chronological shift in Paul's thought. It can equally be argued that the ethnic makeup of the Galatian and Roman audiences are vastly different, and these differences force Paul to differing soteriological conclusions.

4. Conclusion

Although Paul did not evangelize the Jewish people, his people of origin, he could not help but maintain an interest in them and in their status in the purposes of God. His attitude to the salvation of the Jews appears to shift between writing to the Galatians and writing to the Romans. Given the degree to which contingent circumstances, and especially the circumstances of connectivity and satisfaction between Paul and his audience alter his outlook and tone, it is likely that changed emotional ties rather than chronological developments drove him to an altered soteriological perspective. Conflict at Galatia, and especially the presenting issues of

⁶⁵ Sim, "Failed Christian Mission", 46.

circumcision and seasonal observations that sparked that conflict, demand that Paul draw a clear contrast between his gospel and a no/moj -based gospel version. There is in his rhetorical presentation no room for ambivalence, and so he allows no implication of a salvation for people outside the Christian circle. Perhaps news of this reached Rome and he was accused of betraying his people of origin, or perhaps the less conflictual context allows Paul some greater soteriological flexibility, but his tune changes, and he allows hints of a soteriology incorporating the Jewish people to enter into his thought.

Chapter 7: Staying Out

Introduction

It is not true to say that Paul had little or no contact with those outside the community of faith, for he inevitably engaged with them as he worked in the commercial centres of each physical community he visited during the course of his missions. Nevertheless, Paul has little to say about his unbelieving neighbours that can help define his understanding of their place in the purposes of God, his ‘soteriology of the outsider’. He portrays them with the generalized flourish of caricature, an essential tool of a rhetorician but of little use to a sociologist or someone attempting to seek a consistent Pauline soteriology.

Indeed, Paul sometimes has much to say about those outside the community of faith. His pattern is one of ‘looking with contempt on outsiders’.¹ In one monologue alone (Rom. 1.18-32) Paul devotes some 270 words to a depiction of their flawed and degenerate state. They are ‘mindless in thought’, ‘dark in the mindlessness of their hearts’, ‘foolish’ and idolatrous, to cite only Rom. 1.21-23.² In his earliest letter, while less verbose, he is no more flattering: outsiders are lustful (1 Thess. 4.5), without hope (1 Thess. 4.13b), and alcoholically comatose (1 Thess. 5.6). In his last extant letter, Philippians, the outsider community is simply ‘crooked and perverse’ (Phil. 2.15).

In this chapter, then, I consider Paul’s consideration and opinion of those clearly outside the community of faith. In the next chapter I will revisit this question, but from a universalistic and eschatological perspective, the final eschatological state of those who have not encountered, or who have rejected or opposed the gospel and its advocates. In Chapter Eight

¹ Malina, “We and They”, 613.

² Translations mine.

these are considered as a part of a universal ‘all’. In this chapter only the outsiders, and the outsiders as Paul was experiencing them in his here and now, are considered. This is not to say he is not writing of the fate of the outsider in the passages I consider here. It is to say he is starting with *present* experience as he is writing of outsiders’ fate – sometimes in very bleak terms. Paradoxically, in Chapter Eight, I will look at ways in which Paul considers an eschatological, post-parousia future, and the way in which from that futuristic perspective he opens himself to the possibility of outsiders having a place in God’s salvific plans.

The important issue here though is to see whether there is any correlation between Paul’s sense of connection with his audience – the ‘connectivity’ and ‘satisfaction’ order (the order, though not the degree, are the same) established above in Chapter Three – and the extent to which he considers those outside the community of faith. To help explore that issue I will address the letters in ‘connectivity/satisfaction order’ rather than the canonical order I have followed in previous chapters.

I will consider whether the connectivity and satisfaction Paul experiences with his audience has any correlation with his treatment and opinion of the outsider. I begin with the two letters, 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, with the highest degree of connectivity and satisfaction. It will be quickly apparent that Paul spends less time addressing the outsider in these two letters than he does in 1 Corinthians and the earlier part of 2 Corinthians, or Romans. Consequently my own study spends more time addressing the Corinthian and Roman correspondence than either the more ‘connected’ letters or the least connected letters.

Paul is constantly, consciously or otherwise, processing his observations of the practices of neighbouring religious communities to serve immediate rhetorical purpose. He is not always

as nihilistically dismissive of the outsider as some contexts may suggest. Many outsider beliefs and practices are unfathomable and abhorrent to Paul, but he recognizes the limitations of his perspective, and recognizes that the fate of the outsider is beyond the focus of his writings. For this reason even in the volatile early Corinthian context he hands the outsider over, soteriologically speaking, to God (1 Cor. 5.13) or even to ‘the saints’ (1 Cor. 6.2).³

Paul’s Jewish background inescapably informs his response to and portrayal of outsiders’ beliefs and practices. This simple recognition provides a key to understanding Paul’s abhorrence of the world surrounding and particularly, but not exclusively, as it infiltrates the Corinthian faith community. The libertine practices of some Corinthian sub-cultures are anathematic to Paul in a way in they were not to the emerging and more cosmopolitan Corinthian leadership. Boasting in particular, as noted in Chapter Five above, is unacceptable to Paul, for it demonstrates dependence on something other than God. Sexual libertinism is stamped on the Hebrew consciousness as a characteristic of the non-Jew, and as offensive to God; this outrage at outsiders’ liberal or even flamboyant sexual practice, real or imagined, is simply despicable to Paul the Jew, and inconsistent with a life lived in Christ. This is so to such an extent that there is no room for establishing genuine sociological understanding (to apply an anachronism to Paul’s world!) of outsiders’ mores, but simply to dismiss them as offensive.

Paul’s pre-Christian world of Diaspora Judaism was a strong presence in the Roman Empire, and while the degrees of reaction ranging from adaptation to disengagement between Jew and Rome differed from place to place, contact and influence are a given. Early Christianity and its parent community in Second Temple Judaism co-existed in a multi-

³ In this latter reference Paul has in mind not ‘the saints’ as shorthand for the community of faith in their present state (1 Cor. 1.2), but in a future perfected state like that envisaged by Daniel (Dan. 7.21-22) or by the author of Wisdom (Wisd. 3.8).

religious world,⁴ and were influenced by confrontations with and adaptations, intentional or otherwise, to the surrounding world. But Paul's abhorrence of the nebulous world of the outsider is carried from his Diaspora Judaism into Christian faith. Ironically his use of Greek rhetorical devices reminds us of the extent to which adaptation to neighbouring cultural paradigms was unavoidable, and probably desirable. Even the choice of Greek as the *lingua franca* within the faith community was a mark of the degree of influence and impact of a surrounding, dominant culture.⁵ Klauck observes that, in modern missiological terms, this is the question of inculturation: 'the two belong inseparably together: the inculturation of the gospel and the evangelisation of cultures'.⁶ Adaptation of rhetorical styles and influences would not indicate liberalizing attitudes extending to moral or ethical behaviour.

Where Paul sees good vehicles for proclamation of the gospel present in the beliefs and practices of a neighbouring culture, he adopts them. Greek rhetoric was a valuable evangelistic and apologetic tool. Luke portrays this as Paul engages with an audience at the Areopagus (Acts 17.16-34),⁷ and there is no reason to doubt Luke's essential observations, (the first person narrative of Acts 16.11-18 flags Luke's personal insight into Paul's methodology). Paul's rhetorical method throughout the letters confirms the broad picture given by Luke: there was much that was useful to Paul in Greco-Roman culture. But not all that Paul saw in the surrounding culture was useful. This differentiation lies at the heart of Paul's earliest struggles with the Corinthian community after his departure: the Corinthians are assimilating or even

⁴ H.-J. Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (London: T&T Clark International, 2000), xiii.

⁵ Klauck, *Religious Context*, 5.

⁶ Klauck, *Religious Context*, 6.

⁷ '[T]he sermon type found in the Acts exemplifies the apostolic message as promulgated by Peter and Paul. The great similarity between the different sermons has been claimed, by some, to prove that the speeches are stylised compositions by Luke. There is no doubt that he gave them their outer form, but this does not prevent us from thinking that he had reliable sources, and that he really gives specimens of the Apostolic message'. B. Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (ASNU 21. Uppsala: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955), 33.

escalating practices from the wider community that are simply incompatible with Paul's understanding of Christian behaviour. Sometimes the practices of another culture are incomprehensible, and sometimes, because they are incomprehensible, they are abhorrent (Wisd. 14.16-20, 15.14-19).⁸ Confronted by practices that are incomprehensible and abhorrent according to the world-view formed by Paul's Judaism, nevertheless Paul the rhetorician turns to that rhetorical art of caricature to discredit them. This rhetorical method is dominant, for example, in Rom. 1.18-32 as Paul discredits the world beyond the boundaries of the faith community.

From these first observations a pattern might be proposed: does Paul, when emotionally connected with his audience, effectively become more protective of them, and more likely to dismiss the outsiders and their soteriological fate with a swift sentence or two? By contrast, in the more dispassionate contexts, does he spend more time creating a case, where a greater range of rhetorical ploys come to the fore, or does he resort to depicting the outsider in broad but caricatured terms, as he generates a rhetorical contrast between the Jesus community and the vast community beyond its boundaries? Certainly in the least connected letters, 2 Cor. 10-13 and Galatians, there is no place for any significant reference to the outsider's soteriological state: Paul has enough problems on his hands fighting for the faith-survival of those ostensibly inside, without giving consideration to those beyond faith boundaries.

1. 1 Thessalonians

Certainly Paul has very little to say about 'those outside' in the letters in which he feels the greatest sense of connection and warmth for his audience. In 1 Thessalonians, the most 'connected' of his letters, Paul refers to outsiders on only three occasions. At 1 Thess. 2.2-3 he

⁸ Klauck, *Religious Context*, 10.

refers back to his original missionary activities in Thessalonica, making oblique reference to ‘shameful mistreatment’ and ‘great opposition’ (1 Thess. 2.2), and implying a contrast between this oppressive behaviour by external agents and the ‘purity’ of his own missionary endeavours. He returns to the question of ‘purity’ again at 1 Thess. 4.7, contrasting the holiness to which God has called author and audience on the one hand with the otherwise undefined state of impurity from which they were called on the other hand. The idea of ‘impurity’ is a religious one: ‘Paul adopts a) *kaqarsi/a* from Judaism as a general description of the absolute alienation from God in which heathenism finds itself. But for him the term no longer has ritual significance’.⁹ The term is a generalized and sweeping indicator of the state of humanity beyond the faith community, used with no attempt to offer further explanation or definition. In passing, Paul offers further insight into his understanding of ‘those outside’: the Thessalonians are to be a self-controlled and disciplined people, behaving ‘not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles, who do not know God’. The brothers and sisters sharing in the new familial community must be conspicuous by their behavioural contrast to those outside. But the ways in which those outside surrender to lustful passion are not of concern to Paul: this is the language of stereotype. Instead he provides a broad brushstroke that describes the new state of existence that he and his audience share: they live now and are to continue to live ‘in the sphere of God’s holiness’.¹⁰

These Thessalonian passages are not *about* the outsider. Relying on ‘traditional Hellenistic moral tradition’,¹¹ Paul is motivating his audience to stay faithful to their call despite the trials they are facing (1 Thess. 3.4). The broad depictions of outsiders are designed

⁹ F. Hauck, “Clean and Unclean in the New Testament”, *TDNT*, volume 3, 423-430 (428).

¹⁰ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 157.

¹¹ E.J. Richard, “Early Pauline Thought: An Analysis of 1 Thessalonians”, in Bassler, *Pauline Theology*, volume 1, 39-51 (49).

only for contrast with those inside the faith community; this is a boundary marking exercise, not a sociological or soteriological analysis.

2. **Philippians**

Paul has little to say about those outside when he writes to the Philippians. They are ‘a crooked and perverse generation’ (Phil. 2.15), echoing Deut. 32.5. In Phil. 2.12-18 Paul ‘echoes scripture’¹² generously; ‘fear and trembling’, (Phil. 2.12) a phrase he uses also in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 2.3, 2 Cor. 7.15), echoes Ps. 55.5. The command to ‘do all things without murmuring and arguing’, (Phil. 2.14: see also 1 Cor. 10.10), echoes a Hebrew verb used liberally throughout Exod. 16.7-12 and Num. 14.27-29, and at Num. 16.41, 17.5 and 17.10.¹³ The command at Phil. 2.14 to avoid ‘grumbling’,¹⁴ comes with the purposive sub-clause (Phil. 2.15). The first section of this clause, ‘that you may be blameless’, echoes Gen. 17.1 and Job 1.1, while the second part, ‘and innocent’, is an eschatological allusion used elsewhere by Paul only at Rom. 16.19, but used in Mt. 10.16. Paul is using broadly stylized language, predominately from the Hebrew Scriptures, to define an appropriate way of living for his audience, and as a part of his allusion to and proof-texting by the Hebrew scriptures he echoes the Hebrew view of the Gentile nations.

At Phil. 3.19 Paul says of the ‘enemies of the cross’ (Phil. 3.18): ‘their end is destruction’. As if by explanation Paul adds ‘their god is the belly, and their glory is their shame, their minds are set on earthly things’. Though this could be interpreted as a reference to those outside the

¹² ‘In Paul we encounter a first-century Jewish thinker who, while undergoing a profound disjuncture with his own religious tradition, grappled his way through to a vigorous and theologically generative reappropriation of Israel’s Scriptures’. R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 2.

¹³ Fowl, *Philippians*, 122, n. 4.

¹⁴ An ‘intentional echo’ (Fee, *Philippians*, 243; likewise other commentators cited by Fee, *ibid.*, n. 10). The verb is coupled with ‘foolish reasoning’, (dialogismw~n, NRSV: arguing). See also Rom. 1.21, 14.1, 1 Cor. 3.20.

faith community, it is unlikely, and is more likely to be a reference to those who are ‘ostensibly in’, but who by their actions they are rendering themselves ‘out’.¹⁵ The harsh monologue that begins at Phil. 3.2 appears to have in mind those from within the wider Christian community network, not at Philippi, who have sought to undermine Paul’s kerygma by preaching circumcision as a prerequisite of belonging and salvation. The passage is a spontaneous outburst, as Paul recalls the vulnerability of his faith communities to interference.

3. 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 1-9

Although in this section I am treating the letters in order of the degree of connectivity between author and audience, I will treat the earlier parts of the Corinthian correspondence as a unit. There is not a great deal of disintegration in the ‘connectivity’ between Paul and his audience over the extant first and second stages of the correspondence. In fact, as we have seen, there is an improvement in the relationship because of the joy Paul feels at the news of his audience’s positive response to his painful visit (2 Cor. 2.1) and letter (2 Cor. 2.3). By the time of the latter part of 2 Corinthians the warmth in connection between author and audience is gone, and Paul is highly dissatisfied. I shall consider that section separately.

In 1 Corinthians Paul makes several references to the community outside the faith community. These references can be separated into a number of loose categories. In the first place there are several of the same rhetorical generalizations or caricatures that will appear again in Rom. 1.21-23: broad brushstrokes that are of little sociological meaning. For example, in a short vice list at 1 Cor. 5.10, Paul identifies the outsider, the ‘immoral of this world’ as greedy, as a robber, and as idolatrous. At 1 Cor. 6.9-10 the longer vice list includes in its broad caricature ‘Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy,

¹⁵ For arguments see Fee, *Philippians*, 366-375.

drunkards, revilers, robbers'. Vice lists were representative generalizations,¹⁶ although the addition of the neologism *arsenokoi=tai* (cf. 1 Tim. 1.10) suggests that Paul was making some attempt to address Corinthian cultural mores as he viewed them.

Paul's sweeping references to 'idol worship' (1 Cor. 5.10, 6.9, 12.2) are a product of his Jewish formation and heritage. 'Idolatry' on the one hand and belief in and service of the God of Paul's ancestors on the other are mutually exclusive positions. This mutual exclusion drives Paul's argument at 1 Cor. 8.1-6, and creates in his world view a stark antithesis: 'flee from the worship of idols' (1 Cor. 10.14). The stark contrast between worship of God and worship of idols is an either/or: either worship God, or worship 'gods' the human psyche has contrived.¹⁷ To Paul the 'Hebrew of Hebrews', the practices of pagan cultures were neither more nor less than the result of failure to worship God (1 Cor. 8.5-6).

The assertion of 1 Cor. 1.8 undergirds all that Paul has to say: Paul was fundamentally a Jew. He was in a sense thoroughly Hellenized, too, but his religious narrative was thoroughly Hebrew. We have seen in the previous chapter how this Jewishness forced him back to a re-assessment of the soteriological fate of his people of origin, but it is a fact that cannot but affect his analysis of all aspects of the Christ-event. At times his Judaism is central to his argument (2 Cor. 11.22, Gal. 1.13, Phil. 3.5), but even when not explicit it never deserts his world view or his christological understanding: 'his theology consists precisely in the redefinition, by means of christology and pneumatology, of those two key Jewish doctrines', monotheism and election.¹⁸ His Judaism, including his Pharisaic formation (Phil. 3.5), is at the heart of his

¹⁶ 'Lists of vices and virtues are found scattered through all the earliest literature of the Christians, and for the most part they differ little from those we could glean from any of the moralizing philosophers and rhetoricians of the same era'. Meeks, *Origins*, 15.

¹⁷ Dunn, *Theology*, 114.

¹⁸ Wright, *Climax*, 1.

rhetorical method. Luke wants us to believe it is at the heart of his kerygmatic method, too,¹⁹ and, while Luke's chronology may be spurious, there is no reason to question the basic portrayal of Paul's kerygmatic method.²⁰ This is so even if each synagogue visitation portrayed by Luke as taking days in reality took months of visitation and proclamation.

So Paul's writings draw on all the skills available to a Jewish rhetorician, and to this extent the world beyond the boundaries either of his pre-Christian Diaspora Judaism or his Christian milieu influenced his thought and writing. Since the seminal work of Betz²¹ there has been an awareness of the rhetorical tools of Paul's epistolary style; Mitchell²² and Jewett²³ in particular have more recently drawn attention to the role of the audience in shaping the actual form and content of each letter. The rhetorical skill and awareness of the author is only accentuated by his awareness of his audience and adaptability to their culture. Paul's use of creedal and liturgical formulae, of diatribe, midrash, 'speech-in-character', examples, syllogism, enthymeme,²⁴ *a minore ad maius* constructions, dissociations and distractions,²⁵ and other rhetorical forms drawn from the 'mal-artful arts' of rhetoric²⁶ demonstrate his skills in the rhetoric of Jewish intelligentsia.

As a result of this exposure to and influence by the Hellenistic milieu, Paul is not inclined to establish a consistent soteriology of the outsider. It is not in his pastoral interests to do so, for while he is establishing clear boundaries between those inside and those outside the faith

¹⁹ Acts 13.14-15, 13.43, 14.1, 17.1, 17.10, 17.17, 18.4, 18.7-8, 18.17, 18.19, 19.8.

²⁰ Jewett, (*Romans*, 20) describes Acts as 'a work whose chronological framework of five Jerusalem journeys is demonstrably mistaken but whose other details are often useful'.

²¹ Betz, *Galatians*, and Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 & 9*, *passim*.

²² Mitchell, *Rhetoric*, 5-19.

²³ Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 64-68.

²⁴ '[A] formal argument of the artificial type in which a major premise is sometimes supported by a minor premise and then a concluding inference is drawn'. Jewett, *Romans*, 28. Rom. 4.14-15 is an example of enthymeme.

²⁵ J.S. Vos, "The Weaker Argument", 225, 227-230.

²⁶ Vos, "The Weaker Argument", 230.

community he is in doing so with the primary interest of altering the behaviour of the insider. He is deeply worried by those ‘inside’ who are behaving in the same manner as those ‘outside’, who are behaving without countercultural identifiers (1 Cor. 4.7). Those outside are described as ‘perishing’ (1 Cor. 1.18), but this is simply a contrastive caricature of life lived outside the embrace of Christ. Outsiders lack the countercultural values that Paul espouses as the values of the gospel: they are ‘discerning’ but nullified in their discernment (1 Cor. 1.21), wise but futile in the wisdom not invaded by God (1 Cor. 3.20).²⁷

Outsiders rely on sources of strength other than that proclaimed in Paul’s kerygma. They are seeking ‘perishable’ reward (1 Cor. 9.25) while the faithful are committed to one that is imperishable (1 Cor. 15.53). Paul urged his audience to lift their sights beyond the visible to the invisible, for to rely on that which is effectively ‘short-sighted’ is ‘boasting’ (1 Cor. 1.29). Paul wanted his audience to be ‘higher-sighted’, hence 1 Cor. 3.21 and its emphasis not on the visible human but the invisible Christ who owns and operates the human.

At 2 Cor. 1.17 Paul asks the rhetorical question, ‘Do I make my plans according to the flesh?’. The question is phrased to demand a negative answer.²⁸ He is defending himself against accusation of prevarication in his travel plans, and does so by contrasting standards infused by the Spirit with those informed merely by the human self-interest that for Paul is the hallmark of existence without the Spirit. Self-interested language is the language of otherness, language that is characteristic of those outside the boundaries of faith. Once more, Paul is not making a

²⁷ Paul cites Ps. 93.11, which in the LXX reads: *ku/rioj ginw/skei tou\j dialogismou\j tw~n a)nqrw/pwn o(/ti ei)sin ma/taioi*. ‘Paul modifies the quoted text so that it might better serve the needs of his rhetoric’. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 165. Given the apparent claims of the Corinthian opponents to superior wisdom (1 Cor. 1.19-20, 1.26) the *sofw~n* here are lapsing insiders, adopting the *sofi/an tou~ ko/smou* (1 Cor. 1.20) but ironically only succeeding in revealing or exacerbating their ignorance. However, since they are behaving ‘as if outsiders’ it is worth considering them here.

²⁸ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 140.

reasoned assessment of the speech of those beyond the community of faith, but is exemplifying differentiation from them, social identification as *being other* to them. In the encounter with the Spirit the believer's identity has changed and he or she has²⁹ entered into a new realm of decision making; they are no longer answerable to mere human expectations. Now decisions are directed by the Spirit and are made on the basis of a new set of values. These are values of contrast: the values of the flesh are opportunistic self-aggrandizement and double-speak: 'yes, yes and no, no at the same time' (2 Cor. 1.17). The values of the Spirit, according to Paul, are values of working for the betterment of others (2 Cor. 1.24), and this higher call has influenced Paul to change his plans.

'Living for others' will involve exposure to risk and death, (2 Cor. 4.8-9) because that is the point of encounter with the risen Christ (2 Cor. 4.11). Death, which is death to egocentricity,³⁰ is 'carried around in the body' (2 Cor. 4.10) of the believer, but not in the lives of those who remain in the flesh. For those who remain in the flesh the whole aroma of the faith community is altered, so that its experience of enslavement to Christ may appear to others to be 'a fragrance from death to death' but to those in Christ is 'a fragrance from life to life' (2 Cor. 2. 14-16). Inclusion in the Christian community is a complete transformation. Those outside who experience the Christian community as an odour of death are themselves 'perishing' (2 Cor. 2.15, 1 Cor. 1.18). Death to self is also death to seeing oneself or one's neighbours in the former way, (2 Cor. 5.16), an obscure Pauline observation that presumably seeks to end opportunistic relationships that are based on social advancement and the self-promotional mores of an honour/shame society.

²⁹ Or, dyadically speaking, 'they have'.

³⁰ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 336.

Those outside, and those inside who are acting ‘as if’ outside the faith community, run the risk of being no more than ‘peddlers’ of the word of God (2 Cor. 2.17). Paul has in mind not only the professional sophists and other philosophers who earned a living by their teaching³¹ (and whose skills he readily adopts where necessary) but those within the Christian community who cross boundaries between their patterns of ministry and behavioural patterns of ‘the flesh’. For this reason he is careful to emphasize ‘we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord’ (2 Cor. 4.5), so that self-aggrandizement is avoided, the content and the vehicle of the kerygma are not super-imposed, and boasting eschewed.

4. Romans

When Paul wrote to Rome he may not have been writing a compendium of Christian doctrine, but neither was he writing either a passionate defence of his kerygma or a passionate encouragement of much loved converts to the faith.³² Despite a degree of academic cynicism about the ‘compendium approach’ to Romans, there is nevertheless a degree of selective and careful reflection that dominates this ‘*logos Protrepikos* in an epistolary form’.³³ It is not surprising then that in this letter more than any other Paul comments on the state and fate of those outside the faith community. Rome in any case is the seat of Christianity’s most powerful religious neighbour, the emperor cult, so there is little escape from consideration of the place in the purposes of God, of the mores, and of the fate of those untouched by the kerygma of Christ.

The outsider in so cosmopolitan a city as Rome was not defined by racial origin, but blended together by Paul in an amorphous categorization, the vague language that depicts

³¹ Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 1, 213, Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 178.

³² Keck, “Searchable Judgments”, 22.

³³ Aune, “*Logos Protrepikos*”, 278.

otherness: ‘the Jew first, and also the Greek’ (Rom. 2.9). For Paul’s purposes there is no finesse in depicting the characteristics and behaviour of groups or individuals within this vast categorization. They are, broadly speaking, abhorrent to God. They are broadly categorized by the term ‘unrighteous’, though at Rom. 3.5 Paul assumes an external voice, and uses *h(a) diki/a* with a first person plural, so that insider and outsider, author and audience alike are tarnished by the brush of unrighteousness.

Nevertheless, the outsider is of debased mind, ‘filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice ... full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless’ (Rom. 1.29-31). As noted above,³⁴ this stereotypical vice list makes no attempt to understand life outside the boundaries of faith, but it is permitted to set the tone of the epistle in approach to the outsider.

For from this opening salvo onwards the outsider is a caricature. The outsider is a wicked person who in their unrighteousness deliberately ‘suppresses the truth’ (Rom. 1.18). This is Paul’s over-arching ‘thematic statement’³⁵ to which the following statements and proposals are elucidation. The passage is structured tightly, following the patterns of Jewish denunciations of Gentile idolatry, and presupposing that, as the author of Wisdom puts it, God’s ‘immortal spirit is in all things’, guiding and correcting all willing creation towards righteousness (Wisd. 12.1, 16). Paul and the author of Wisdom alike presuppose that ‘all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the

³⁴ See p. 272, above.

³⁵ Byrne, *Romans*, 64.

one who exists' (Wisd. 13.1). Wisdom, too, parades a litany of the evils of the outsider, primary of which is the failure to differentiate between creature and Creator (Wisd. 13. 1-9).

This blind and blinded³⁶ abstract person is characterized by litany after litany of evil traits, the 'shape of human sin'.³⁷ They are fundamentally abhorrent to God, but this abhorrence is defined by a catena of adjectives not only in the opening sentences but throughout the epistle. They include:

a) *se/beia* (Rom. 1.18)

At Rom. 4.5 and 5.6, Paul notes the transition in and by Christ where it is the ungodly become 'godly'. This language of transition reinforces the audience's sense of belonging to a new culture. Jewett notes 'For Greeks and Romans, *a) se/beia/impietas* is the most heinous crime – the failure to respect deity'.³⁸

a) *diki/a*

The NRSV of Rom. 1.18 reads: 'the wrath of God is revealed against all ... wickedness'. It is possible to bring out the nuance of the word with the English 'injustice' and/or 'unrighteousness'. This is true also at Rom. 1.29, where the outsider is 'filled with injustice/unrighteousness'; at Rom. 2.8 they are 'guided by partisanship'³⁹ and ... disobey the truth'; at this point Paul is still generating a caricature of the outsider. At Rom. 3.5 Paul includes himself and his audience in the realm of those whose 'injustice serves to confirm the

³⁶ 'God gave them up ...'. Rom. 1.24, 26, 28.

³⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 148.

³⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 152.

³⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 206.

justice of God’; at Rom. 6.13 Paul uses the language to reinforce the audience’s sense of transfer from ‘outsider’ to ‘insider’.

a) napologh/touj Rom. 1.20, 2.1.

The ‘blinded’ outsider is ‘without excuse’, a legal term.⁴⁰ But at Rom. 2.1 the ‘implied partner’ of Paul’s dialogue is led into a rhetorical trap.⁴¹ The dialogical partner who ‘judges others’ is included amongst those who have ‘no excuse’. At this point it becomes apparent that the dialogue partner, ‘whoever you are’ (Rom. 2.1) is any person who believes they are able to pass judgement on others (also Rom. 2.21), especially on the basis of nationalistic preference,⁴² but realistically on any basis at all. Paul’s primary target may be the Jew (Rom. 2.17) who subscribes to the tone of the diatribe against evil,⁴³ but there is a stark warning here also for his mixed-ethnic audience of Christ-believers: ‘according to my gospel, God will judge the secret thoughts of all’ (Rom. 2.16). In the light of what Paul writes to the Corinthians, (‘all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil’: 2 Cor. 5.10), it would appear that the entire audience regardless of ‘christological status’ are issued stern warning against judgementalism and complacency.⁴⁴

ma/taioj (Rom. 1.21, see also Rom. 8.20).

⁴⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 156.

⁴¹ Byrne, *Romans*, 80.

⁴² Dunn, *Theology*, 117-119.

⁴³ Byrne, *Romans*, 80; Dunn, *Romans*, volume 1, 90; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 298-301; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 39-40, Jewett, *Romans*, 221.

⁴⁴ Jewett draws attention to Mt. 7.1-5 // Lk. 6.37. *Romans*, 196-197.

The NRSV provides [made⁴⁵] ‘futile’ or in its noun form at Rom. 8.20 ‘futility’. The word, which echoes Psalm 93.11 (LXX),⁴⁶ introduces a brief description of ‘godless thought’ (Rom. 1.21-23), defining the behaviour of the outsider and any insider who emulates outsider behaviour. Paul also uses the word at 1 Cor. 3:20, where ‘Paul modifies the quoted text so that it might better serve the needs of his rhetoric’.⁴⁷

a) su/netoj (Rom. 1.21)

Perhaps echoing Deut. 32.21b (LXX) and/or Ps. 75.5-6 (LXX), Paul introduces ‘without understanding’ as a hallmark of ‘being out’. He includes it again in the vice list at Rom. 1.29-31 and in an altered citation of Deut 32.21b at Rom. 10.19c. At 1 Cor. 1.19 he cites Isa. 29.14 where the positive form of the word is used, although again using the form as a pejorative by which to caricature intellect that is not surrendered to God. Here it indicates ‘that the human ability to “bring together, perceive” (suni/hmi) is disabled when God is unacknowledged’.⁴⁸ When the word reappears at Rom. 1.31 it is as the first of ‘four rhyming words that begin with the alpha negative’,⁴⁹ portraying a world turned away from God.

mwrai/nw (Rom. 1.22)

This word in verbal form is a *hapax*, although mwro/j (foolishness) is used as an ironic-derogatory noun in the early Corinthian correspondence.⁵⁰ The verb is in the passive form

⁴⁵ ‘The verb e) mataiw/qhsan should be translated as a resultative aorist passive’. Jewett, *Romans*, 158.

⁴⁶ Psalm 93.11 LXX reads: ku/rioj ginw/skei tou\j dialogismou\j tw~n a)nqrw/pwn o(/ti ei) si\n ma/taioi.

⁴⁷ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 165.

⁴⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 158.

⁴⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 189.

⁵⁰ mwro/j is depicted as a positive attribute in contrast to the wisdom of the Corinthians. See 1 Cor. 1.18-25; 2.14; 3.18, 19; 4.10.

e)mwra/nqhsan, emphasizing God's role in handing over⁵¹ humanity-without-God to become victim to its own myopia. Given the respect given to wisdom as an attribute in antiquity, and the *non-sequitur* of claiming wisdom for oneself, Paul is depicting humanity trapped in a darkness of its own choice.⁵²

fqartou~ (Rom. 1.23)

'Corruptibility' is here and in 1 Corinthians essentially a characteristic of separation from God. Paul is again echoing or alluding to Wisdom (Wisd. 2.23): 'God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity', but now is building his argument towards the attack on soteriological complacency that begins at Rom. 2.1. The construction is a contrast of a divine attribute, a) fqa/rtou, with the state chosen by humanity opting to exist without God and access to God's attributes. There are clear and deliberate echoes here of Ps. 106.20, hinting again that godlessness is not necessarily just a Roman religious attribute.

a) kaqarsi/a

At Rom. 1.24 Paul identifies the outsider in terms of ritual uncleanness or impurity,⁵³ and at Rom. 6.19 as removed from this state by being in Christ. For Paul and his audience the word no longer denotes ritual impurity but, in keeping with his understanding that those outside are 'handed over to degrading passions' is used to denote sexual libertinism and disrespect for and misuse of their own and one another's bodies. The term has appeared in the Pauline vice list for the Galatian correspondence, and it is Paul's fear in the late Corinthian context that 'impurity'

⁵¹ Pare/dwken, held over until v. 24.

⁵² Jewett, *Romans*, 159-160.

⁵³ 'Paul adopts a) kaqarsi/a from Judaism as a general description of the absolute alienation from God in which heathenism finds itself. But for him the term no longer has ritual significance'. F. Hauck, a) xa/qartoj, a) kaqarsi/a, *TDNT*, volume 3, 423-430 (427).

may once more become a hallmark of the audience (2 Cor. 12.20 – again a vice list) though the notion has been central to Paul’s worldview from the beginning of his writing ministry (1 Thess. 2.3, 4.7). Paul may again be echoing the stereotypical form of the Wisdom of Solomon (Wisd. 2.16).

Rom. 1.25b: meth/llacan th\ n a)lh/ qeian tou~ qeou~ e) n tw|~
yeu/dei

In the second half of Rom. 1.25 Paul summarizes the fault of his subject, turning to Wisdom’s theme of substitution of creature for Creator as subject of worship (Wisd. 13.1). The summary Paul offers, ‘they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator’ – accompanied by a solemn doxology to emphasize the severity of the claim – is a catch-all analysis of human failure, which is explicated in the verses that follow. Underlying the litany that follows is the understanding that ‘Moral perversion is the result, not the cause of God’s wrath’.⁵⁴ Misdirected worship results in dishonourable passions, unnatural (lesbian) sexual relations, male homosexual lust and homosexual acts.⁵⁵

Paul’s construction in these citations of sin generates a crescendo of decadence, from female to male degradation.⁵⁶ The crescendo moves then from sexual to intellectual, social and religious degradation, again introduced with the catch-all or summary statement that ‘God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done’ (Rom. 1.28).⁵⁷ Again these are listed, now in the form of a vice list,⁵⁸ though not strictly in a crescendo:

⁵⁴ Käsemann, quoted in Dunn, *Romans*, volume 1, 64; original location not cited.

⁵⁵ th\ n a) sxhmosu/nhn katergazo/menoi.

⁵⁶ Dunn, *Romans*, volume 1, 64.

⁵⁷ mh\ kaqh/konta.

⁵⁸ See also Eph. 4.31, 5.3-5; Col. 3.5, 3.8; 1 Tim. 1.9-10; 2 Tim. 3.2-5; Tit. 3.3; 1 Pet. 4.3. Cf. Wisd. 14.25-26; 3 Baruch 4.17, 8.5, 13.4; Test. Reub. 3.3-6; Test. Jud. 16.1; 2 Enoch 10.4-5.

i.	a) diki/a	injustice, unrighteousness
ii.	pornei/a ⁵⁹	harlotry
iii.	ponhri/a	evil-doing
iv.	pleoneci/a	avarice
v.	kaki/a	wickedness, human evil
vi.	fqo/nou	envy
vii.	fo/nou	murderous intent
viii.	e) /rij	quarrelsomeness
ix.	do/loj	cunning
x.	kakoh/qeia	malice
xi.	yiquristh/j	gossip
xii.	kata/laloj	slander
xiii.	qeostugh/j	God-hatred
xiv.	u (bristh/j	insolence
xv.	u (perh/fanoj	arrogance
xvi.	a) lazwn	boastfulness
xvii.	e) feureth/j kako/j	invention of evil
xviii.	[goneu~sin] a) peiqh/j	disobedience (towards parents)
xix.	a) su/netoj	mindless incomprehension
xx.	a) su/nqetoj	faithlessness
xxi.	a) /storgoj	lovelessness
xxii.	a) neleh/mwn	mercilessness

⁵⁹ Probably a scribal addition, rectifying the apparent absence of specifically sexual vice in this list. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 129-130. The apparent word associations of fqo/nou and fo/nou and a) sunetoj and a) su/nqetoj later in the list suggest the simple word association ('linked by assonance rather than meaning'. Cranfield, *Romans*, volume 1, 132) of ponhri/a and pornei/a.

Paul introduces a further, shorter litany later in his essay-letter:

Romans 13.13

- | | | |
|------|------------|--|
| i. | kw~moi | (Dionysian) drunkenness |
| ii. | me/qh | drunkenness |
| iii. | koi/th | ‘bedding’ (sexual intercourse, coitus) |
| iv. | a)se/lgeia | debauchery |

These lists of human failure summarise what for Paul is a state of being ‘in the flesh’, a phrase he turns to more than 30 times in Romans. On occasions the phrase is neutral or near-neutral (Rom. 1.3, 4.1, 9.5). At Rom. 3.20 Paul demonstrates the degree to which he can weight the phrase by quoting Ps. 143.2b and inserting the phrase ‘all flesh’ into it. The insertion of *sa\rc* into the quotation is a deliberate theological observation by Paul that it is in being ‘fleshly’ or oriented away from Christ that humankind fails to be righteous before God.

Sometimes Paul presents ‘fleshliness’ as a before and after equation: ‘when we were in the flesh’ can be set against ‘but now in Christ/the Spirit’ (Rom. 7.5-6). At Rom. 6.19 he reminds his audience that they continue to exist in the fleshly sphere, that they are subject to imperfection even when existing in Christ. Paul confirms this in his soliloquy at Rom. 7.18. The hypothetical first person subject of the soliloquy is ‘in the flesh a slave to sin’ (Rom. 7.25c) but lives with a mind enslaved to God.⁶⁰

Paul juxtaposes the ‘law of the Spirit of life’ alongside ‘the law of sin and of death’ (Rom. 8.2). The latter is the sphere of existence ‘weakened by the flesh’. But Paul here is speaking of those whose lives have been previously reliant on Torah for liberation. He needs to speak of

⁶⁰ Paul is here contrasting the ‘mind in Christ’ with the unregenerate mind of the vice lists.

law-observant believers because of his past experience of opposition to his law-free gospel stemming from the Galatian context. Paul is pre-empting any introduction of inappropriate⁶¹ law-observance in the Roman community. He is no longer speaking of the outsider, who has been removed from the conversation since Rom. 2.16, but of any insider who might re-adopt and ‘boast of’ a structure of law.

At Rom. 2.16 Paul foretells a universal judgement. From that point his focus shifts. Law has served a purpose in creating awareness of sin (Rom. 3.20), and with that awareness established Paul shifts attention from his passing consideration of the outsider to the implications of renewed law-observance for Jew and, more importantly, potential Judaizing Christian. Throughout Rom. 8.1-13 Paul builds a case for the life in Christ as a life liberated from enslavement to flesh, from sin and death, a life transformed from inherent ‘hostility to God’ (Rom. 8.7) to a life lived for God. The outsider has dropped from his perspective, except from such sweeping and all-inclusive statements as ‘those who are in the flesh cannot please God’ (Rom. 8.8). But for the insider the ‘flesh’ remains a constant threat, (Rom. 8.13) against which the only protection is to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 13.14).

Powerful hostile statements about those who are ‘fleshly’ abound throughout the letter. But from Rom. 3.20 on there is no real interest in those outside the faith community. A condemnatory verse such as Rom. 16.18 is directed at figures such as those Paul has experienced elsewhere, who masquerade as believers but who are betrayed as opponents by

⁶¹ Jewett notes with approval Georgi’s observation that ‘the law of the Spirit of life’ is ‘not a demand, a norm, or an authority. It is, rather, an environment of loyalty and solidarity, of fidelity and confidence, of spirit and community’. D. Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul’s Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 100. Jewett, *Romans*, 493.

their behaviour. God will render 'wrath and fury' on the heads of 'everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek' (Rom. 2.9).

Fleshly existence and sin and death are inseparably entwined as interchanging spheres (Rom. 6.23, 8.6a), but they are the spheres of a life not invaded by and surrendered to the Spirit. Paul's primary interest here is not on outsiders but on those, inside the community of faith, hypothetically faced with the temptation to revert to live lives controlled by passions (Rom. 6.12) or law-observance (Rom. 7.4). These temptations are anathematic to Paul, and contradictory to the life he demands of his audience, life 'obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted' (Rom. 6.17). Nowhere in this discourse is Paul remotely concerned with those who are outside, who are 'law to themselves' (Rom. 2.14). They have passed out of Paul's soteriological discourse, outside the sphere of 'my gospel' (Rom. 2. 16).

Paul maintains a theology of the sovereignty of God. The God who hardened the heart of the Pharaoh in the Exodus narrative hardens or has mercy on the hearts of human beings in the narrative of salvation in Christ: 'God has mercy on whomsoever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomsoever he chooses' (Rom. 9.18). It is God who will deal with the outsider according to the dictates God decides (Rom. 2.16). The insider must not succumb to the standards of the outside community (Rom. 12.2), but that in itself is not a moral judgement on the outside community, for they have not heard (Rom. 10.14) the gospel by which they will be judged.

Does Paul express an overall view of the outsider in Romans? Once more he relies on disinterested and uninformed stereotype. The outsider is debased (Rom. 1.29-31), but not really of any interest to Paul at all. The opening salvo of derogatory characteristics recurs

occasionally throughout the epistle (Rom. 8.20), and a subsequent vice list at Rom. 13.13 revisits the impression of decadence, but these lists are no more than generalized over-views of life lived without God. Generally speaking, Paul is utterly uninterested in the outside *qua* individual.

5. Galatians

When writing to the Galatians Paul is frustrated. He is not concerned with outside communities, but fighting for the faith of an audience that has deserted his teachings. As elsewhere he looks on the community outside as debauched, but makes few attempts to move beyond the sweeping caricatures of a vice list. The characteristics of life outside are listed as ‘works of the flesh’ (Gal. 5.19-21). Those inside the community, should they submit to the law-observant gospel with which they have been confronted, will re-immense themselves that world. They will do this not necessarily by emulating the debauched behaviour of the outsider, but by prioritizing the fleshly realm which is the outsider’s realm. To choose other than Paul’s kerygma is to ‘sow to your own flesh’ (Gal. 6.8). By that choice the Galatians are ‘cursed’ (Gal. 3.10-11).

They were once slaves to the outside realm (the ‘sinful nations’ – Gal. 2.15) and to its observances (Gal. 4.8-11). It was an irredeemable (Gal. 2.16) realm of flesh, the world of Hagar’s off-spring (Gal. 4.24). As with his letter to the Romans Paul at this point is not defining the remote pagan outsider as Hagar’s child, but is with rhetorical sleight of hand making the law-observant believer the child of Hagar, an ‘as if’ outsider. The law-observant believer has become as if an outsider, and as such is opposed to the Spirit of God. Such a

person knows only how to ‘bite and devour’ (Gal. 5.15) and is destroying the community of Christ.

6. 2 Corinthians 10-13

As the relationship deteriorates those outside the faith community become an increasingly small concern. They matter in the discourse of Paul’s arguments only in so far as they stand as a warning of what the audience may revert to if they surrender the integrity of Paul’s kerygma (2 Cor. 12.20-21). False siblings, who have become outsiders, are no less a danger (2 Cor. 11.26) for reasons Paul has already outlined: they seduce the faithful from their course (2 Cor. 11.4). But those generally ‘out there’, beyond the parameters of his urgent fight for the faith of the Corinthians community, are of no interest to the apostle.

So in this most acerbic and desperate and emotionally ‘disconnected’ of Paul’s letters Paul has little interest in the question of the outsider. He delivers another vice list (2 Cor. 12.20-21b), but on this occasion he is hypothesizing that his audience, together with the pseudo-apostles, have in their apostasy become fleshly: ‘I fear that when I come I may find you not as I wish’ (2 Cor. 12.20). He fears he may come to Corinth a third time (2 Cor. 12.14) and find the Corinthians entrapped once more in lives of un-repentant debauchery (2 Cor. 12.21), of ‘moral dereliction’.⁶² Paul has no need to speak of the outsider for the recidivist behaviour of the audience is outside enough. They have succumbed to the temptation of another gospel (2 Cor. 11.4) and have only this chance to ‘put things in order’ (2 Cor. 13.11) before they are utterly beyond the parameters of faith.

⁶² Thrall, *II Corinthians*, volume 2, 866.

7. Conclusion

Paul considers the fate of those outside the faith community primarily in contexts in which their behaviour is impacting on the lives of the gospel community. He tends to depict those outside with the broad brushstrokes of caricature, and with little interest in analysis of God's potential dealings with them or the implications of the Christ event for them. It should be noted that 'those outside' include, especially in the Thessalonian context, those who are making life difficult for the believing community. It is unlikely that Paul, seeking to encourage his audience to be tenacious in faith in the face of trials, would speculate too much on the possibility of the tormenters, too, being embraced within the soteriological purposes of God. Context dictates content.

Chapter 8: All In? Paul's Soteriology of the Outsider

Introduction

In this final chapter, following the marathon metaphor, we examine what might, according to the metaphor, be considered 'the spectators'. We consider not only the gathered crowd watching the athletes, but the vast international electronic audience not available to Paul's imagination. Perhaps that development of modernity should not be allowed to influence our reading of Paul, but a reader's hermeneutical site will always influence his or her interpretation. Paul never imagined us to be in his audience, yet we are, and that development has hermeneutical ramifications.

Paul does not in any deliberate way set out to answer soteriological questions regarding the fate of those outside the visible faith community, with the exception of his 'kindred according to the flesh', considered above in Chapter Six. Consequently, his attitude to the question, probably one he rarely if ever considered, can be extrapolated from only a handful of texts. Alongside texts that may suggest a doctrine of, or hope for, or belief in a universal resurrection or restoration, another set of texts could be considered: are there texts that speak not of restoration but punishment, eternal or otherwise, of non-believers? In this context it is necessary to note the debate between different modern exclusivist soteriological interpreters of Paul: those who propose that Paul sees annihilation as the fate of non-believers, and those who propose that Paul's view is of some form of punitive afterlife. I will return to this question at the end of the present chapter.

In this chapter, as with earlier chapters, I consider Paul's satisfaction and connection with his audience as I address the relevant texts. Where he talks of those outside the faith community, what authorial 'mood' is he in? If he speaks of them with soteriological optimism, is this affected by his sense of the audience's space and well-being? In cases where he speaks with pessimistic or vengeful tones of the fate of the outsider, is he feeling more or less connected to his audience?

Sumney's terminology of 'explicit statements', 'allusions', and 'affirmations', and his hermeneutical demand of awareness of types of passage ('polemical', 'apologetic', and 'didactic') and 'epistolary periods' ('thanksgivings', 'greetings', 'closings' and 'hortatory sections') will not always be stated explicitly, but will guide my assessment of the comparative weight of any universalist soteriological statements that Paul makes.

A similar weighting of textual significance is used in feminist hermeneutics, when Fiorenza notes that 'only those traditions and texts that critically break through patriarchal culture and "plausibility structures" have the theological authority of revelation'.¹ Fiorenza explores this hermeneutic further: 'Although the canon preserves only remnants of the nonpatriarchal early Christian ethos, these remnants still allow us to recognize that the patriarchalization process is not inherent in Christian revelation and community but progressed slowly and with difficulty'.² Fiorenza adds hermeneutical weight to texts that speak, despite the impact of subsequent patriarchalism, of the liberation of women. Similar methodology is applied in this chapter to texts that may speak of the salvation of the outsider. The texts may still speak through decades of canonical records of boundary maintenance, and centuries of subsequent

¹ Fiorenza, *In Memory*, 33.

² Fiorenza, *In Memory*, 35.

hermeneutical boundary maintenance. If they originally appeared in contexts of boundary vulnerability, then they must be given extraordinary weight: if Paul speaks of the possibility of the salvation of those beyond the boundary at all, it is remarkable. If soteriologically inclusivist words are spoken despite animosity and boundary vulnerability, then those words should have enormous significance in our multi-religious world in which his thoughts are now read. Texts that speak of the perdition of persecutors and disconnected outsiders generate less weight, for they are to be expected. It should be noted that only four of Paul's letters deal in any significant way with the soteriology of the outsider: 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 1 Corinthians and Romans.

Malina emphasizes that a taxonomy of social groups provides a hermeneutical key for ancient letters.³ While Paul sometimes uses an authorial plural (1 Thess. 1.3), he more often uses a form of invitational or collusive plural, leading the audience to identify with the practice and command of the author (1 Cor. 4.12b-13a). This establishes intrigue between author and audience, differentiating between insider and outsider. Author and audience are entwined in a web of common purpose, from which 'they' are excluded. But Malina also notes Paul's frequent limitations on the word 'all'; it delineates a specified group rather than an absolute universal. Sometimes the limiters are applied in the sentence: 'all *the saints*' (2 Cor. 1.1). This is similar in effect to the usage of the post-Pauline author of Colossians: when this author writes 'Christ is all and in all!' (Col. 3.11) he has already limited the scope of the 'all' to exclude 'those who are disobedient' (Col. 3.6), and perpetrators of 'the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life' (Col. 3.7). Sometimes there are no limiters to the

³ Malina, "We and They", 609 and *passim*. G. Burnett's summary dismissal of Malina's dyadic emphases (*Paul and the Salvation of the Individual* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 45) has been rebutted by R. Keay, "Review of *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*", *JBL* 121 (2002): 777-781, esp. 779.

sentence. For example, when Paul writes of proclaiming the gospel among ‘all the Gentiles’ (Rom. 1.5) he is laying a foundation for his hopes to extend his mission to Iberia, the end of the known world. To one extent there is an unseen limitation at work: Paul is not expressing interest in peoples beyond the Empire’s Mediterranean-based boundaries, even if he were aware that trade routes existed beyond those boundaries or the older boundaries of Alexander’s Empire. From our twenty-first century perspective that limiter, ‘the end of the known world’, must be inserted in the hermeneutical process.

Hebrew traditions had little to say about those outside their ethnic boundaries, but placed great narrative emphasis on those who gave them identity as separated or ‘other’ (Ezra 2.1-70, Neh. 7.6-65, 1 Chron. 5.1-17). Outsiders were usually an amorphous mass, and their identity, even in so christologically formative a passage as Isa. 53, is beyond our gleaning.⁴ This is not quite universally the case: Cyrus’ impact on the Hebrews’ story⁵ is considerable, to the extent that he is deemed God’s ‘shepherd’ (Isa. 44.28), ‘anointed’ (Isa. 45.1), and ‘righteous’ (Isa. 45.13).⁶ Cyrus is an ‘impacting outsider’ (in much the same way that Paul regards Caesar) and is not a part of the amorphous outsider mass considered here.

Paul’s ethnic people saw themselves as separate, a ‘chosen people’, Judean as against Gentile.⁷ But Paul has crossed boundaries and is addressing a new ‘we’. Sometimes he names the heritage of his new audience overtly (Rom. 11.13); more often he simply assumes fictive kinship. Nevertheless, the presupposition remains unchanged: ‘we ... they’. There are insiders,

⁴ D.J.A. Clines, *I, He, We & They: a Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (JSOTSup 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1976), 31-32.

⁵ Childs rejects the word ‘story’ as ‘a modern hermeneutical device that sought to escape the problems involved with the word “history”’. *Canonical Shaping*, 182. Nevertheless ‘story’ or ‘narrative’ as vehicles of self-understanding and understanding of the self’s soteriological relationship to God can be a profound hermeneutical key.

⁶ See also the Book of Ezra, and 2 Chron. 36.22-23, in which Cyrus is seen favourably.

⁷ Malina, “We and They”, 613.

and there are outsiders. It is possible to cross boundaries from one to the other – ‘Getting In’ – but if that crossing is not undertaken, ‘they’ remain nebulous and undefined, and largely unconsidered in the epistolary narrative. Paul’s letters are urgent corrective pastoral letters to the ‘we’. Yet every now and again the soteriological question of ‘they’ creeps into his narrative. The in-breaking of the nebulous outsider into Paul’s thought is a concern of this final chapter.

There are insiders, and there are outsiders. There are also *degrees* to which outsiders impact on insiders. Does Paul differentiate between the impacting outsider, a Cyrus or a Caesar figure, whose actions directly impact on the faith community, and the first century equivalent of John Doe, nameless and faceless, whom Paul never meets? Does Paul have any thoughts about the amorphous outsider at all if they don’t impinge of the practice of the faith community? This will be another matter considered in this final chapter.

Furthermore, in this assessment of outsiders, I will continue to bear in mind the connectivity and satisfaction between author and audience. If Paul is close to and satisfied with his audience, does this affect his attitude to the salvation of the outsider? Does he feel more or less able to accommodate the thought of their salvation? In addressing these questions I will limit myself to texts that directly raise the question of the fate of the outsider, and not the internal opponents, the Jewish people or other groupings dealt with in previous chapters.

Once more the order in which I have treated texts is neither canonical nor chronological, but, in order to emphasize the ways in which the contingency of connectivity affects Paul’s thought and expression, connectivity order.

1. 1 Thessalonians

Aasgaard rates the relationship of author to audience in 1 Thessalonians as ‘close-superior’. By this he means Paul is ‘close’ in relation to emotional solidarity with his audience, while remaining ‘superior’ in hierarchical relationship to them. Aasgaard refers to this as a ‘close, positive unstrained relationship’.⁸ In my scheme the Connectivity Indication, at 1.08%, is very high.⁹ The Satisfaction Indicator, at 0.68%,¹⁰ is also very high. Paul has few fears of misinterpretation or deliberate misapplication of his letter to the Thessalonians.

Paul, then, was comfortable with his Thessalonian audience and wrote on that basis. There is no significant internal conflict to deal with, and no significant points of tension between Paul and his audience. The tone is exhortative:¹¹ the audience are experiencing trials, possibly not least at the hands of neighbours, applying pressure to them to subscribe to the dominant Imperial religious ethos (1 Thess. 3.3). How does Paul respond to these impacting, persecuting outsiders? What does he see to be their fate?

He allows his expectation of eschatological judgement to come to the surface of his thought. For those who are of the community of faith, and who are suffering for their faith, God’s wrath purifies and corrects: ‘may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints’ (1 Thess. 3.13). Some Thessalonian Christians, shaken by persecution (note 1 Thess. 1.6), may separate themselves from the faith community and from grace (1 Thess. 1.1c). But by this they

⁸ See Aasgaard’s Figure 10, *Beloved*, 294.

⁹ Table 4, (p. 197 above).

¹⁰ Table 6, (p. 212, above).

¹¹ B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (Etudes Bibliques. Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 456. Cited in Sumney, *Servants*, 217.

would expose themselves to the eschatological fate of non-believers (1 Thess. 2.16).¹² Paul's hope has 'an apocalyptic specificity',¹³ a pressing wish that believers may be considered 'blameless' in the face of impending judgement.

In fact Paul says little about even those outsiders who persecute the faith community. 1 Thessalonians 2.14-16 is far more about the Jewish community than about non-believing Gentiles. Believers are encouraged to maintain their faith, with dire warnings of wrath. At 1 Thess. 2.16 Paul indicates that 'those who killed the Lord' have received their punishment already, failing to receive the benefits of Christ. Paul does not indicate in what way this failure disadvantages the Jews: in the transaction of ideas between author and audience there is an agreement that failure to receive Christ is in some way punishment enough, and no more need be said.¹⁴ Even so Paul adds the instruction 'May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for *all*, just as we abound in love for you' (1 Thess. 3.12). This sentence epitomizes the language of close connectivity that is the flavour of this letter.

2. Philippians

Close connectivity is also the hallmark of Paul's relations with the Philippians. In Aasgaard's rating scheme Philippians reveals a high degree of 'closeness' between author and audience, but the second lowest hierarchical rating.¹⁵ It is to Aasgaard a 'close, positive unstrained relationship'. My ratings of Connectivity (0.98%) and Satisfaction (0.52%), like those of 1 Thessalonians, indicate on Paul's part a high degree of comfort and satisfaction with

¹² Wanamaker notes the degree to which conversion to Christianity represented radical resocialization, and draws his own missiological conclusions from that observation. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 139.

¹³ Beker, *Paul*, 149.

¹⁴ L. Morris ignores this present dimension of the wrath of God when he speaks of dire warnings of 'a day to come when that which [Paul] elsewhere designates as "the wrath of God" will have full operation'. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Third edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 183.

¹⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 294.

his audience. The slightly lower standing on both counts indicates an increased level of caution that has developed in Paul's worldview during the intervening years of the period of epistolary ministry.

Philippians 1.28

Paul believes the resilient behaviour of the Philippian faithful is evidence of the opponents' destruction, but of the Philippians' salvation (Phil. 1.28, cf. 1 Cor. 1.18). He is here thinking of the violent and intimidatory behaviour towards the faith community by the external populace at Philippi. Consistent with his continued apocalyptic expectation of judgement, and the eschatological wrath of God that will provide punishment to fit the crime of opposition to the gospel, he wishes his opponents to perdition. The coalface of persecution and victimization, including the physical violence that both author and audience have recently experienced,¹⁶ is not an environment conducive to making reasoned, optimistic soteriological forecasts. Paul is connected to and satisfied with his audience, but a shared experience of suffering, which has heightened his connectivity to the audience, means he is indisposed to inclusivity in his attitude to outsiders.

The key word *α)pwlei/a* is variously described as 'comparatively rare in ancient Greek'¹⁷ and 'richly attested in secular Greek'.¹⁸ The Hebrew Scriptures allow an interpretation of physical destruction, but New Testament usage begins to emphasize a sense of eternal, punitive destruction (apparent also in Qumran).¹⁹ There is little doubt that this possibility is in Paul's mind as he recalls the opposition that the Philippians are experiencing. Who are these

¹⁶ See, e.g., Phil. 1.7, 1.17b, 1.28a.

¹⁷ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 156.

¹⁸ A. Kretzner, "*α)pw/leia, aj, h(*", *EDNT*, volume 1, 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

opponents? The text of Phil. 1.28, if taken in isolation, does not clarify whether the opponents are entirely unconnected to the faith community ('impacting outsiders'), or interfering insiders of the kind that Paul has experienced in the Corinthian and Galatian contexts.²⁰

Perhaps there are clues given from outside the text itself. Sumney's warning that we cannot use external texts as hermeneutical aids²¹ need not deter us here, for elsewhere in Philippians Paul does address both internal and external enemies of the gospel. Phil. 3.2 is an explosive outburst made in response to internal enemies of the gospel. It is possible that Phil. 3.18 refers to those same opponents. In Phil. 1.13 Paul makes a clear reference to outsiders, 'the whole Imperial guard and everyone else'. This group is seen as fertile soil for the gospel (Phil. 1.18), and as an opportunity for witness. It is a group like these who are in Paul's mind as he encourages the audience to be 'in no way intimidated by your opponents'. Paul has encountered the guards, and the Philippians have encountered some other intimidatory opponents; to Paul either group provides opportunity for witness. The 'destruction' is conditional: should the unidentified opponents relent they can be redeemed, as some of the Imperial guard have demonstrated, effectively under Caesar's nose. Should they not, then in this context Paul sees only 'a hopeless destiny of death'.²² There is not a lot of soteriological generosity in this context where author and audience alike share a narrative of persecution and oppression. On the other hand, Paul is not in the mood to make consistent missiological statements (Phil. 1.15-18), so it is possibly unfair to expect his soteriological statements to bear the weight of eternal judgement!

²⁰ Hooker, "Philippians", 496.

²¹ Sumney, *Servants*, 22.

²² Kretzner, *EDNT*, volume 1, 135.

Philippians 2.5-11

Paul is not consistent in this short letter. He moves on to contrast the obedient Christ of Phil. 2.5-11, who does not grasp equality to God, and who opens himself up to the possibilities of self-emptying and self-giving, with Adam-Satan, who grasps betterment by self-seeking. Paul identifies gospel-workers with Christ, and sees in his opponents echoes of Adam-Satan. Paul's use of the *Carmen Christi*²³ again demonstrates that he is familiar with a universalist soteriology. The hymn is adamant that all powers, 'every knee' and 'every tongue', should ultimately confess the lordship of Christ. If *all* creatures 'own' the name of Jesus in this eschatological vision, then *all* creatures are caught up in the possibilities inherent in that name. If even hostile forces have 'wrung from them' confession of the Lordship of Christ and surrender to him as Pantocrator,²⁴ then there is here, as R.P. Martin acknowledges, a glimpsed doctrine of *apokatastasis*.²⁵ Christ in the hymn is 'Lord of the world, not Lord of the Church',²⁶ and there is also little doubt in context that the cosmos is not limited to the human sphere.

Hawthorne notes 'it is conceivable that beings, who are created with the freedom of choice, may choose never under any circumstances to submit to God or to his Christ. And it is also conceivable that these beings will never be forced to do so against their wills'.²⁷ By this Hawthorne avoids what Boring has called 'grudging' acknowledgement of Christ's lordship.²⁸ Hawthorne notes 'not always are purposes realized or goals attained - not even divine purposes

²³ See Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 42-62, 297-309, for arguments concerning authorship.

²⁴ See Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 262; J. Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, translated by M. Kohl (London: SCM, 1996), 240.

²⁵ Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 269.

²⁶ Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 279.

²⁷ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 94.

²⁸ Boring, "Language", 283.

and goals'.²⁹ Hawthorne's observation may appear to contradict the 'all in all' of 1 Cor. 15.28 as addressed below, or even to contradict the internal logic of the Philippian hymn itself, but the contradiction is the result of attempts to impose an 'alien frame of reference' on the text.³⁰ For ultimately this text is a hymnic celebration, embedded in a hortatory text, of the kingship of God. It is not a theological and didactic analysis of the powers and plans of God the Judge.³¹ That there is an element of universal salvation in the text may reveal Paul's heart-felt longing, but it does violence to the hymn to impose systematic theological reasoning on the hymn's poetic structure and rhetorical purpose.³²

Roman socio-political structures also give content and form to the hymn. In the post-Hellenic Roman world in which the hymn was coined human beings 'craved a freedom from the power or tyranny of evil spirits'.³³ They also craved liberation from unjust temporal structures. The self-emptying of the hymn contrasts with the tyrannical structures of perceived temporal and spiritual power. The Philippian hymn speaks of universal hope, of subjugation of the powers, indeed of power itself, to a divine power. As the climax to the hymn, Paul utilizes the symbol of the cross, hugely feared symbol of Roman tyranny, as the ultimate contrast between kenotic Christlike victory and temporal power structures: subjection of Christ's self 'even to death on a cross' contrasts with use of the cross as an instrument of torture, terror, and social domination.

²⁹ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 94.

³⁰ Boring, "Language", 283.

³¹ Boring, "Language", 283.

³² Boring, "Language", 283.

³³ Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 309.

Summary: Philippians

In Philippians Paul is engaged in exhortation of a community sharing with him a story of suffering at the hands of internal and external opponents.³⁴ In that context he does not feel well-disposed to opponents. Nevertheless an inclusive narrative sub-structure breaks through to the surface of his thought when he breaks into an adulatory hymn, and the possibility of an all-embracing salvation appears. It is not, however, in a didactic context, and cannot be given great weight as a soteriological statement.

3. Romans

Aasgaard rates Romans as the second lowest letter in terms of ‘degree of solidarity’ and the lowest on a ‘degree of hierarchy’ standing. This is a ‘distant, ambivalent [to] negative but unstrained’ relationship.³⁵ The Connectivity indicator of 0.38% and Satisfaction indicator of 0.26% of my findings suggest Paul is not entirely sure of his standing with his audience, and is therefore cautious in approach. The literary tone underlying these statistical observations has long been recognized, and is the basis on which readings of Romans as a ‘last will and testament’³⁶ and as ‘compendium of Christian’³⁷ doctrine³⁸ have been based. Clearly there is some degree of truth in these hermeneutical responses to this longest Pauline letter, and F.W. Farrar was not so far off the mark when he observed of Romans that ‘Its tone has nothing of the passionate intensity which the Apostle always betrays when engaged in controversy with direct antagonists’,³⁹ and that Paul was in a ‘peaceful mood’⁴⁰ when he wrote this letter. In more

³⁴

³⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 294.

³⁶ Bornkamm, “Last Will and Testament”, in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 16-28.

³⁷ Or, as Baur put it, ‘of Pauline dogma’. *Paul*, volume 1, 349.

³⁸ Nygren, *Romans*, 8.

³⁹ F.W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (London: Cassell, 1897), 451.

recent years this relatively irenic mod has inspired a hermeneutical fascination with Paul's authorial circumstances.⁴¹ In this relatively irenic mood, Paul was able to address questions 'of the position of the Christian in reference to the law, and of the relations of Judaism to Heathenism, and of both to Christianity'.⁴² Significantly Farrar sees Paul driving from a doctrine of 'the Universality of Sin' to one of the 'Universality of Grace'.⁴³ Farrar hints that, just as in Romans Paul counters claims to Jewish particularity, so he opens up to claims of the 'radical annihilation of sin'⁴⁴ and to the hope of universal salvation.

Farrar's primary hermeneutical emphasis in approaching Paul is the universality of sin.⁴⁵ In the context of Romans, Farrar emphasizes the extent to which Paul's hamartiology embraces all humanity. Noting the spreading 'paganism' of his own era (the study was first written in the 1870s!) Farrar observes that 'in St. Paul's description not one accusation is too terrible, not one colour is too dark'.⁴⁶ From that observation of universal sin Farrar moves to the theological conundrum of freedom and grace, the basis on which much exclusivist soteriology, whether punitive or annihilationist, baulks at soteriological universalism. Farrar's answer is sweeping: 'The duality of election [in Rom. 11.32] resolves itself into the higher unity of an all-embracing counsel of favour; and the sin of man, even through the long Divine œconomy [*sic*] of the *æons*, [*sic*] is seen to be but a moment in the process towards that absolute end of salvation, which is described as the time when God shall be "all things in all things"'.⁴⁷ Farrar elsewhere would avoid the label 'universalist' of his position or his

⁴⁰ Farrar, *St. Paul*, 452.

⁴¹ Childs, *Canonical Shaping*, 66.

⁴² Farrar, *St. Paul*, 455, 457.

⁴³ Farrar, *St. Paul*, 456.

⁴⁴ Farrar, *St. Paul*, 457.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Farrar, *St. Paul*, 464-470.

⁴⁶ Farrar, *St. Paul*, 466.

⁴⁷ Farrar, *St. Paul*, 495. Italics and diphthongs in original.

understanding of Paul's: 'I am not a Universalist'.⁴⁸ Farrar, like Barth after him, prefers to relegate it to the status of 'impossible possibility':⁴⁹ 'how long, even after death, man may continue to resist [God's] will; how long he may continue in that spiritual death which is alienation from God; that is one of the secret things which God hath not revealed'.⁵⁰

In writing to Rome Paul was writing to an 'audience' or faith community to whom *en masse* he was personally unknown.⁵¹ For this reason, though there is no readily identifiable crisis in the Roman faith community,⁵² the relationship between author and audience is restrained. Nonetheless if Romans 16 is authentically Pauline many individuals of the faith-community were known to him personally, and it was a faith-community whose overall 'flavour' and reputation was known throughout the emerging Christian network.⁵³ Consequently, with the absence of a crisis and the presence of many unknown individual and groups in the audience, Romans provides more detailed analysis of theological issues than Paul's other letters. That said, while soteriology is a major concern of the letter, I will address only those moments that clearly focus on the fate of the outsider.

Romans is not without internal inconsistencies and contradictions. As Paul outlines his plans and the purpose of his letter he does so cautiously: 'Paul has increasing difficulty in

⁴⁸ Farrar, *Eternal Hope: Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey, November and December 1877* (New York: Dutton, 1878), 86. See also Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment: A Few Last Words on Christian Eschatology with Reference to Dr. Pusey's 'What is of Faith?'* (London: Macmillan, 1881; repr. Whitefish, MT.: Kessinger, n.d.), 1: 'I have never denied, and do not now deny, the eternity of punishment'. Also cited by D. Powys, "The Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Debates about Hell and Universalism", in N.M. de S. Cameron, ed., *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell: Papers Presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference on Christian Dogmatics, 1991* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992), 101.

⁴⁹ K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, volume 4, (§ 69), 178.

⁵⁰ Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, 86.

⁵¹ So Käsemann: 'As will be seen, this congregation was also very important for the apostle's future missionary plans. So far, however, he was unknown to it personally and had to introduce himself officially'. *Romans*, 3, (see also 364). See also Farrar, *St. Paul*, 453.

⁵² Farrar, *St. Paul*, 452.

⁵³ Käsemann, *Romans*, 3.

formulating precisely the reasons for his projected journey and his expectations. This allows only the conclusion that Paul feels very insecure in relation to the unmet recipients of his letter and is thus forced into an apologetic defensive'.⁵⁴ The audience is a powerful influence on the shape and expression of Pauline thought; Käsemann is correct when he cautions readers of Romans that 'The most important theological epistle in Christian history is undoubtedly also the record of an existence struggling for recognition and of an apostolicity called into question. Apart from this insight Romans cannot be interpreted correctly'.⁵⁵

Rom. 1.18, 24-25

The expectation of eschatological judgement⁵⁶ is an underlying theme as Paul presents his theological and apostolic credentials. The 'wrath of God' (Rom. 1.18), a 'cosmic-apocalyptic event',⁵⁷ is a given presupposition amongst those who are 'called to belong to Jesus Christ' (Rom. 1.6). This wrath is sometimes expressed in the present tense (a)pokalu/ptetai, Rom. 1.18)⁵⁸ as an 'eschatological present' illuminating a past 'previously concealed',⁵⁹ from humanity. The Christ-event exposes that past.⁶⁰ Paul proclaims divine wrath in the context of the gospel of which he is not ashamed (Rom. 1.16); the connective ga/r at Rom. 1.18 is

⁵⁴ Käsemann, *Romans*, 18-19.

⁵⁵ Käsemann, *Romans*, 20.

⁵⁶ '[T]he apocalyptic eschatological scenario which Paul accepts and presupposes throughout the letter'. Byrne, "Universal Need", 125.

⁵⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 192. Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 34, who speaks of 'a uniquely modified Jewish-Christian apocalyptic' dominant in the letter.

⁵⁸ Byrne, "Universal Need", 130. Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 151: 'Since "wrath" is redefined by the gospel, a present progressive translation of the present passive a)pokalu/ptetai ... is appropriate'. See also Dodd, *Studies*, 129-130.

⁵⁹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 35.

⁶⁰ This appears to be what Käsemann means when he says 'This is not the result nor is it the true point of the gospel, but its reverse side. It is not merely something of which man now becomes conscious from within but an event which encounters him from without and which is therefore characterized as eschatological revelation'. *Romans*, 35.

designed to be more than a transitional participle,⁶¹ but a connective participle that throws a listener's⁶² consciousness back to the 'righteousness of God' of the previous verse. Righteousness is contrasted with the semantically related a)diki/a,⁶³ unrighteousness, against which God's wrath⁶⁴ is revealed. This wrath is, as seen in the Thessalonian context, present wrath,⁶⁵ visible only through the eyes of faith.⁶⁶ The experience of 'being given over to' human depravities (Rom. 1.24-25) indicates falling outside the parameters of God's righteousness.⁶⁷ 'immorality is the punishment, not the guilt'.⁶⁸ Consequently 'Paul should not be understood as propounding a rigid theory of the total depravity of human nature'⁶⁹ at this point, nor making a soteriological forecast of the fate of the outsider.

The proof text, Hab. 2.4, that Paul turns to at this early point in the letter is one in which a prophet laments the failure of the law to restrain human sin.⁷⁰ It is a part of a passage in which God favours the outsider Chaldeans over the insider Hebrew people (Hab. 1.5). As such it has implications for Paul's treatment of the Jewish people. But it may have implications for his

⁶¹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 35. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC. Second edition. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 33; 'to be taken with full seriousness'. Jewett, *Romans*, 151.

⁶² C. Hill emphasizes that the biblical culture was an oral and audial rather than literary visual one: "The Fathers on the Biblical Word". *Pacifica* 7 (1994): 255-272. See also Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 24. While Paul's rhetorical devices are to some extent available to us in the written text, the tone of his agents' delivery of the text must to some greater extent elude research.

⁶³ Translated as 'wickedness' in the NRSV and NIV, perhaps more effectively as 'injustice' in the NJV. See p. 353, above.

⁶⁴ J.A.T. Robinson refers to ο) rgh\ as the 'positive absence of God'. *Wrestling with Romans* (London: SCM, 1979), 17.

⁶⁵ See Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 179-184, for emphasis on a future in which divine ο) rgh/ will have 'full operation' (183).

⁶⁶ Wrongly described by Käsemann as 'basically human receptivity'. Käsemann, *Romans*, 94.

⁶⁷ *Contra* W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 39. See also D. Powys, *Hell: A Hard Look at a Hard Question* (Leicester: Paternoster, 1997) 309-311.

⁶⁸ Käsemann, *Romans*, 39. Cf. Stählin, *TDNT*, volume 5, 444: 'Moral perversion is the result of God's wrath, not the reason for it'. Quoted in Käsemann, *Romans*, 47. See especially Rom. 12.19, where this thought is made most clear.

⁶⁹ Dodd, *Romans*, 19.

⁷⁰ See R.E. Watts, "'For I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel'. Romans 1:16-17 and Habakkuk 2:4", in *Romans and the People of God*, in S.K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright, eds., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 3-25.

Gentile audience, too. Habakkuk 2.4 is fundamentally a text about boundaries and boundary crossings, in which the outsider becomes a vessel of God (as is the case in Isaian references to Cyrus), and in which the pressure of eschatology is unmistakable ('a vision for the appointed time'). Paul wants to flag both eschatology and boundary crossing as themes that will underpin his presentation to the Roman community.

Rom. 5.18-19

The clearest soteriological statement made by Paul in Romans is at Rom. 5.18-19. It is part of a rhetorical flight of eloquence that compares and contrasts Christ and Adam. Chronologically speaking, Paul has made this comparison before, when writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15.21-22).⁷¹ In Romans Paul once more assumes that audience and author alike can agree to the statement 'just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all' (Rom. 5.18). The *pa/ntaj* is repeated in the Greek as in the translation, perhaps being a recitation of a liturgical or other confessional formula. Paul makes no attempt to modify the universality of 'justification and life for all'; if there are qualifiers to this universality they are not a part of the agreed, shared narrative. Did 'all' mean 'some'? It may be that this implication troubles Paul, for in his next sentence he adds a limitation or qualifier: 'just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous' (Rom 5.19). Here once more the equation is symmetrical, *oi (polloi* / on each side of the equation.

Nevertheless, whether Paul is inclined to alter the agreed narrative of the balance of 'alls' or not, he does not feel able to do so, or does not feel that it is necessary to do so. Furthermore,

⁷¹ See below, pp. 390-391.

the ‘many’ of Rom. 5.19 has, in any case, a universalistic sense: ‘all, without exception were made sinners by the one man’s disobedience’: this universal human state likewise is carried over into the second part of the equation. N.T. Wright is too cautious when he asserts, ‘Our minds instantly raise the question of numerically universal salvation, but this is not on Paul’s mind’, adding ‘His universalism is of the sort that holds to Christ as the way for all’.⁷² This may be right, but Wright is too hastily ignoring the possibility of a christocentric universalism. He is, in missiological terms, missing the inclusivist option, in Race’s language, that ‘aims to hold together two equally binding convictions: the operation of the grace of God ... and the uniqueness of the manifestation of the grace of God in Christ’.⁷³ Race, unfortunately, makes these claims without anchorage in the biblical text or a Pauline world-view. The fact is that Paul the consummate rhetorician is making powerful claims for the Christ-event in an apocalyptic context,⁷⁴ and in those claims is balancing the language of judgement (*kri/ma*, Rom. 5.16), punishment (*kata/krima*, Rom. 5.16, 5.18), trespass and sin (*para/ptwma*, *a(marti/a)*, Rom. 5.20) on the one hand, with language of divine victory (*xa/risma*, Rom 5.15-16, *dw/rhma*, Rom. 5.16, and *dikai/wma*, Rom. 5.16, 5.18) on the other: he cannot allow, rhetorically, the former to outweigh the latter. As Tobin observes, ‘Paul is using these words less for their precise meaning than for the rhetorical effect they have in emphasizing the contrast and especially the disproportion between the effects of the sin and the effects of the free gift’.⁷⁵ To win his rhetorical argument Paul must allow the latter nouns to outweigh – one could almost say ‘out-impact’ – the former.

⁷² Wright, “Romans”, 529.

⁷³ Race, *Religious Pluralism*, 38. The omitted words, ‘in all the great religions of the world’, represent the modern perspectives of interfaith dialogue, and muddy the waters of an exegetical discussion, as such dialogue was not on Paul’s mind or a part of a first century world-view.

⁷⁴ So Jewett, *Romans*, 374.

⁷⁵ Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 184.

Is Paul here making universalistic harmartiological claims, and then matching them with equivalent soteriological claims? It would appear so. At Rom 5.12 Paul has made it quite clear that he has returned to the theme of universal sin, and that the ‘Adam’ part of the equation of sin is *all* people. The momentary attempt at a clarification at Rom. 5.13⁷⁶ suggests that questions of the extension and limitation of the Christ-event and of all God’s soteriological actions are forming and re-forming in Paul’s mind during the period that he is writing to the Romans.

Perhaps Paul is no more than carried away by the force of his own rhetoric, but he is not usually careless in rhetoric. At the very least it appears that in the relatively non-conflictual context of writing to Rome he is willing to permit universalizing implications to the Christ-event. There is, in this emotionally disconnected and paradoxically cautious context, room for Paul to allow unlimited scope to the universality of the second part of the equation. This may partly be because of his concern to refute any hint of a rejection of his biological people, potential inclusion of whom has allowed Paul to extend his vision of the Christ-event. Were this a solitary expansion of the implications of the Christ-event it could arguably be ignored as an aberration in Paul’s thought. But when it is combined with momentary hymnic exclamations in Philippians or the similar equation of 1 Cor. 15, to be discussed below, the direction of Paul’s thought becomes clear: Paul’s vision of the impact of the Christ-event is open to its universalizing, even cosmological implications.⁷⁷ At the very least, if Paul does not open himself up to a universalist soteriology here, he opens himself up to a soteriology that cannot be restricted by human limitations. The one who ‘made intercession for the transgressors’ (Isa. 53.12c) does not seem to be limited by human restrictions: ‘It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes,

⁷⁶ ‘[P]arenthetical explanation’. Jewett, *Romans*, 376.

⁷⁷ See Käsemann, *Romans*, 157.

who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us' (Rom. 8.34). In this context Paul is simply handing the question of salvation into the hands of the Intercessor.

Rom. 11.32

After Paul has outlined his soteriology in the context of the Israel/Church dichotomy, he turns to the question of the restitution of the original people of God. Paul understands this process as operating in a nexus of jealousy: provocation to jealousy is the key to God's soteriological operation. Restitution is to be the outcome of Israel's recognition of soteriological deficiency or loss;⁷⁸ recognition of a lost opportunity should spur this 'extra-ecclesial' community to repentance. The insertion of *nu~n* at Rom. 11.32 almost certainly reflects a subsequent scribal discomfort at the thought of the inclusion of the Hebrew people into the salvific plans of God. The passage Rom. 11.25-32 systematically breaks down claims that humans may make to coerce God to save them on the basis of 'claims of cultural superiority or personal entitlement through piety, social status, or other achievement'.⁷⁹ At this point Jewett too notes a universalizing of Paul's soteriological vision: 'The reduplication of *pa~j* ... in this verse is the climactic expression of one of the most important themes of the letter, salvation for all, found in 1:5, 7, 8, 16, 18; 2:9-10; 3:9, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23; 4:11, 16; 5:12, 18; 6:3; 8:14; 9:5, 6, 7, 17; 10:11-13, 18, 26'.⁸⁰

With twenty centuries' hindsight this interpretation might be applied soteriologically not only to the 'all' of Israel, of whom Paul was conscious in the soteriology of Rom. 11.32, but to the 'all' outside the church, in whom he was generally disinterested. Paul is emphasising the

⁷⁸ Käsemann, *Romans*, 305.

⁷⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 711.

⁸⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 711.

eschatological completion of God's salvation, in contrast to the sectarian elitism and separatism of the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.⁸¹ Gentile Christians today are one with Paul's first audience in being firmly reminded that there is no opportunity for elitism in non-Judaism: 'God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all' (Rom. 11.32). There is no limitation applied to either 'all' in this equation.⁸² Jewett goes on to conclude 'The expectation of universal salvation in this verse is indisputable'.⁸³ Paul's thoughts then give way, in a calculated outburst,⁸⁴ to doxology (Rom. 11.33-36). R. Huston notes that this doxology is inclusive: 'all comes from God; all lives through God; all finds its goal in God'.⁸⁵

Rom. 12.19

Little of Romans 12 is directly soteriological, yet essentially *sw~ma*-edifying behaviour is the only appropriate response to divine *xa/rīj* (Rom. 12.4, cf. 1 Cor. 12.12 etc). At Rom. 12.19 Paul at the very least indicates that the outsider should be subject to the believers' decency: 'Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God'. In a sense this is more a missiological statement than a soteriological one, but it certainly presupposes that the 'other' is always a potential recipient of grace, that cycles of injustice and deprivation can be broken: 'for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord"'. At this point, as Dunn notes, lines between insider and outsider are erased: 'Believers should not make the mistake for which Paul criticizes Israel (Romans 2) by thinking that because they are in process

⁸¹ 'The grace of God cannot be "contained" within one privileged community'. Brendan Byrne, "Universal Need", 132.

⁸² So too Karl Barth, "All", in *Deliverance to the Captives* (London: SCM, 1961), 86-92.

⁸³ Jewett, *Romans*, 712.

⁸⁴ Cf. Rom. 1.25, 9.5.

⁸⁵ R. Huston, "A Larger Room for Conversation", in P. Mojzes and L. Swidler, eds., *Christian Mission and Interreligious Dialogue* (RiD 4. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1996), 196.

of “being saved” they will therefore be exempt from the moral consequences of their actions’.⁸⁶ If vengeance is the prerogative of God, and usurpation of that right of vengeance is usurpation of the role of God,⁸⁷ then it may be that the demarcations between insider and outsider, and the implications of insideness and outsideness are utterly the prerogative of God; thus ‘divine wrath requires no human vindictiveness, ... it remains a divine prerogative, and ... it belongs in that arena of unsearchable mystery celebrated at the end of Rom 11’.⁸⁸ Not only vengeance, this suggests, but salvation, is in the realm of divine mystery.

Summary: Romans

In Romans Paul has little to say about the fate of those outside the faith communities of Israel and the Church. Nevertheless there are moments which might be referred to as unguarded moments of doxology in which he permits his thought to harbour implications beyond the restoration in Christ of only the faith community, extending to a notion of the restoration of some nebulous form of ‘all’. There is a sense, then, that in an emotionally disconnected and more intellectually rarefied discourse the implications of salvation can spread beyond definable boundaries. At Rom. 11.32 in particular the universalizing language must be given considerable weight, for, while Rom. 11.33-36 are doxological and hymnic, they are a response to an epigrammatic conclusion of the letter’s key themes, and there is no basis on which to downplay Paul’s summary of those themes.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Dunn, *Theology*, 490.

⁸⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 776.

⁸⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 777.

⁸⁹ See Jewett, *Romans*, 711-713; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 696.

4. The Corinthian Correspondence

The connectivity and satisfaction ratings associated with the Corinthian Correspondence⁹⁰ reveal a fluctuating relationship between Paul and his Corinthian audience. In the first and second stages of the correspondence (1 Corinthians and 2 Cor. 1-9) Paul feels a relatively high degree of satisfaction with his audience, driven by relief at correspondence or reports received from the city. By the time of 2 Cor. 10-13 (and apparently in the period between 1 and 2 Corinthians) indications fall. Aasgaard rates 1 Corinthians as exhibiting a fairly high degree of solidarity and an average degree of superiority, while 2 Corinthians rates very low on solidarity between author and audience, and very high on ‘superiority’ of author over his audience.⁹¹

At this point any attempt to be sequential in analyzing Paul’s soteriology runs the risk of becoming embedded on hermeneutical sandbanks. If I follow a canonical order I impose a post-Pauline structure on the letters. There would be at this point some merit in a chronological approach, because, apart from running some conjectural risks,⁹² it avoids amalgamating the diverse soteriological approaches that emerge over the duration of the Corinthian correspondence. These are driven primarily by changing circumstances, not by Paul’s ordered theological honing of his kerygma. But the mood swing within the entire Corinthian correspondence is considerable; the connectivity that drives the moods averages out at the same level as Romans, and Paul’s satisfaction over the Corinthian saga averages fractionally lower than the Roman figure. This means that while indications from 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor. 1-9 are higher than those of Romans, the negativity of 2 Cor. 10-13 pulls the overall figures lower than

⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians Connectivity 0.52%; Satisfaction 0.30%. 2 Corinthians 1-9 Connectivity 0.55%; Satisfaction 0.34%. 2 Corinthians 10-13 Connectivity 0.07%; Satisfaction 0.03%. Overall Corinthian Connectivity 0.38%; Overall Corinthian Satisfaction 0.22%.

⁹¹ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 294.

⁹² See, for another chronological sequence, Dodd, *Studies*, 85-108.

those of Romans, and the Corinthian correspondence effectively straddles Romans in these indications. In the interests of pragmatism I have addressed the Corinthian material after the longer yet seemingly less dispassionate letter to the Romans.

In first Corinthians Paul is less connected than he is when he receives news of Corinth from Titus, and pens the early part of 2 Corinthians. His relationship is strained by the information he has received from Chloe's people, and perhaps other sources.

1 Cor. 1.1-31

As Paul begins his remedial correspondence with the faith-community at Corinth he draws, amongst many contrasts, one between the community 'called to be holy'⁹³ (1 Cor. 1.2; cf. 1 Cor. 1.24), or 'those who believe' (1 Cor. 1.21) on the one hand, and 'the world' (1 Cor. 1.21) out of which the faith-community has been separated on the other. Paul hopes that believers will be separated from the wider community by their behaviour. In 1 Cor. 1.18 the boundary between the ones 'who are being saved'⁹⁴ and the ones 'who are perishing', is a porous boundary separating authentic and inauthentic existence.⁹⁵

1 Cor. 15.1-58

After outlining corrective instruction to the Corinthian community, Paul takes a position similar to that of Romans, in which at least the possibility of universal salvation is allowed: 'As

⁹³ Fee argues persuasively that 'The traditional translation, "saints," contains too many misleading connotations to be of value'. *First Epistle*, 32.

⁹⁴ 'Although not frequent in this letter (3:15; 5:5; 7:16; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2), this is probably the most comprehensive word in Paul's vocabulary for God's redemptive event'. Fee, *First Epistle*, 68, n. 6.

⁹⁵ J. Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians*, (NTM 10. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1979), 22. Cf. Bonda, *One Purpose*, 121: '... in these passages Paul speaks about "being lost," but we read nowhere that this state of being lost is the final phase of God's dealings with the lost'.

in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. 15.22). J. Robinson argues that there is no doubt that Paul's intention here is universalistic:

The New Testament asserts the final *apokatastasis*, the restoration of all things, not as a daring speculation, nor as a possibility, but as a reality - a reality that shall be and must be, because it already is. It already is, because it is grounded upon what has been, one decisive act of God, once and for all, embracing every creature. "In Christ *shall all* be made alive" [1 Cor. 15.22], because "through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto *all men* to justification of life" [Rom. 5.18].⁹⁶

Robinson's exegesis of 1 Cor. 15.22 is marred by two faults according to the terms of this study. He too easily introduces Rom. 5.18 as a hermeneutical key for the Corinthian passage, and therefore, in Sumney's terms, fails 'to interpret letters individually'.⁹⁷ Also, perhaps because he reads Romans into Corinthians, Robinson fails to note that the 'all' of 1 Cor. 15.22 carries the limiter 'all in Christ' introduced at 1 Cor. 15.18. Robinson's reading of Paul may ultimately be correct, but this soteriological optimism cannot altogether stand as a reading of 1 Cor. 15.22.⁹⁸

Paul often creates a division between those in Christ, who are now able to appropriate the Christ-event, and those now outside Christ, at present subject to the wrath of God. This is a depiction of present experience, as explored above in the context of Rom. 5.18-19. Conzelmann⁹⁹ argues that the 'all' equation of 1 Cor. 15.20-28 is addressed primarily to the

⁹⁶ Robinson, *In the End*, 99. Italics in original.

⁹⁷ Sumney, *Identifying*, 88.

⁹⁸ The tense of *gnwri/zw* at 1 Cor. 15.1 is present, but the implications are of recapitulation of previously accepted doctrine: *eu)hggelisa/mhn* and *parala/bete* are in the aorist, while *e(sth/kate)* is perfect active indicative: the Corinthians are reminded of that which they have received and in which they continue – provisionally!

⁹⁹ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 268, n. 49, 269.

faith community, reminding the Corinthian Christians that *all of them* were ‘dead in Adam’. The faithful were oriented with the fallen world towards non-being, but ‘in Christ’, for as long as their actions demonstrate that they remain ‘in Christ’, they are re-directed away from this death. While this may be so, the ambiguity of God’s eschatologically being ‘all in all’ (verse 28c) and the restoration of ‘all in Christ’ (verse 22b) could not have been lost on Paul. It is therefore not correct to argue, as Conzelmann does, that Paul is at this point writing with reference only to believers, or even with Robertson and Plummer to observe ‘nothing is said about the wicked: their fate is not much in the Apostle’s mind’.¹⁰⁰ Murphy-O’Connor notes ‘Paul can say “all” only in hope’¹⁰¹ (though ‘hope’ is not a word without some soteriological referents even in 1 Corinthians: 1 Cor. 9.10!). Barrett, who after first noting that a universalist reading of 1 Cor. 15.21-22 ‘can hardly be said to fit the context,’¹⁰² in which ... resurrection seems to be the privilege of those who through faith are in Christ’ adds ‘This is not a denial that all men may ultimately come to be in Christ; indeed, this may be implied’.¹⁰³

It seems reasonable that Paul was open to the universalist implications of his claim, if unwilling to be dogmatic about it. The following verse, where ‘those who belong to Christ’ are ‘made alive’ prior to the destruction of the ‘authorities and powers’ which are antagonistic to God, repeats the same idea. That the possibility of such soteriological implications should be raised only as a tentative option is not surprising in a context in which a new faith-community

¹⁰⁰ Robertson and Plummer, *I Corinthians*, 353 (un-numbered footnote).

¹⁰¹ Murphy-O’Connor, *I Corinthians*, 142.

¹⁰² So too, emphatically, Fee: ‘There can be *no* question that [Paul’s] concern is with the resurrection of believers’. *First Epistle*, 749-750, n. 19, original italics. Fee is dismissive of the argument of W.B. Wallis, “The Problem of an Intermediate Kingdom in 1 Corinthians 15.20-28”, *JTS* 18 (1975): 229-242, that for as long as a portion of Adam’s race remains excluded from the resurrection of Christ, permanently in death, the God might be ‘all in all’ of Paul’s argument is incomplete. However Wallis has not ‘put his own logic ahead of Paul’s’ (Fee), but put Paul’s saying into the wider context of his writings and his world.

¹⁰³ C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to The Corinthians* (BNTC. Second edition. London: A&C Black, 1971), 352.

is emerging and establishing itself in, at best, an environment of suspicion and alienation, and at worst open hostility and persecution. It may be that the most that can be said of the universalist or exclusivist implications of this passage is to say with Fee ‘This is not to say that Paul denied a resurrection of the unjust ... but that it simply lies outside the scope of this passage’.¹⁰⁴ The volatile context of Corinth permits Paul less room for ‘abstract theology’¹⁰⁵ than the measured context of Romans.

Some form of eschatological destruction is essential to the Pauline vision. Anti-God forces, ‘enemies of God’, can play no part in the perfected eternity of God of Paul’s scheme. As is the case in the earlier vision of Isaiah (Isa. 25.6-9), it is Death, personified as the ultimate anti-God force, which is the final recipient of God’s attention in 1 Cor. 15.26; only after the defeat of Death can God finally be ‘all in all’.¹⁰⁶ This vision is essential to a scheme that juxtaposes the resurrection experience of Christ proclaimed by the gospel and the continuation of anti-God elements in temporal history.¹⁰⁷ The context of this passage demands that the vision of destruction inherent in Paul’s apocalyptic scheme is not seen to be one of destruction or punishment of individual existences,¹⁰⁸ but of destructive forces opposing the kingdom-purposes of God. Like the author of Revelation, Paul looks ahead to a time when existence is fused into the apocalyptic moment in which ‘Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more’ (Rev. 21.4). This dovetails with Paul’s understanding that ‘death is the

¹⁰⁴ Fee, *First Epistle*, 753, n. 37.

¹⁰⁵ Fee, *First Epistle*, 750.

¹⁰⁶ See also the apocalyptic vision of Rev. 20.14, (cf. Rev. 21.4).

¹⁰⁷ Contemporary Judaism can point to the on-going existence of suffering and death in human history as one basis for continued rejection of the ‘Messiah-hood’ of Jesus of Nazareth: ‘What is the meaning of Christ as the Messiah *without* his fully actualized kingdom?’ Beker, *Paul*, 346; italics in original.

¹⁰⁸ O. Cullmann shifts from a discussion of the death of Death to its implications for individual continuation, which he argues to be effectively in limbo until the parousia. Cullmann begs the question as to whether ‘the dead in Christ’ is inclusive or exclusive: see O. Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1958), 48-57.

wages of sin' (Rom. 6.23), that both sin and death are of the essence of being oriented according to the flesh (for example at 2 Cor. 10.2), and therefore incompatible with the glory of God.

Paul does not feel a great deal of connectivity with the Corinthian audience, as he receives news of their effective apostasy, and wields a corrective argument at them. Despite his affection for the Corinthians, there is no shared experience of persecution binding author and audience; by their failure to stand out as a counterculture in the Corinthians' milieu the Christians are altogether failing to attract trials and tribulations. The Corinthian troubles are internal. Paul is attempting to correct the Corinthians' propensity for an over-realized eschatology, expressed in arrogant enthusiasm that means they as a social group fail to be countercultural in the wider society. Paul does allow a hint of the idea of *apokatastasis* to enter his argument as he sets about breaking down the elitist claims of the eloquent opponents (1 Cor. 1.26 - 2.5), but his major concern is the death of Death, the ultimate evil, and he is not here overly interested in the fate of individual lives.

2 Corinthians 5.10-11

2 Corinthians 5.10-11 is, though not a direct reference to Paul's opponents, nevertheless applicable even to them (2 Cor. 5.11).¹⁰⁹ Where Paul introduces images of eschatological judgement into his exhortation to the Corinthians, he does so specifically bearing in mind their need to restore appropriate behaviour. He wants not to put the fear of judgement into the hearts of a non-Christian audience, but to spur members of the faith-community into responsible and

¹⁰⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 188: 'Paul has permitted the call "Be reconciled to God" to stand as the centerpiece of that soteriological statement [2 Cor. 5.18-21]. The Corinthians' opposition to Paul is, in Paul's eyes, opposition to God, requiring that the opponents "Be reconciled to God" '.

habitual Christ-like action.¹¹⁰ It is therefore to the Corinthian Christians, not generally to humanity, that Paul issues the stern reminder ‘all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ’ (2 Cor. 5:10a).¹¹¹

2 Corinthians 5.21a

It is worth noting the creedal formula used by Paul at 2 Cor. 5.21a: ‘For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin’. If Christ is cursed under the auspices of Deut. 21.23, then cursedness in itself is caught up into the Christ event. Martin notes ‘Then ... follows a piece of cosmic soteriology’, which he believes to be ‘both personal (“reconciled *us*”) and universal (“the world”)’.¹¹² Martin notes Tannehill’s observation that the eschatological change of 2 Cor. 5.17 ‘Is not a matter of the individual’s viewpoint, but of the eschatological situation’.¹¹³ The implication of this formula is that there is no state of cursedness or alienation, and no state or place ‘outside’ the Christ event; therefore there can be, in this vision, no ‘left out of’ in the eschaton.

The first part of 2 Corinthians represents a happy interlude in Paul’s relationship with the Corinthian Christians. The language of this section is warm and co-conspiratorial – the Corinthians and Paul are on a common journey, to which interest in the outsider and his or her fate is of little relevance.

¹¹⁰ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 114-116.

¹¹¹ Theissen notes that in this passage ‘Christ has grown fully into the role of God’. *Psychological Aspects*, 102. But he notes also that, when Christ becomes judge, “‘judgement” becomes “chastisement””, (*ibid*). Moltmann makes a similar observation, that for Paul, ‘sinners will experience their salvation’. *Way*, 322. This is not a passage of condemnation, but one of eschatological hope. Later this struggling optimism will be maintained even despite Paul’s increasing suspicion that he was fighting a losing battle (2 Cor. 13. 6-10). Ched Myers is too negative in suggesting that Paul was living only ‘to see his work crumble into apparent insignificance’. Although some disintegration is obviously reflected in his increased disconnection with his audience, Paul never gives up hope that they will respond to his exhortations. Myers, *Binding*, 456.

¹¹² Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 146. Italics in original.

¹¹³ R. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Topelmann, 1967), 68-69.

Summary: The Corinthian correspondence

The mode and connectivity of the Corinthian correspondence maps a vacillating relationship. Paul is never quite confident enough to allow an unfettered 'all' to enter his soteriological hope. Destructive internal elements restrict that possibility in First Corinthians, while the memory of their behaviour informs the more optimistic 2 Cor. 1-9. Nevertheless, there are moments in 2 Cor. 1-9 when Paul could have, had he wished to be more circumspect, erased all possibility of universal salvation from his wording. It is an argument from silence, and could never stand alone in an assessment of Paul's openness to universal restoration, but Paul does not take the opportunities presented to remove the possibility from his thought.

5. Other Letters

In the final section of the Corinthian correspondence, 2 Corinthians 10-13, Paul's focus is entirely on those ostensibly within the faith community. The urgency of the matter at hand is so great that he has no time to address questions of universal salvation or the fate of humankind beyond the community of faith. Paul is writing as *paterfamilias* (see earlier at 2 Cor. 6.13) and as pastor to his people,¹¹⁴ and restoration of those people to a credible faith and practice is his sole, desperate concern.

Similarly, When Paul addresses the Galatians, in what Aasgaard refers to as a 'close ambivalent but strained' relationship,¹¹⁵ the writing context is emotionally disconnected and dissatisfied, and he has no interest in questions of the salvation of those beyond his immediate audience. The letter is adversarial, as Paul addresses particular misunderstandings developing

¹¹⁴ 'As a pastor he gives himself to his people, grateful or ungrateful, without reserve'. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to The Corinthians* (BNTC. London: A&C Black, 1973), 204.

¹¹⁵ Aasgaard, *Beloved*, 294.

within the faith community. The letter is overloaded when interpreted as a soteriological treatise.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at factors affecting Paul's thoughts about and attitude to those outside of and disconnected to the faith community. Paul lived as a traveller within the heart of the first century Roman Empire, with no need or opportunity for dialogue, in a contemporary sense, with other religious milieux. Paul's letters are topical: he is not interested in a theoretical application of comparative soteriology. He is instead fighting for all that he sees to be the heart and soul of the kerygma entrusted to him by his risen Lord.

Despite this priority, Paul's theological reflections sometimes drive him to a point where the possibilities of a universal salvation and 'restoration of all things', *apokatastasis*, creep into his language. Paul is too aware of the potential for his words to be misconstrued or abused not to be aware of the potential for his audience to notice these hints, yet he allows them to stand. This occurs primarily in the Roman context in which he feels comparatively emotionally disconnected from his audience. Where he wishes to bolster the confidence of a community with whom he feels close connection and satisfaction, the Thessalonians, he uses the threat of perdition for the outsider as a means by which to encourage the faithful. But the references in 1 Thessalonians are not to the nebulous unconnected outsiders beyond the faith community but to those whose actions directly affect the faith community. In a similar context, albeit written later, the Philippians' persecutors are effectively damned to destruction,¹¹⁶ probably more

¹¹⁶ 'The verb "to damn" and its cognates does not once occur in the Old Testament ... No word conveying any such meaning occurs in the Greek of the New Testament'. Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, xxix. See also *ibid.*, 78: 'the verb "to damn" in the Greek Testament is neither more nor less than the verb "to condemn"'.

annihilative than punitive, but only in passing exclamation, and a deep narrative substructure of universal hope still breaks through to the surface of the text. When writing in a rare contented phase to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1-9) Paul feels no need to reflect on the outsider and their fate at all.

Where Paul is feeling disconnected with his community, distressed by their behaviour, and is fighting for their continuation in the faith, he tends to ignore the question altogether (Galatians, 2 Cor. 10-13), or, paradoxically, allows a universalist hope to enter his argument. The Galatians and Corinthians are not experiencing any marked external oppression, and have shown a propensity to wander from Paul's doctrinal (Galatians) and moral (1 Corinthians) way. The situation in Galatians, as indeed in 2 Cor. 10-13, is so volatile that there is neither time nor inclination to introduce third parties into the conversation. In 1 Corinthians, as in Romans, there are moments when Paul appears to allow language of universalism to surface. He is emphasizing the death of all destructive and counter-God forces, rather than the fate of individuals, though he is too skilled a rhetorician to fail to note the universalizing extent of some of his language. In the emotionally dispassionate letter to the Romans he allows those universalizing hints greater scope.

Is it possible to reach any conclusion about connectivity between Paul and his audience and universalism in his soteriology? Perhaps it can be tentatively suggested that the more abstract implications of the gospel explored in relative calm can include universal hope, while the passionate defence or correction of a people's faith or praxis allows no room for such reflection. Paradoxically it is perhaps the exception that proves the rule. Romans certainly fits this pattern, but it is the glimpse of universalism in Philippians, passionate and connected as that document is, that bears the most weight in this discussion.

Sumney's analysis of Paul's references to opponents provides valuable tools with which to read Paul. But Sumney's concern is the identity of the *opponents*: mine is a more broad soteriological sub-text. Sumney can therefore take a micro-approach to the text, breaking it into constituent epistolary parts, and weighing Paul's references to opponents according to the stylistic expectations of those parts. Larger subtexts cannot be pinned so easily to a small constituent part: certainly a direct and grudging reference to the future salvation of the circumcisers in Galatia in a hostile and polemical would provide all but irrefutable evidence that Paul understood the Christ-event to be illimitable in scope! There is, at a micro level, paragraph by paragraph, little such evidence. The letter to the Philippians contains remarkable fluctuations, and provides a glimpse of both passionate connectivity and satisfaction with an audience, and the threat of persecutions and subversion.

In the *Carmen Christi* (Phil. 2.5-11) of Philippians, despite a hostile outburst just 306 words later that reveals raw Pauline nerves, Paul does permit universalistic soteriological language to enter his argument. The combination of hostile outbursts and warm connection with an audience give an overview of Paul's mindset: an inclusivist or universalist statement in such a context can be accorded considerable weight in an overall assessment of Paul's soteriology.

Even in the case of the relatively dispassionate letter to the Romans, texts that are open to a universalist interpretation should be assessed and given appropriate weight: how significant is it that Paul, establishing his credentials in an unfamiliar setting, allows hints of universalism to appear in his thought? The very cautious and disconnected tone of the letter to relative strangers adds weight to its glimpses of universalistic hope.

How significant then are the glimpses of universalism that appear in Paul's texts? The answer suggested here is that they are very significant indeed. The context in which Paul writes and the context he addresses shapes the content of his writing. That context cannot be ascertained on a micro paragraph by paragraph basis, but it can be gleaned by an overall look at the content of his letters and the emotional connection they reveal between author and audience. Perhaps Paul never worked out a full-blown universalist soteriology, but he risked the possibilities of it to enter his writings, for as long as he was not propping up a persecuted community or fighting for the faith of a misguided one.

There remains a passing question of annihilative and punitive views of the afterlife, a contemporary debate that may not have troubled New Testament authors. However, at least since the nineteenth century, soteriological questions have arisen over this issue, and soteriological systematians and New Testament theologians alike have arrived at myriad perspectives. These have ranged from a universal salvation, hinted at if not actually championed by Farrar, to exclusivist soteriologies with correlative doctrines of either eternal punishment or total annihilation of the outsider.¹¹⁷ Soteriological approaches to these issues were undeniably a catalyst for my own study, but I have sought to address the question in a biblical and specifically Pauline investigation. There is no doubt that a passage such as Lk. 16.19-31 depicts punitive hell fires. Such passages are outside the scope of this investigation. It can only be said here that, while Paul will make reference to 'destruction',¹¹⁸ he shows no speculative interest in the fate of those who have died outside the identifiable Body of Christ; he places emphasis on the destructive behaviour and experience of those outside the faith

¹¹⁷ Following a seminar in Edinburgh in 1991, the findings of a series of theologians, pastors and biblical scholars were published under the title *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, cited above.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Rom. 9.22; 1 Cor. 5.5; Phil. 1.28, 3.19; 1 Thess. 5.3.

community as in itself punitive, and is in the end far more interested in the destruction of sin and death (1 Cor. 15.55-56) than any punitive or annihilative treatment of those outside the boundaries of the Body. Questioning the ‘fate of the unrighteous’ may be a profoundly soteriological and harmartiological question, but it is not a profoundly Pauline question. Paul is ultimately concerned with the fate of unrighteousness, and the question of punishment of a state of existence is a *non sequitur*.

What does arise though, in moments when Paul is, as Farrar put it, ‘peaceful’ is the hope of the destruction of all that is evil: ‘I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 8.38-39). This is the personal, human hope that the bond between believer and his or her Lord is inseparable. But there is a broader hope yet, to which the individual may add limitations, but to which Paul, it seems, does not: ‘For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all: O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!’ (Rom. 11.32-33).

Conclusions

The site in which the Christian community reads its scriptures is today even more varied than that in which Paul read his scriptures and wrote the letters that subsequently became a part of our new canon. As a reader of Paul's letters I am inevitably aware of a vast world of difference. I am aware, too, of similarities. Can the writings of Paul bridge the gulf of difference and address the missiological concerns of my world?

Paul's primary concern in his epistolary ministry, in contrast to his evangelistic ministry to which we only have Luke's stylized witness, was a pastoral one of ensuring that those for whom he was responsible before God (is this the implication of Rom. 15.17 and 2 Cor. 1.14?) remained faithful to the gospel (Gal 5.1). Despite the vast differences between our worlds, Paul and I share a common interest: we would like those for whom we are pastorally responsible to remain within the milieu we represent. The continued vast repertoire of Pauline scholarship, as well as the devotional and liturgical reading of Paul's letters today, indicates that he continues to speak to a world he never envisaged. How is this possible, when the gulf is so great between his world and mine?

My linguistic investigations have been primarily soteriological. If we live in a multi-faith world, and we do, then we have to acknowledge the reality that Paul's mission 'to the ends of the earth' has been less than successful. To some degree the New Testament writers were faced with a similar problem: the parousia was on its way, if no longer quite as imminent as they first thought, yet there seemed still much to be done. Paul, missionary *par excellence*, was aware of this, and towards the end of his writing was planning a westward mission to complete a

proclamatory arc across the Mediterranean.¹ Under the pressure of eschatological urgency he was certainly aware of the existence of religious cultures surrounding him, and was aware that not all around him were succumbing to the lure of the Christian kerygma. To that extent his world and mine have similarities!

Paul raises challenges for soteriology in our interfaith world. Christian practitioners of interfaith dialogue disagree on soteriological issues: should dialogue take place from presuppositions of syncretistic pluralism, of traditional exclusivism, or of some form of christocentric inclusivism,² by which the Christ-event has beneficial implications for those beyond the boundaries of the faith community? Of these three positions that have defined the soteriological dimensions of interfaith dialogue, the first blurs and erases boundaries between Christianity and other faiths, the second underscores boundaries in heavy red ink, and the third engages to converse with but not necessarily to convert conversation partners. Paul could hardly be claimed as a patron saint for any of these positions, but he is clearly a theologian and missionary who is aware of the existence of boundaries. A vast amount of his writing is dedicated to boundary maintenance: an aim that could be called missiological, pastoral, or soteriological. Could understanding Paul's boundary definitions and the reasons for his boundary maintenance be useful for contemporary reflection?

Paul, though, is a contextual writer. To make that observation takes us right into the heart of Pauline hermeneutics. Beker made it abundantly clear that Paul operated, as a theologian, a missionary and a pastor, out of a dialectical tension between a coherent centre and contingent influences. Paul cut the coherent theological cloth, as it were, to fit the contingent bodies of

¹ See above, p. 110.

² See above, p. 47, n.125, above.

pastoral and missiological contexts. But, in the context of my concerns, the question remained: was Paul's soteriology part of the coherent, immutable essence of the cloth, or the flexible contingent bodies of his audiences?

It was to answer that question that I set about this investigation. I began with a survey of contemporary Pauline hermeneutics. The field is vast, but some key players and issues emerged. Beker, along with Sanders, clearly looms large over any contemporary analysis of Paul and his writings. Beker's concerns were closer to my own, however: to what extent is Paul's thought, especially his soteriological thought, fluid? Sanders raises questions of covenant and divine relationship with chosen peoples: these are not questions to be ignored. Sanders is inescapable when questions of relations between 'old' and 'new' testaments are to be considered. His 'New Perspective' does have the effect of blurring some traditional soteriological boundaries, those between Judaism and Christianity. For that he is applauded by many, and treated with suspicion by others. The impact of the New Perspective, not least as mediated through the scholarship of Dunn, is inevitably huge on any contemporary investigation into Paul, but for this enquiry it has been largely subterranean.

Questions of covenant are questions of boundaries, of transitions from one or no covenant to another covenant, and of adherence to the latter. For my investigations these questions rose to the surface when issues of Paul's relationship with his 'people of origin' were addressed. Paul had crossed a boundary in conversion, but his own mission was not primarily to those who were to make that same boundary crossing from Judaism to Christianity, but to those arriving from other directions. Nevertheless, a boundary is a boundary, and in one chapter of this study in particular it was necessary to consider relations between old and new covenants.

The question of 'adherence' is also a matter of missiological, pastoral, and soteriological importance. If mission is about boundary crossing, much pastoral energy is about encouraging tenacity and maintaining a sense of belonging to the new community. Gundry Volf's study in 'perseverance' was always going to be important to my own investigations into Paul's missiological, soteriological and pastoral writings. If the implications of Gundry Volf's analysis are applied to Paul, then there is a sense in which boundaries, though unseen, are beyond maintenance. Though who are 'in Christ' are indelibly in Christ, and those who fall away were never going to do otherwise. This analysis robs Paul of his eschatological imperative, the urgency that drove him from one end of the Mediterranean at least most of the way to the other end, and which fuelled the passion of his writings.

With questions such as these in mind I set about finding tools by which to evaluate the impact of Beker's 'contingencies' on Paul's writings. Beker was notoriously and problematically imprecise when defining the 'contingent centre' of Paul's kerygma, but there is no doubt that he was providing a valuable hermeneutical tool when he wrote of the shifting contingencies. Yet what were the contingencies, and for that matter was there any way of measuring the degree to which they related to the coherent centre? If Beker was elusive in defining the centre, Paul was, at least in the experience of his intended audience, not: 'I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Cor. 2.2). Paul and his audience knew what he meant! He had no need to elucidate this fundamental proclamation further. As a third party to the conversation between Paul and his audiences we must make deductions, but if nothing else that proclamation demanded an audience response of boundary crossing, from 'outside Christ' to 'in Christ'. Paul's energetic writing ministry suggests that he knew only too well that it was possible to travel the other way, too. It is also clear that having

crossed boundaries in what Paul considered the ‘right’ direction, believers became a part of a new reality, which Paul and the Christian community appear to have defined as a new ‘family’.

If Paul’s epistolary concerns are largely about boundary maintenance, then the state of the boundary itself may be one of the contingencies that give shape to the correspondence. With this thought in mind, inspired primarily by Beker, I set about finding indicators that reveal boundary contingencies. To do this I investigated, on a quantitative basis, the frequency with which Paul addressed key themes. The frequency with which Paul alludes to, refers directly to, or in other ways addresses matters of boundary definition may betray the degree to which he is satisfied, or not, with the state of his audience. The very way in which these matters are addressed provided another hermeneutical key. Sumney’s analysis of Paul’s literary styles provided me with a series of hermeneutical tools and warnings. The differing style of Paul’s writing is determined by rhetorical context: he adapts his rhetorical style to maximize his chances of achieving his pastoral aims. If boundary maintenance is Paul’s key pastoral aim, then the letters must as far as possible be allowed to stand alone in the interpretative process, reducing to a minimum any eisegetical influence. Each letter is contingent – Sumney echoes Beker in this respect – to be analyzed on its own merit if we are to understand Paul’s response to presenting issues. The nature of opposition to Paul and his kerygma, not only in the volatile Corinthian and Galatian contexts, is an important contingency; if Sumney is right in proposing widespread but not unified adversarial responses to Paul, then the letters will reveal differing responses to peripheral matters, while maintaining a monochrome adherence to Beker’s coherent centre.

The rhetorical style of individual passages will reveal much about Paul’s emphases. Different passages will however carry different ‘weight’: polemical rhetoric and measured

didactics are different literary species, and, just as they are given different weight by Sumney in determining the identity of Paul's opponents, so they need to be given different weight in determining Paul's soteriological emphases. With this 'weighting' in mind, it was possible to make a preliminary measure of the frequency with which Paul provided indications of soteriological state. Direct and either polemical or punitive outbursts do not indicate that their context is a good platform on which to base a search for Paul's soteriological world view. To some extent, then, passages need to be weighed according to Paul's aims. If he denigrates opponents and condemns them in a furious outburst it may carry less weight than a measured, discursive or didactic context in which he allows for their redemption. But is there any tool by which to measure the comparative weight of his soteriological observations?

It became clear that Paul's mood changed according to context, and that his language reflected those changes. The more pressing the presenting issue the more urgent the matter of boundary maintenance becomes. To understand this I have had to read and interpret each letter with a keen awareness of the culture to which it was addressed. Each act of correspondence was sparked by a different catalyst. The catalysts changed according to the sociological context of the audience: Galatia, Rome, Corinth, Thessalonica and Philippi are different milieux, and they provided Paul with different issues. In Chapter One I therefore engaged with historical, sociological and linguistic commentators in an attempt to establish the nature and 'reading site' of each of Paul's audiences. I sought a chronological order to the letters not in order to propose chronological development in Paul's thought, but in simple acknowledgement that the canonical order, which can influence our reading of Paul, can be disadvantageous. Chronological order is preferable to canonical order, but as Beker has emphasized, given that Paul had spent much time honing his kerygmatic task before the epistolary phase, it is never

likely to provide a decisive key to Pauline hermeneutics. More important than chronology were the sociological factors that influenced each audience. The Roman Empire was powerful, but not monochrome. In Chapter One I drew on sociological, historical, and linguistic commentators in order to comprehend Paul's environment and the way it influenced his approach to each letter. In what contexts were Paul's ministries of boundary maintenance carried out?

Boundaries are about crossings, and in Chapter Two I looked at the form of boundary crossing Paul wanted to achieve by his primary mission, that of 'Getting In'. His letters are not evangelistic tracts: the process of evangelism has gone on in the various communities at an earlier date. Nevertheless, 'Getting In' has been a part of the shared experience of Paul and his audiences, and is a presupposition of his narrative. From time to time Paul revisits memories of this common experience of transition in order to address the present needs of the communities, primarily to remind them from where they have come. Paul doesn't address the method of 'Getting In', but revisits the process to ensure that he and his audience share common ground.

Changes have taken place in the lives of the believers: they have re-enacted their experience of change in the rite of baptism, although for various reasons Paul underplays this rite. They have experienced 'baptism in the Spirit', a form of spiritual rebirth that Paul doesn't enlarge on but which is common ground between author and audience. They have experienced changes in their lifestyles as a result of boundary crossing. The degree to which Paul addresses these reminders of transition depends, however, on the context addressed. The urgent matter, ultimately, is not one of 'Getting In', for that has happened already and is addressed only as a reminder of a shared narrative, but of 'Staying In'.

To understand how to ‘stay in’, the audiences need to be reminded what it is to ‘be in’. By adopting this nomenclature for my chapters I am bearing in mind soteriology and soteriological states. ‘Being in’ is the optimum state, as far as Paul is concerned, and his task is to encourage continuation of or return to that state. But what assurance does the audience have that it is ‘in’, that its members have crossed a boundary and remained on the right side of it? Paul provides a number of answers, directly and indirectly. However the most useful is probably the least self-conscious of Paul’s indications, the use of familial language: ‘brothers and sisters in Christ’.

I came to this realization on the basis of a numerical analysis of Paul’s letter. What are the terms Paul most frequently uses to indicate ‘belonging’? Clearly some are used with specific didactic purpose: a term like ‘in Christ’ differentiates between belonging and non-belonging. But the most frequent linguistic indicator of belonging, and the most significant because it is not deliberately didactic, is the assumption of belonging to, having crossed a boundary into, a new family. As noted above,³ much of my work in this area was carried out before the 2004 publication of Aasgaard’s study, but his different approach has served to confirm my own findings.

It became clear to me that the frequency of Paul’s use of the metaphor of family-belonging provided an indication of his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his audience. It provides an indication of the extent to which Paul’s audience is ‘being in’. I suspect Paul’s use of sibling address is largely a deliberate rhetorical ploy, but have no reason to suspect that it does not unambiguously and honestly indicate the extent to which he is satisfied with the audience. On this basis I use a simple mathematical analysis to establish the degree to which

³ See p. 147, above.

Paul feels a sense of kinship with his audience, referred to in Chapter Three as the Fictive Kinship Indicator.⁴

Sibling language need not be the sole indicator of belonging. In particular it is apparent that the extent to which the audience collectively and its members individually are affirmed as recipients of divine grace and mercy is an indication of Paul's relationship with them. Sumney's warnings are again important: divine grace and mercy must be predicated of the audience, not as an abstract quality or an absent quality, if they are to indicate a high degree of 'Being In'. Once more I applied a numerical analysis, noting the frequency with which Paul applies to the audience terms etymologically related to grace, thanksgiving and mercy. This process provided me with a second indication of relationship between Paul and his audience, which, for want of a better phrase, I named the χ_a/r -indicator.

Numerically, the third most significant indication of the pastoral and soteriological well-being of the audience is the degree to which its members exhibit right faith and belief. To glean a measure of this I looked for the degree to which Paul affirms the state of believing or of faith of his audience: in simple terms the degree to which he applies *pist*-derivatives to them.

As stand alone indicators these are at best ambivalent, and at worst misleading. But by combining these elements in 'connectivity' (Table 4) and finally 'satisfaction' (Table 6) indicators I have been able to establish an indication of the state of Paul's relationship with his audience. This provided a key to an otherwise amorphous contingency, that of 'emotional connection'. There are myriad influences on Paul's relationship with his audience, available to

⁴ See p. 177, above.

us by means of sociological and historical analysis, but it is the visceral, emotional connection that gives final shape to his letters.

This indication then informs my exploration of the remaining ‘soteriological states’ addressed by Paul. In Chapter Four, in response to Gundry Volf and others, I look at ways in which Paul instructs and exhorts his audience to stay in, to remain within the boundaries of the faith-family. This of course is the desired outcome of all Paul’s letters, but it is clear that the more stridently he addresses this matter the more concerned he is over their behaviour, and the less the likelihood is of their ‘Staying In’. The most destructive behaviour is ‘errant’ or ‘inappropriate’ boasting, but there are many indications of wavering behaviour within the audiences. He wants his audiences to be stand-out countercultures, conspicuous by contrast to the decaying societies around them. Where they show signs of failure to do and be this, his language reveals decreasing sense of emotional connection.

The worst outcome of the failure to behave in a countercultural manner is to ‘lapse out’, to cross boundaries in the wrong direction. In Chapter Five too I addressed the issues raised by Gundry Volf, Marshall and others. Does Paul maintain a sense of emotional connection with those who are ‘Lapsing Out’? Does the degree to which a community is defecting from right belief and praxis affect the way Paul writes? Clearly this is the case, and in the most lapse-prone communities, Corinth and Galatia, Paul’s emotional connection with the audience is clearly reduced.

I briefly addressed the key question raised by Sanders and the New Perspective school of Pauline hermeneutics. Does Paul propose a ‘successionist’ approach to God’s soteriological relations with the Hebrew people, Paul’s people of origin? Here, however, I began to notice a

new dimension to Paul's soteriological reflection. While Beker has been right to emphasize contingent circumstances rather than chronological development as the main shaping factor influencing Paul's thought, there is here a hint that chronology itself is a contingency. Paul is not primarily writing to Hebrew people (though some are clearly present in the Roman audience); they are not his missiological concern. But, perhaps under pressure from some who are misrepresenting his position, particularly in the Roman church, he modifies his stance: the Jews must accept Jesus' lordship, as did Paul the Jew. Perhaps, though, their Damascus Road experience is yet to come. Paul's stance modification is only slight, and may even have taken place as he dictated Romans itself. He remains fundamentally Christocentric, but has shifted to reincorporate a future, perhaps eschatological solution to the problem (Rom. 11.25-35). It is a vivid point of pain, triggering one of his most heartfelt outbursts: 'I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people' (Rom. 9.3).

Paul is left with another soteriological possibility. As observed above, he is powerfully aware that the majority of the world around him has not responded to the Christian gospel. In the interests of rhetoric, often using the tools of caricature to depict the contrast between the Christ-community and its neighbours, he depicts those outside the boundaries of 'in-ness' as degenerate and reprobate. His descriptions show little interest in or real awareness of the behaviour of those around him. If his audience is experiencing persecution, or the threat of it, he wants to encourage them to stand firm against hostility, and caricature serves as a useful exhortative weapon. If he is aggressively polemical with his audience (Galatians, 2 Corinthians), he is more concerned with their behaviour than with the behaviour of those over whom he holds no sway. In 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9 he has little interest in those outside the faith community, except insofar as their reprobate behaviour may serve as a

warning to the audience. In Romans, too, there is much negative portrayal of those outside the faith community, but without constant applied theological or soteriological engagement. Paul's world was different to ours: Christians were an infinitely small group, not recognized by the state, and with no established identity with which or from which to generate dialogue. They were a remnant awaiting the Last Day. The outsider in Paul's letters existed mainly as a rhetorical deterrent.

But this was not Paul's final say. In my final chapter I look at moments in passing when Paul makes soteriological statements that, while remaining absolutely Christological, may also permit hints of universal restoration or salvation. They are tiny hints, sometimes doxological outbursts, but nevertheless carrying considerable weight. Those that could be considered capable of bearing a universalist soteriological implication appear in literary contexts that are neither highly negative nor highly positive. A high degree of connection with an audience inclined Paul to protectiveness, and resulted in negative outbursts at those who caused the lives of Christians to be lives of suffering. A low degree of connection with an audience meant more pressing matters were on hand than the fate of the outsider, and, beyond caricature with deterrent purpose, Paul remains uninterested. But in the context of Romans and its more considered, rarefied reflection, after considering the possibility of the reconciliation of the Hebrew people to the God of Jesus Christ, Paul allows a hint that God may yet have a final word of hope for all people. It is a passing hint, but not his final word on the subject: salvation is God's prerogative, and remains in the realms of mystery.

The strongest hint of the possibility appears in Philippians. If Beker is correct then the fact that this was the last of the undisputed Paulines to be written is less significant than the contingent circumstances of author and audience. Imprisoned, perhaps following some betrayal

or altercation in Jerusalem, but certainly contrary to Paul's hope of a westward finale to his kerygmatic mission, he begins to make statements that were previously inconceivable: 'what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel' (Phil. 1.12). Were Galatians or Corinthians to have been the final word the next would be more inconceivable still:

Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice (Phil. 1.15-18).

This seems barely compatible with the clarion call of Gal. 1.6-9.

In the confines of Caesar's gaol, and with the possibility of death now more of a probability, Paul reflects on the contrasts between human and divine models of power. The power of God is revealed in self-emptying and sacrifice, 'even death on a cross' (Phil. 2.11). Paul's mood swings are very marked in Philippians, from one of his most sublime hymnic exaltations of the incarnation (Phil. 2.5-11) to one of his most vitriolic outbursts of antagonism (Phil. 3.2). The latter is to be regretted, but in my final chapter it is quite clear that, despite moments of human negativity, the possibility of an all-inclusive universalism is beginning to surface in Paul's thought.

In revisiting and drawing some conclusions about these matters the intention has been primarily to emphasize the value of a biblical theology. That theology can encompass pastoral, missiological and soteriological matters which are as germane to today's world as they were to Paul's. Paul's writing may not be the natural first place to turn for answers to contemporary

missiological matters, but I hope there are some implications in my quest for those of us who dwell in a reading site that is not Paul's, but is still tainted by the same realities of death, life, depths and heights and all those other elements that Paul firmly believed would not finally separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

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